

# AP Lang: How to Write That Rhetorical Analysis Essay!

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# Things you **MUST** know in order to accurately analyze a text...

1. SOAPS

2. Rhetorical Strategies

3. Why did the author choose these strategies for the particular audience, occasion, and/or purpose?

Rhetorical Appeals  
(ethos, logos, pathos)

Style  
(diction, syntax, connotation)

Rhetorical Devices  
(see notes)

## AKA → ANALYZE

- 1) **HOW** do the rhetorical strategies help the author achieve his/her purpose?
- 2) **WHY** does the author chose those strategies for that particular audience and for that particular occasion?

# Intro Paragraph: Use SOAPS!



## □ Speaker, Occasion, and Subject

- (Writer's credentials), (writer's first and last name), in his/her (type of text), (title of text using correct punctuation or italics), (strong verb—see green list) (writer's subject).
- **EXAMPLE:** Well-known American novelist, Amy Tan, in her narrative essay, "Fish Cheeks," recounts an embarrassing Christmas Eve dinner when she was fourteen years old.

### Pro Tip:

Keep it brief!  
When in doubt... use  
Mini Skirt Rule

# Intro Paragraph: Use SOAPS!



## □ Purpose

- (Writer's last name)'s purpose is to (what the writer does in the text).
- **EXAMPLE:** Tan's purpose is to convey the idea that, at fourteen, she wasn't able to recognize the love her mother had for her or the sacrifices she made.

### Pro Tip:

Keep it brief!  
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# Intro Paragraph: Use SOAPS!



## □ Audience

- **He/she** (strong verb—adopts, creates, etc.) a[n] (adjective describing the attitude/feeling conveyed by the writer) tone in order to (verb phrase describing what the writer wants readers to do/think) in **his/her** (intended audience).
- **EXAMPLE:** **She** adopts a **sentimental** tone in order to **appeal to similar feelings and experiences** in **her** adult readers.

### Pro Tip:

Keep it brief!  
When in doubt... use  
Mini Skirt Rule

# Intro: Bring it all together

Well-known American novelist, Amy Tan, in her narrative essay, “Fish Cheeks,” recounts an embarrassing Christmas Eve dinner when she was fourteen years old. Tan’s purpose is to convey the idea that, at fourteen, she wasn’t able to recognize the love her mother had for her or the sacrifices she made. **She adopts a sentimental tone in order to appeal to similar feelings and experiences in her adult readers.**

SOS

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# Body Paragraphs = ANALYZE!

## Pro Tips

1. Include a **detailed explanation** of strategies used by the writer
2. Work **chronologically** through the text.
  - Include the beginning, middle, and end of the text.
3. Use **transition words** as you move through the text
  - Examples: begins, opens, closes, contrasts, shifts to, juxtaposes, ends, moves to

# Body Paragraphs = ANALYZE!

Every analysis paragraph MUST:

1. Identify the part of the text you are analyzing
2. Identify the **strongest** rhetorical strategies by using textual evidence
  - **DO NOT discuss EVERY strategy used**
3. Explain **HOW the strategies help the writer** achieve his/her purpose and reach his/her audience.



# Body Paragraphs = ANALYZE!

[from Pres. Reagan's speech after the space shuttle *Challenger* explosion in the 1980s]:

## FORMAT

- The first sentence identifies which section of the text you are discussing and the main idea of that section.
- (Writer's last name) (transition word) his/her (type of text) by (strong verb) that (main idea of this section of the text).

## EXAMPLE

Reagan begins his tribute to the *Challenger* astronauts by acknowledging that the shuttle accident has appropriately postponed his planned State of the Union address and by expressing the depth of his and his wife's personal grief.

# Body Paragraphs = ANALYZE!

[from Pres. Reagan's speech after the space shuttle *Challenger* explosion in the 1980s]:

## FORMAT

- The second sentence conveys the writer's support for the main idea by identifying and providing a specific example for one rhetorical strategy used by the writer. [This sentence is repeated if you want to discuss more than one rhetorical strategy.]

## EXAMPLE

He **appeals to the mournful emotions** of the audience by admitting that he and Nancy are **“pained to the core” (3)**, that today is rightfully a **“day for mourning and remembering” (2-3)**, and that the accident is **“truly a national loss” (4)**.

# Body Paragraphs = ANALYZE!

[from Pres. Reagan's speech after the space shuttle *Challenger* explosion in the 1980s]:

## FORMAT

- The third sentence explains how the rhetorical strategies you discussed in the previous sentences help the writer achieve his/her purpose by using an *in order to* statement.

## EXAMPLE

He joins in this time of mourning *in order to* unify the nation and humbly admit that “**we share this pain with all of the people of our country**” (4).

# Body Paragraphs = ANALYZE!

[from Pres. Reagan's speech after the space shuttle *Challenger* explosion in the 1980s]:

## FORMAT

- The fourth sentence identifies the effect of the writer's use of these rhetorical strategies on the audience.

## EXAMPLE

This outpouring of emotion from the president conveys a calming tone that reassures the nation that their grief is both understandable and proper.

# Body: Bring it all together!

Reagan begins his tribute to the *Challenger* astronauts by acknowledging that the shuttle accident has appropriately postponed his planned State of the Union address and by expressing the depth of his and his wife's personal grief. He appeals to the mournful emotions of the audience by admitting that he and Nancy are "pained to the core" (3), that today is rightfully a "day for mourning and remembering" (2-3), and that the accident is "truly a national loss" (4). He joins in this time of mourning in order to unify the nation and humbly admit that "we share this pain with all of the people of our country" (4). This outpouring of emotion from the president conveys a calming tone that reassures the Nation that their grief is both understandable and proper.

# Conclusion– easy, wrap it up.

- Be brief. Use the mini-skirt rule again! In one-two sentences, remind your reader of the things you said in the introduction.

