

6 Reading a text's argument and its method together – Part 2

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Recall

- You have agreed with an argument and disliked how it was made.
- You know a fair-sounding text can be one-sided.
- You have spotted an example chosen because it suited the writer.

New ideas

Read these first. Each idea has a short worked example. Then do the Practice below.

■ 1 Two questions at once

A rhetorical analysis asks both *what is being argued* and *how*. Answering only the first is summary; answering only the second is a list of devices.

Worked example. Saying an author argues for the subsidy is summary; saying they open with the objection to disarm resistance is analysis.

■ 2 Selection as argument

What a writer includes and omits is itself a rhetorical choice. A text that discusses only the costs of a proposal has made an argument through selection before making one through claims.

Worked example. An article listing five drawbacks and no benefits has taken a position without stating one.

■ 3 Evaluating fairly

Analysing a text is not agreeing or disagreeing with it. The task is to describe accurately what the writer does and how it works on the intended audience.

Worked example. You can show precisely how a persuasive technique works while thinking the conclusion wrong.

Watch out: A rhetorical analysis that spends its space saying whether the author is right has answered a different question. Describe the machinery, not the verdict.

Practice

2.1 State the two questions a rhetorical analysis asks. [2]

2.2 Explain the difference between summary and analysis here. [2]

2.3 Explain how selection makes an argument. [2]

2.4 State what analysing a text is not. [2]

2.5 Explain why you can analyse a text you disagree with. [2]
