

Rhetoric/Rhetorical Modes

One of the main objectives of taking ENG 1101 at City Tech is to develop an understanding of rhetoric and to be able to incorporate the various rhetorical modes in your writing. **Rhetoric** is the study of effective speaking and writing. **Rhetorical modes** are methods of writing aimed at achieving a particular effect in the reader. In this class, you will learn to use various rhetorical modes of writing, such as: **narration**, **exposition**, and **argumentation**.

The primary purpose of **narration** is to engage the reader's emotions through a descriptive and reflective story. The personal narrative essay often allows the writer more creative liberties due its less rigid organization and structure. Narratives do not always start at the beginning or follow a chronological order of events. They can start in the middle of the action (*in medias res*), or they sometimes start by foreshadowing the story's ending. The writer also makes use of figurative language and dialogue to make the story more lively and interesting.

On the other hand, the **expository** essay is aimed at informing readers about or analyzing a specific topic, and setting forth a clear and concise argument concerning that topic. As such, expository essays tend to be much more tightly organized, and typically follow the 5-paragraph structure (one introductory paragraph, 3 body paragraphs with support, and one conclusion).

Finally, **argumentative** essays seek to change readers' attitudes or actions with regard to specific subjects by way of presenting convincing examples of support.

Although each rhetorical mode has its distinct characteristics, it is important to note that a writer will often incorporate several rhetorical modes within an essay depending on its overall purpose. For instance, exposition is an element of plot in narration. Likewise, argumentation often requires exposition (in the form of compare/contrast or definition).

Audience

Audience refers to the person or people who are intended to read your writing. In this class, your professor and peers are your readers. Writers must carefully consider their audience and anticipate the most effective ways of appealing to readers, whose backgrounds and beliefs do not always align with that of the writer. Hence, writers will often have to go through several drafts before finding the right language, organization, examples, rhetorical modes, and so on for their essay.

Writing as a Process

Writing happens in stages. Usually, your professor will assign you a topic. From there, you can begin **brainstorming** ideas on how you can respond to that topic. This involves making a list of all the possible options and narrowing it down to one. Once you've figured this out, you can proceed to the **drafting** stage. You can write an exploratory draft, which is like freewriting because you are just expressing everything you have to say about a topic without worrying about

organization or structure. Alternatively, some students find it helpful to **outline** their ideas before forming full paragraphs.

Afterwards, you can evaluate what is strong and what is lacking in your first draft, and build from there. It is important to note that you will have to write multiple drafts before the final draft. This is known as the **revision process**. Many think revision is limited to proofreading your writing for grammatical, spelling, or formatting mistakes. While this is, indeed, a part of revision, the most important type of revision involves attending to the essay's content and structure. Have you answered the question, and in the most effective way? Is your information logically presented, and in a clear and concise fashion?

Always remember to read your assignment carefully, and ensure that you are adequately responding to the given topic and fulfilling all the necessary requirements. You do not want to lose points for not following instructions.



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