

WRITING THROUGH THE RHETORICAL MODES

SECTION 1: A RHETORICAL MODES READER

Chapter Four: The Persuasive Mode

WRITING THROUGH THE RHETORICAL MODES: READER

Persuasion: Reading 1

Nicholas Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains"

Nicholas Carr is an American writer and critique of technology and culture. His 2011 book, The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains, further develops the issues raised in this 2008 article.

<http://citytech.ezproxy.cuny.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=32562106&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Questions for Reading and Discussion

- 1) Carr begins his article with dialogue from the science fiction film, *2001, A Space Odyssey*. Why?
- 2) Is Carr's argument encapsulated in a direct thesis statement? Discuss why or why not you believe Carr made the decision to use a direct or implied thesis statement in the article.
- 3) Carr combines combines personal experiences and research from scholarly sources as evidence to support his claims. What is the effect of this combination on the reader? If Carr had only used one kind of evidence, would his argument seem weaker or stronger, and why?

Questions for Writing and Research

- 1) One of Carr's central points in his essay relates to the fact that "the process of adapting to new intellectual technologies is reflected in the changing metaphors we use to explain ourselves to ourselves." Free write about the metaphors that you use to describe yourself and your thinking processes. Have these metaphors changed over time? How may these metaphors relate to the technologies you use or may once have used?

2) Write a three to five page essay in which you explain, based on your own experiences of using Google and other web technologies for your own writing and research, why you agree or disagree with Carr's argument and the claims he uses to support his argument. In your essay, make sure you clearly restate Carr's argument and the claims used to support it, and to cite and comment on textual evidence from his essay.

3) Carr's article has provoked numerous responses. Locate three of these. Prepare a brief presentation in which you analyze the rhetorical situation (writer, purpose, audience) of each article and discuss the argument presented in each.



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