Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Analyzing an Argument: Choice Nonfiction Critique

*Objective: I can critically read and evaluate a nonfiction argument so that I can form a fair opinion about it.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Based on annotations and the written response, student shows a detailed level of accurate analysis; he or she can identify advanced writing techniques used in text and critically evaluate it overall.  | Based on annotations and the written response, student shows a grade level ability to critique the quality of argumentative writing.  | Either the annotations or the written response do not yet show a grade level ability to identify the strong or weak areas of an argument and critique it overall.  | Both the annotations and the written response do not yet show a grade level ability to identify the strong or weak areas of an argument and critique it overall.  |
| Teacher Comments  | Next Steps |
|  | * No further steps needed - revision is optional.
* Please add to/revise your **annotations** by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Please add to/revise your **critique** by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Please turn in a missing item ASAP:
* Other:
 |

Every day (and especially during an election season), you are bombarded with conflicting arguments from convincing adults who want you to not only **agree** with them, but **do** what you’re told. So how do you know with certainty which arguments are valid and which ones are flawed?

In this assignment, you’re going to choose a real-world argument to either praise or rip apart in a critique. Although you are allowed to express your opinions on the topic, **make sure you focus on the writer’s techniques**; you’re being graded on your ability to accurately find and discuss the pros/ cons of the **writing**.

**DIRECTIONS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DUE:**  | 1. Choose any argumentative or persuasive non-fiction text, past or present, to **print, read, and annotate**. (In order to be fair, your item must be a minimum of 2 pages single spaced or 4 pgs double; it must be school appropriate and a decent reading level, written for teens or adults.) ***These could include***:
	1. Famous speeches or documents from history (including non-political figures)
	2. Transcripts of current political speeches, especially DNC or RNC speeches, campaign speeches, acceptance speeches, inaugural addresses, addresses to Congress/ the United Nations, state of the union addresses, and more.
	3. Transcripts from TED talks (or other internet videos)
 |
| **DUE:**  | 1. **As you annotate**, look for both good AND bad qualities of the argument and **mark** them. Be specific; name fallacies/strengths in the margins. Complete the CHEAT SHEET on page 2.
 |
| **DUE:**  | 1. **Write a 1-page critique** of the argument (single spaced). The # of paragraphs is totally up to you, since I’m not grading you on structure, BUT your critique must have...
	1. **Your thesis, opinion, or topic sentence** in the beginning (how great/poor the argument is)
	2. An introduction that gives CONTEXT for the speech: who, when, where, and why it was given, including any other helpful info about it
	3. At least one paragraph EACH discussing the POSITIVES and WEAKNESSES of the speech
 |

Argument Analysis Cheat Sheet

Here is a STARTER list of some of the characteristics you could look for or think about for your critique!

*(Reminder: When you do the critique, you have to cite and/or give examples of the techniques that you mention!)*

Text Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Pub. Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Purpose/Goal** | **Positive Characteristics** | **Basic Argument Problems** |
| * **Argument** (present a stance)
* **Persuasion** (convince you to join side or take action)
* **Informative** (explain or teach a topic/situation)
* **Other**:
 | **General qualities:*** Hooks the reader
* Polite/respectful tone
* Unbiased
* Bias is fair/professional
* Call to Action
* Sufficient facts/data
* Mix of ethos/pathos/logos
* Clear structure
* Memorable ending OR a positive final impression
* Stays on topic
* Credible sources cited
* Specific examples
* Realistic/plausible
* Inspirational without being unrealistic
* Made fair comparisons
* Fairly addressed a counter-argument or gave some credit to the other side
* Explored multiple options, viewpoints, or alternatives
* Other:

**Techniques:*** Parallel structure
* Anaphora
* Epistrophe
* Antithesis
* Chiasmus
* Hypophora
* Allusion
* Imagery
* Similes/Metaphors
* Extended Metaphors
 | * Thesis is unclear
* Disrespectful and/or offensive
* No, or not enough, facts/data
* Only attacks other side instead of supporting its stance
* Other:
 |
| **Thesis/Main Idea was \_\_\_\_\_.**  | **Propaganda Problems** |
|  | * Off-topic content
* Irrelevant content
* Misuse of facts/data
* Presented opinions as facts
* Too vague
* Generalized too much
* Inappropriate degree of bias
* Imbalance of ethos/pathos/logos
* Hyperbole/ exaggeration
* Unrealistic overpromising
* Other:
 |
| **Your Overall Rating of it (and Why) out of 5 stars** | **Logical Fallacies** |
| * Ad hominem attacks
* Correlation vs. Causation problem
* Bandwagon tactic used
* Made a faulty assumption
* False dichotomy (excluded middle)
* Card stacking/confirmation bias
* Unfair comparisons
* Other:
 |
|  |

*Brainstorming Space: Feel free to write other notes here as you prepare to write your critique.*