

Rhetorical Analysis Worksheet

Adapted from Ramage et al.'s *Writing Arguments* (155-157)

Your name:	Samiha Hussien
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Conducting a rhetorical analysis asks you to bring to bear on an argument your knowledge of argument and your repertoire of reading strategies. The chart of questions for the analysis below can help you examine an argument in-depth (and be sure to see the additional corresponding, and certainly helpful, questions posed in the chart in the book on pages 155-157). Although a rhetorical analysis will not include answers to all of these questions, using some of these questions in your thinking stages can give you a thorough understanding of the argument while helping you generate insights for your own rhetorical analysis essay.

Short and “free-write” type answers are ok, but be sure to address each question. Take as much space as you need, and spend more time to expand on those questions in which you find yourself interested.

First, go reread the Rhetorical Situation worksheet you completed for this text so that you’re reminded of the author’s background, purpose, argument, and rhetorical strategies; the context, exigence, intended audience, text/genre; as well your initial responses to the text.

What additional insights or corrections, if any, regarding the text or author might you add to the information you gathered in the Rhetorical Situation worksheet?

Audience and rhetorical effectiveness

The author’s intended audience is those who are like her: immigrants, people who are afflicted with prejudice just because of their differences, particularly regarding language. She also targets the perpetrators, the education system that failed to understand her, and adjust their teaching for her success. Kingston is rhetorically effective because, for instance, she employs ethos because her credibility is writing this very colorful and nuanced essay about how when subjected to the American education system, was treated as less because of her struggles with language, her shyness, and hesitance to speak aloud.

Writer’s identity and angle of vision

Kingston is a Chinese immigrant who grew up in America. She utilizes her identity as an outsider or at least someone who is treated as such to emphasize the way her education worked against her in terms of growth in language. Her angle of vision is one of someone who experienced literary neglect. Her writing this very essay serves to prove it wasn’t her own lack of skill or potential that caused her American teachers and her peers to treat her as incapable.

Argument, reasons, evidence, and appeals to logos

<p>1. What is the argument? Is it explicitly stated or implied? Upfront or delayed?</p>	<p>Kingston’s implied argument is that others’ lack of understanding of people like her led to educational and social hindrance and served to discourage success.</p>
<p>2. What are the main reasons in support of the claim? Are the reasons audience-based?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Her teachers were concerned about her black covered paintings not even attempting to understand her purpose and discouraging this expression of herself. Instead, they treated her as if she was doing something wrong. 2) She failed kindergarten because of her lack of speech. Many other Chinese girls were similar to her as they were silent as well. Instead of recognizing an issue within the system, she and her sister, who was also quiet, were flunked.

	<p>3) She was punished by being told to sit with the loud assumably troublesome kids because of her struggle to grasp certain English words because of their confusing differences from their Chinese counterparts.</p> <p>4) She and the other Chinese girls were left behind in a classroom whilst the rest of their classmates were able to attend the second-grade play.</p> <p>5) Even in Chinese school, there were kids who still struggled to be comfortable and loud and were subjected to immense discomfort and forced to present publicly though their practical cries of embarrassment.</p>
3. How effective is the writer’s use of evidence? How is the argument supported and developed?	Kingston’s evidence is very effective as it proves time and time again, people similar to her are not greeted with compassion and understanding. Instead, they are further discouraged from the get-go because the system only serves those who they believe digest and learn in the “right” way.
4. How well has the argument recognized and responded to alternative views?	This is more of a personal narrative so it doesn’t often bring alternate perspectives to disprove the writer instead recounting the author’s own experience.
5. What is emphasized and what is omitted in this text?	What is emphasized is how the writer had struggled with language and the way she had been treated because of it. What is omitted is a more impartial account. Though from an audience perspective, it is easy to believe in the writer’s argument do to present-day observations, Kingston does not include the other perspective nor statistical evidence.

Author background and appeals to ethos

6. How does the writer’s personal history, education, gender, ethnicity, age, class, sexual orientation, and political leaning influence the angle of vision? How much does the writer’s angle of vision dominate the text?	Kingston is a Chinese immigrant who grew up in America. She utilizes her identity as an outsider or at least someone who is treated as such to emphasize the way her education worked against her in terms of growth in language. Her angle of vision is one of someone who experienced literary neglect. Her writing this very essay serves to prove it wasn’t her own lack of skill or potential that caused her American teachers and her peers to treat her as incapable.
7. What <i>ethos</i> does the writer project? How does the writer try to seem credible and trustworthy to the intended audience? How knowledgeable does the writer seem in recognizing opposing or alternative views and how fairly does the writer respond to them?	Kingston, a writer, writing this personal narrative in and of itself provides credibility to her intended audience. To those who underestimated her because of their assumption of her language ability and disinterest in engaging and attempting to understand her, she proves them wrong revealing that while the system pushed to set people like her back did not mean she was incapable of learning if given the right tools and methods. This is proven because she at the end is able to express this in the very language she struggled with initially and was given no encouragement with.

Assumptions, values, and appeals to pathos

<p>8. What assumptions, values, and beliefs would readers have to hold to find this argument persuasive?</p>	<p>Well, the audience would have to believe that prejudice, racial, language, or otherwise, is wrong because people should be given an equal chance even if they are different from the expectations of whatever system they are partaking in. Even so, the system should cater to differences rather than an ideal partaker.</p>
<p>9. How well does the text suit its particular audience and purpose? How would this argument be received by different audiences?</p>	<p>This text serves to question the beliefs of those who do not share this belief by making plain the injustices experienced and hopefully bring discomfort to those who believe differences should be punished. On the other hand, the other potentially intended audience of those who share the aspect of being different and being treated as such would receive this argument as common sense.</p>
<p>10. How does the writer use concrete language, word choice, narrative, examples, and analogies to tap readers' emotions, values, and imaginations?</p>	<p>Paintings - Kingston uses vivid imagery to emphasize her innocent and endearing purpose of covering her colorful paintings with black paint. The readers are able to recognize and feel her pure childlike innocence whereas her teachers took her actions for something wrong or dark. Presentation - the instances where she is forced to speak at risk of failure, Kingston taps into the audiences' emotions when describing the fear, the embarrassment, the "weeping and strangling", she endured when being forced to present out loud. Readers can truly empathize and feel the agony through her words.</p>

Writer's style

<p>11. How do the writer's language choices and sentence length and complexity contribute to the impact of the argument? How well does the writer's tone (attitude toward the subject) suit the argument?</p>	<p>Kingston's style of writing from the perspective of herself as a child impacts and strengthens the argument greatly. The innocence depicted serves to illuminate the unwarranted and disheartening bias she is subjected to within her education.</p>
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Rhetorical context: Genre

<p>12. How do the genre and the argument's place of publication influence its content, structure, and style? Might the text/approach be radically different if a different genre or publication was used?</p>	<p>The genre of a personal narrative influences the rhetorical strategies she is able to use because a narrative allows the audience to live through the writer's experience through their words and feel what they had felt. If this was a more statistic-based essay, Kingston would lose the ability to build a more personal connection to the audience.</p>
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Overall persuasiveness of the argument

<p>13. What features of this argument contribute <u>most</u> to making it rhetorically interesting, memorable, effective, disturbing, or problematic for its target audience and for you yourself?</p>	<p>Kingston's employment of pathos is particularly strong especially because being different and experiencing a certain kind of treatment because of it and because it calls into question easily recognizable systems in place today, even those</p>
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	who cannot personally relate most likely have been witness to the systems prejudice against others.
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Your brainstorm

14. Freewrite here what rhetorical features you're thinking of focusing on in your Rhetorical Analysis Essay.	Pathos Writing style Genre
15. Freewrite here some of the points you want to make by analyzing the above features.	Kingston's argument is extremely persuasive as these three strategies work together to put the audience in the shoes of a little girl who is faced with a struggle that many have experienced and is treated as though she is at fault instead of the system which instead should be shaped to cater to <i>her</i> needs to encourage success for those who have traditionally been disadvantaged by society,