

AP Language and Composition Adopt a Columnist

Rationale:

A society benefits from an educated populace that not only stays abreast of social, political, and economic issues but also recognizes the rhetoric involved in the written word that shapes its individual and corporate responses.

Objectives:

Students will...

- Follow a columnist in a national newspaper.
- Note biographical details of the columnist, particularly those of education and career development.
- Annotate three columns of a chosen columnist.
- Identify and discuss the columnist's focus: political, social, family, arts, etc.
- Identify rhetorical appeals and strategies and explain their effectiveness to the overall purpose and tone of the columns.

Steps:

- Go to the Opinions sections of mainstream newspapers and/or read opinion pieces in national newsmagazines.
- Other sites for accessing columnists are <http://drudgereport.com> and <http://www.polinks.com/polinks001.htm>.
- Select one columnist and read three specific columns.

I. Reading, Annotating, Responding

1. Read three columns written by your columnist.
2. Copy and paste each column into a word-processed document, and annotate as follows:
 - Using highlight pen, highlight areas showing logical appeal (logos) and emotional appeal (pathos):
 - Logical appeal: blue
 - Emotional appeal: green
 - Underline rhetorical strategies and, in parenthesis in red, identify the strategy.

• Embolden (using your word processor) any words denoting an organizational shift.

• At the conclusion of the article, do a SOAPS analysis of the column.

• Write a paragraph stating the purpose of the article as well as the tone and diction and imagery that establish the tone. Use two tone words to describe tone. Note, also, any change in tone and where and how that occurs. (This part is worth 90 pts.)

3. After annotating the columns, draft a one-half to one-page response for each column including the following:

- A brief summary of the column.
- The key rhetorical strategies used and their effectiveness in establishing tone and meaning.
- The article's effect on you, the reader.

(These responses are worth 60 pts.)

II. Writing the Response Essay (100 pts.)

Write an essay after reviewing the above three responses covering the following:

- Biographical details that are pertinent to the columnist's writing and career (You might try emailing the columnist. Some of the publications contain a biographical blurb as well).
- The columnist's general focus
- Three of the author's most often used rhetorical strategies and an analysis of the effectiveness of those strategies
- A personal response to the columns noting any insight gained.

Deadlines:

- Annotated columns and responses are due on _____
- Rough draft of response essay is due on _____. If you are absent that day, you still must get your essay to class so that you benefit from others' reviews.
- Response essay is due on _____ (early), _____ (for sure)
- Turnitin.com deadline for response essay is _____
(20 pt. deduction if you fail to submit the paper on turnit.com)