

PRACTICE WORKSHEET + FULL ANSWER KEY

Rhetorical analysis: choices and effects

AP English Language skill practice. Work through the sections in order, or choose the one that matches this week's topic.

QUESTIONS	SECTIONS	ANSWER KEY	WORKING SPACE
52	5	At the back	Ruled

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Before you start

Explain how a specific choice helps a writer address an audience and achieve a purpose. Naming a device is a first observation; analysis connects the words to their effect in this particular context.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Original council speech: "A library is not a luxury for the few; it is a doorway for every child." How does the contrast support a request for library funding?

- 1 The contrast sets an exclusive luxury against a shared opportunity.
- 2 The reference to every child invites the council to consider a public responsibility.
- 3 An analytical claim connects the contrast to the purpose: the speaker frames funding as an investment in access rather than an optional expense.

Use this method as your model. Set out your own working the same way.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Listing techniques without explaining their function
- Assuming all readers react identically

There are 52 questions across 5 sections. Write in the ruled space, then mark your work against the answer key at the back. Topics covered: Audience and purpose, Evidence and commentary, Qualified arguments.

SECTION A Audience, purpose and situation

Read this original council speech twice. Identify who is being addressed and why before analysing any choice.

READ THIS PASSAGE

A library is not a luxury for the few; it is a doorway for every child. We are told the budget is tight. It always is. But the question before this council is not whether we can afford to keep these doors open - it is what we are prepared to close them on. Last winter, ninety children did their homework in that reading room because it was warm and it was quiet. Ninety. Vote for the line item, and you vote for those desks.

- 1 A speaker tells councillors, "Your vote can keep the doors open." Identify an audience and a likely purpose.

- 2 Identify the rhetorical situation: speaker, audience, purpose and occasion.

- 3 What does "We are told the budget is tight. It always is." do to the opposing argument?

- 4 Explain the effect of the dash in the third sentence.

- 5 Explain the effect of the one-word sentence "Ninety."

- 6 Identify one appeal to shared values in the passage.

- 7 Explain how "those desks" works at the end.

- 8 Name the exigence, the problem prompting the speech.

- 9 Explain why the speaker addresses councillors rather than the public.

- 10 How would the speech change if the audience were parents rather than councillors?

- 11 Explain why purpose and audience must be identified before analysing technique.

SECTION B Evidence and commentary

These questions use the Section A speech. Naming a device is an observation; commentary explains its function.

- 12** Explain the effect of "every child" in the passage, without claiming every listener will agree.

- 13** Improve this claim: "The writer uses contrast and it is effective."

- 14** Write a claim, evidence and commentary paragraph about the "ninety children" detail.

- 15** Explain the difference between quoting and analysing.

- 16** Explain why "the speaker uses pathos" is an incomplete analysis.

- 17** Choose the strongest evidence for the speaker's argument and justify the choice.

- 18** Explain how a single word choice can carry an argument.

- 19** Rewrite one sentence of the passage to weaken its effect, and explain what you removed.

- 20** Explain what commentary should add beyond the evidence.

- 21** Write a sentence connecting a stylistic choice to the speaker's purpose.

- 22** Explain why analysis should avoid claiming what all readers feel.

SECTION C Reasoning and the quality of evidence

Test the argument, not only the style.

- 23 A report says visits rose after opening hours increased. Does this alone prove the longer hours caused the rise? Explain.
- 24 Name one piece of evidence that would strengthen the library argument.
- 25 Explain what a line of reasoning is.
- 26 Identify one assumption the speaker relies on.
- 27 Explain why an unstated assumption can weaken an argument.
- 28 Explain the difference between an anecdote and evidence.
- 29 Explain when an anecdote is legitimate in an argument.
- 30 Name one logical weakness to watch for in a persuasive speech.
- 31 Identify the false-choice risk in "either fund the library or close it on those children".
- 32 Explain why acknowledging cost strengthens the speaker's credibility.

SECTION D Synthesis and qualified argument

Use sources to build your own line of reasoning, not to report each in turn.

- 33 Qualify the claim "Every town must build a new library" while keeping a defensible position.
- 34 Write two sentences connecting evidence to your qualified claim. Do not invent research statistics.
- 35 Explain what synthesis requires beyond summarising sources.

- 36 Write a sentence integrating an attributed source into your own claim.

- 37 Explain why sources should be attributed even when paraphrased.

- 38 Explain how to use a source you disagree with.

- 39 Write a concession followed by a rebuttal.

- 40 Explain the difference between qualifying a claim and abandoning it.

- 41 Name two ways to keep your own voice among several sources.

- 42 Write a thesis for a synthesis essay on funding local services.

SECTION E Writing and revising analysis

A thesis claims what the choices achieve; it does not list them.

- 43 Write a two-sentence introduction for a rhetorical analysis of the Section A speech.

- 44 Write a thesis naming two rhetorical choices and their shared purpose.

- 45 Explain why a rhetorical analysis thesis should not simply list devices.

- 46 Revise to add commentary: "The speaker uses the number ninety."

- 47 Explain how to organise a rhetorical analysis.

48

Explain the purpose of a conclusion in an analysis.

49

Name two things to cut when revising an analysis.

50

Correct: The author uses diction which effects the audience.

51

Explain why the present tense is used to discuss a text.

52

Find one sentence in your paragraph that summarises rather than analyses, and rewrite it.

Answer key

Work each section before you check it. These are model answers: an equivalent method, or a different well-supported interpretation, can be just as correct.

SECTION A - AUDIENCE, PURPOSE AND SITUATION

1. The audience is councillors with voting power; the likely purpose is to persuade them to support the service. The context should confirm what the vote concerns.
2. A campaigner addressing councillors at a budget decision, seeking a vote to fund the library.
3. It concedes the objection and then deflates it as routine, reducing its force without denying it.
4. It reframes the question mid-sentence, shifting the issue from cost to consequence.
5. Isolating the figure makes an abstract budget line concrete and hard to pass over.
6. "A doorway for every child" presents access as a public responsibility.
7. It replaces a policy vote with a specific image, so the decision feels personal rather than administrative.
8. A budget decision that could close the library.
9. Councillors hold the vote, so the appeal is aimed at those able to act.
10. The appeal to public stewardship would matter less; personal benefit and collective action might do more of the work.
11. The same device does different work for different audiences, so effect is only judgeable in context.

SECTION B - EVIDENCE AND COMMENTARY

12. The inclusive phrase presents access as a shared concern and may encourage councillors to view the proposal as serving the wider community.
13. By contrasting luxury with a doorway for every child, the speaker presents library funding as widening opportunity, appealing to councillors responsible for public services.
14. A paragraph claiming that the detail makes the cost concrete, quoting it, and explaining how it converts a budget line into a visible consequence.
15. A quotation reproduces the words; analysis explains what the choice does for this audience and purpose.
16. It names a category without showing which words create the appeal or what response they invite.
17. Any well-argued choice with a reason, for example the ninety children, because it is specific and checkable.
18. A loaded term frames the issue before any reasoning begins, for example luxury set against doorway.
19. A rewritten sentence with a named loss, for example replacing the concrete figure with "many children".
20. It explains how the evidence supports the claim and why it works on this particular audience.
21. A sentence naming the choice, its effect and the purpose it serves.

22. Audiences differ; a claim about a likely effect is defensible where a universal claim is not.

SECTION C - REASONING AND THE QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

23. No. Other changes, such as publicity or school activities, could contribute. Establishing causation needs stronger evidence and attention to alternatives.
24. For example usage data across comparable towns, or figures on alternative study space.
25. The sequence of connected claims that leads an audience from the starting point to the conclusion.
26. That councillors accept a responsibility for children's access to study space.
27. If the audience does not share it, the reasoning does not connect for them.
28. An anecdote is a single illustrative case; evidence supports a general claim and can be checked.
29. When it illustrates a claim that other evidence supports, rather than standing in for that evidence.
30. For example a false choice, an appeal to consequences without evidence, or a hasty generalisation.
31. It presents two options where others exist, such as reduced hours or shared premises.
32. It shows the argument has faced the strongest objection rather than avoiding it.

SECTION D - SYNTHESIS AND QUALIFIED ARGUMENT

33. For example: Towns with limited access to books should prioritise library services, using new buildings or shared facilities according to local need and cost.
34. For example: A shared library room could give residents access where a separate building is unaffordable. This supports expanding the service while allowing the delivery model to reflect local resources.
35. It uses several sources to develop your own line of reasoning, rather than reporting each in turn.
36. A sentence naming the source and using it to support a claim you are making.
37. The idea is not yours; attribution shows where it came from and lets a reader check it.
38. State its position fairly, then explain what your evidence or reasoning shows instead.
39. A sentence granting a genuine point, followed by a reason your position still holds.
40. Qualifying narrows the conditions under which the claim holds; abandoning gives up the position.
41. Frame each source with your claim, and comment on its limits rather than only reporting it.

42. A defensible, qualified position that the essay's sources can support.

SECTION E - WRITING AND REVISING ANALYSIS

43. A sentence establishing the situation and a thesis naming the choices and their purpose.
44. A single sentence naming both choices and what they achieve together.
45. A list makes no argument; the thesis should claim what the choices accomplish.
46. For example: By naming ninety children, the speaker turns a budget line into a countable group the council can picture.
47. By the choices and their effects in the order they build the argument, rather than by device type.
48. To state what the choices achieve together, rather than to repeat the paragraphs.
49. Summary of the content, and any device named without an explanation of its effect.
50. The author uses diction that affects the audience.
51. The text continues to make its argument each time it is read, so the present tense is conventional.
52. The identified sentence rewritten so that it explains an effect rather than restating content.

Review and next steps

Mark your work against the answer key, record your score for each section, then answer the three questions below. Bring this page to your next lesson so your tutor can start from what actually blocked you.

Which question did you find hardest, and what exactly stopped you?

Rewrite the corrected working for that question here.

Which section do you want to practise again before your next lesson?

Score record

SECTION	QUESTIONS	NUMBER CORRECT	PRACTISE AGAIN?
A. Audience, purpose and situation	11		
B. Evidence and commentary	11		
C. Reasoning and the quality of evidence	10		
D. Synthesis and qualified argument	10		
E. Writing and revising analysis	10		
Total	52		

Keep going with one-to-one support.

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