

# Rhetorical Analysis with a Focus on Genre

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When analyzing a particular “text,” it is important to think about its genre. Genres help writers understand and employ specific conventions, styles, and rhetorical strategies. An attention to genre can tell us a lot about a text’s purpose and the audience it is trying to reach.

## GUIDE TO ANALYZING GENRE

### 1) Genre Identification:

- What genre does the text belong to (e.g., infographic, essay, listicle, op-ed, personal reflection, TED Talk, brochure, X (Twitter) thread, etc.)?
- What are the typical elements and structural features associated with this genre? How do these conventions contribute to the effectiveness of the text's communication?
- How is information in this genre typically presented and organized? Does it employ paragraphs? Bulleted lists? Something else? If applicable, be sure to think about any visual elements of the genre. These can include drawings, maps, graphs, tables, and more!
- Why do you think the author choose this particular means of communication, and what do they hope to achieve with it?

### 2) Language, Style, and Tone:

- Identify any specific writing style or language choices that are common in this genre. Does it, for example, use a lot of specialized jargon, or does it use simple, straightforward language that can be understood by most ordinary people? Based on the writing style, does this genre seem directed toward any specific communities and/or age groups?
- What is the tone of the writer/speaker’s voice? Is it formal or informal? Serious or unserious? Does it incorporate humor? Does it try to provoke some sort of emotional response from the audience?
- How do these choices influence the readability and impact of the text?

### 3) Evidence and Support:

- Evaluate how the text incorporates evidence, examples, and support to make its case. Consider as well how it gives credit to outside sources.
- What kinds of evidence and support does it draw from? Witness testimony? Expert opinion? Historical research? Scientific studies? Interviews? Personal anecdotes? Something else?

### 4) Audience:

- What group(s) of people do you think this genre is particularly suited for? Who, in other words, do you think would be most receptive to learning new information in this particular way?
- How does the genre cater to the needs and expectations of this audience?

### 5) Evaluate Effectiveness:

- Finally, assess the effectiveness of the genre in achieving the author’s intended goals. Does it successfully communicate its message, engage the audience, and fulfill its intended purpose?