

Rhetorical Summary

WHAT is this assignment?	WHY this assignment?
You will write a rhetorical summary of one of our course texts. Your summary will do more than repeat the author's content (what they say and argue). You will instead focus on the rhetorical situation and rhetorical strategies used (what the author does, how, and why, as it relates to the audience, purpose, and genre of the text).	You will build your rhetorical reading skills and give you an advantage throughout your college career, as you will likely be charged with this writing task in many of your courses across the curriculum. Summary is also a key component of research (source-based) writing, so this skill will be used again and further fine-tuned in this course.



Your summary should be **375-500 words** (1.5-2 pgs) long. You should include at least **two quotes** and a **Works Cited page**. You will start writing this in class (with notes).

What rhetorical summaries are:

- Rhetorical summaries are short, un-evaluative **analyses** of the text's **rhetorical situation** and the author's **complete argument**. It's more than a restatement of the main ideas.
- Your task is to tell the story of what an author is **doing** and **how** they get the job done.
- Interpretations of the **rhetorical situation** should be included—
 - the **author's** background and credentials,
 - the **context** and **exigence** of the text,
 - the **genre** and intended **audience**,
 - the author's **purpose** and main **claims**,
 - the **evidence** they draw on to support those claims, and
 - the **organization** and other **strategic moves** to appeal to the audience.

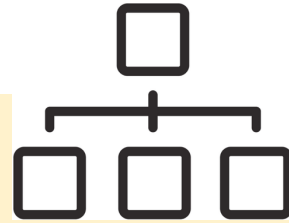


What rhetorical summaries are not:

- Your evaluation of the text (your opinions about what's good/bad or wrong/right).
- Your personal reflections of what you learned or how you were affected by the text.
- Your own argument as inspired by the text (including your own intro and examples).
- You listing major claims and concepts (without making meaningful connections)
- You explaining a single claim or single example from the text.
- You repeating major terms or reciting important quotes from the text.



Suggested Organization Strategy:



- Introduction: THE WHO, WHAT, & WHY
 - Contextual information about the text (i.e., the **rhetorical situation**)
 - A brief and concise explanation of the **overall argument** made by the author
 - Note: catchy or personalized introductions are not needed
- Body paragraphs: THE HOW & WHY
 - An explanation of the overall **reasons / evidence** to support the argument
 - A description of the author's **organization scheme** (citing sections)
 - An analysis of **why** the text is organized as it is (explaining intended effect)
- Conclusion: none needed

Additional tips for summary writing:

- Summaries should be written for an **audience unfamiliar** with the text. Ask yourself: "From this summary, would someone who has never read this text be able to grasp the main argument, purpose, and evidence that the author presents?"
- Summaries should be **accurate** and cover the **complete argument**. Ask yourself: "Is my interpretation of the rhetorical situation and what the author is doing correct? Does my summary truly represent the full argument?"
- **Attribute** ideas/claims to the author. Don't restate them as your own.
 - **No:** "There is not just one English. There are Englishes."
 - **Yes:** "Tan argues there is not just one English. There are Englishes."
- Use these **handouts to guide** your writing of the rhetorical summary:
 - The Rhetorical Situation
 - Annotating a Text for What it Does
 - Rhetorical Strategies
- Use these **handouts to format** your rhetorical summary:
 - Formatting Academic Writing
 - Citing Sources

