Chapter Five
Writing Practical Arguments
Writing Practical Arguments

One of the main purposes of this unit is to show you how important the rhetorical concepts of ENGL 200 are for you in your daily and professional lives. You will be asked to complete three brief, practical documents, all of which will help you develop your ability to be persuasive, use audience-based reasoning, and be mindful of the major rhetorical appeals (ethos, logos, and pathos).

First, you will write a professional development document, one that argues why you are a good candidate for a scholarship, educational opportunity, internship, or job. Some of these genres may include the following:

- A formal statement for a scholarship application
- An application letter for an internship
- A personal statement for an application to a graduate or professional program

You will be able to demonstrate awareness of your readers’ needs and perspectives. When you’re applying for a job, for example, you won’t argue why the job will be a good opportunity for you—but why you will be an asset for that particular company. You will emphasize your ethos and produce a document that is free of errors.

Second, you will write a letter that delivers “bad news” to the readers: you will complain about a problem, poor service, or a bad product. You will need to use your rhetorical skills and strategies in order to refocus your irritation about the problem and to make yourself more persuasive for your readers. Your main focus will not be to express your frustration but to make sure that action is taken on your complaint.

In the final document, you will write a performance review: a memo to your instructor that evaluates the strengths of your two documents, describes their rhetorical situations, and evaluates and justifies the rhetorical strategies that you used. You’ll need to explain your use of at least two of the three major rhetorical appeals.

Objectives: By the end of this unit, you should be able to

- Consider the needs and perspectives of your intended readers
- Consider and implement different strategies for being persuasive
- Deliver “bad news” to a reader in a persuasive manner
- Evaluate your own performance and reflect on your rhetorical situation and use of rhetorical appeals
- Read a scholarship, internship, or job announcement rhetorically
Follow the formatting expectations of typical letter and memo documents
- Edit closely to enhance your ethos

Reader Focus: “You Attitude”

When focusing upon practical communication with real people, you will still be able to use the audience-based reasoning that you have practiced in other assignments and activities. Anytime that you consider your readers as real people and you can see the communication from their perspective, you are using a version of audience-based reasoning.

In practical terms, you can think of it as the difference between a “me attitude” and a “you attitude.” When a writer uses the “me attitude,” there is little recognition of the reader: the entire message is based upon the writer’s needs and perspective. When the writer uses a “you attitude,” they are now seeing the message from the readers’ needs and perspectives.

Here are three examples to demonstrate the unfortunate “me attitude.”

An example from a job application letter:

I’m interested in this position because it can be a good stepping stone for my future career.

Ask yourself: How is the reader connected to this statement? How will they feel to be considered a “stepping stone”? What is this statement suggesting about the value of the company?

An example from an email from a student to an instructor:

I’m going to be absent from class on Friday because something really important has come up. Please tell me what I’ve missed.

Again, what is this email signaling about the importance of the class and the role of the instructor?

A complaint email:

This is the second time that I’ve received the wrong part. You and your employees obviously don’t know what you are doing!

Obviously, this writer is irritated, as the complaint email shows. The reader will feel insulted—and therefore may not be interested in helping out the writer.
The “you attitude” strategies ask you to consider the message in terms of the reader. What benefits or connections can the writer make with the reader? How can they imagine themselves as the reader? Additionally, what common ground can they build between themselves and their readers?

Let’s look at three ways of revising those me-based messages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me Attitude</th>
<th>You Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m interested in this position because it can be a good stepping stone for my future career.</td>
<td>I’m interested in this position because I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to your company’s mission and practice what I’ve been learning in my Entrepreneurship courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m going to be absent from class on Friday because something really important has come up. Please tell me what I’ve missed.</td>
<td>Though I am sorry that I am going to have to miss Friday’s class, I have a conflict with an important career opportunity that I scheduled before the start of the semester. I will make sure to check with a classmate regarding the notes for class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is the second time you’ve sent me the wrong part. You and your employees obviously don’t know what you are doing!</td>
<td>Unfortunately, for the second consecutive time, I have received the wrong part. As I’m confident that you are interested in strong customer relationships, I have attached an image of the part for your reference. Please see my correspondence on February 2 if you need additional background.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Importantly, though the “You Attitude” versions are indeed politer, they also are more rhetorically sophisticated. In the complaint email, for example, the writer is still firm about the problem and does expect action. The student in the absence email also does not provide the instructor with an opportunity to insist on their attendance.

The “You Attitude” practices several of the same rhetorical moves as the rhetorical appeals of pathos and ethos. As far as pathos is concerned, writers using a you-attitude approach are more likely to consider the feelings and emotions of the reader. The writer is not looking to insult or pick fights with the reader. As for ethos, the you-attitude writer comes across as more fair, likeable, and relatable—someone whom readers may be more willing to empathize with and help out.

Here are two more examples of me-attitude messages. Consider ways to revise them and, at the same time, reflect on how these strategies relate to ethos and pathos:

- An inquiry email from a student to a government researcher: Can you please share with me all of your research on first-generation students? This information will really help me out in a paper I’m working on for my ENGL 100 class.
• An email to a professor: Can you please look at the description of a similar course to yours that I took at Kentucky State? I really think it meets the same objectives, and I’m trying to save as much money, time, and effort as possible this semester.

Professional Development Document

Your professional development document responds to a particular educational or professional opportunity, such as an internship. You’ll want to find an opportunity that has stated expectations for the candidates. You can consider, among other possibilities, the following:

• Scholarship announcements
• Applications to enter academic or professional programs
• Internship and job advertisements

In your professional development document, you should emphasize the ways you want to represent yourself to your readers: how do you want them to think about you? What are your key experiences, academic training, and skills that relate to the opportunity? Additionally, you’ll want to utilize the reader-based “you attitude,” in which you show your understanding of your audience’s position, needs, and interests. Make sure to underscore the ways in which you meet the opportunity’s required or desired skills and qualities.

How to Rhetorically Read Scholarship, Internship, or Job Announcements

When you are looking to apply to a job, internship, scholarship, or some other opportunity, make sure that you carefully read the announcement. You’ll want to read it rhetorically — meaning that the announcement will give you important clues for the type of candidate the organization envisions and privileges. If you have a good idea what these key traits are, you can then make sure you highlight them in your own application letter.

Let’s look at one internship example. Read it and mark the most important keywords or “buzz terms” that you see emphasized and repeated. Come up with 3-4 important keywords that you could then return to in your application letter.

IN-17010 Private Sector Engagement Intern, Communications

Job description
World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the world’s leading conservation organization, seeks a Communications Intern to support our Private Sector Engagement team at our Washington, DC office. In close collaboration with the Communications Manager, the intern will support the planning and implementation of communications activities (with a significant emphasis on
written communications) related to WWF’s corporate partnerships.

This internship provides an opportunity to learn more about environmental sustainability by working with the team that advances sustainable business practices with leading US corporations.

**Key Responsibilities**
Supports the Private Sector Engagement team through written communications and administrative tasks that contribute to the successful management of existing corporate partnerships and written materials that further business development.

- Participates in the development of key materials including blog posts, reports, PowerPoints, talking points, partnership activity summaries, and web copy related to WWF’s sustainability initiatives with corporate partners.
- Drafts, reviews, and updates select Private Sector Engagement communications materials including digital platforms and collateral (brochures, presentations, one-pagers).
- Provides administrative support to Supervisor including meeting scheduling, note-taking, and event planning
- Attends calls and meetings with WWF staff, stakeholders and corporate partners, summarizing key points and action items in collaboration with Supervisor.
- Provides additional communication and strategic support as needed.
- A bachelor’s degree in Communications, Marketing, Journalism or related discipline or equivalent work experience is required.
- Excellent writing and research skills, particularly with ability to write, deliver and evaluate communications for specific audiences and outcomes. Strong editing and proofreading skills.
- Ability to prioritize projects, manage details, and meet deadlines with limited supervision
- Excellent interpersonal skills with a willingness to work in a team environment across institutional and reporting lines to contribute toward larger goals and projects
- Basic understanding of HTML (for web updates) and working knowledge of MS Office tools
- Demonstrated history of leadership, initiative and accountability
- Experience in conservation or sustainability a plus

Did you write down “sustainable” or “sustainability”? This keyword appeared five times.

How about “communications”? This keyword appeared ten times.

“Partner” or “partnership”? This one appeared four times. You could also connect this keyword to “team environment,” “leadership,” and all of the activities that go on while working in teams.
Consequently, given our keyword analysis here, the successful candidate would need to emphasize any connections from their coursework or previous experiences and interests that:

- Show their interest in the environment and sustainability
- Demonstrate their ability to communicate with others
- Demonstrate their ability to work effectively in teams

Considering the internship announcement, what else might you consider to be important for an applicant?

**Finding Your Own Opportunities**

Start searching for local, college-level, campus-wide, state, regional, national, and international scholarships, opportunities, and internships. At K-State, the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry, the Career Center, the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy, and many others may be a good place to start.

Here are several local examples at K-State:

**Rebecca and Aaron Graham Scholarship for International Education and Understanding.** This scholarship offers student funding to travel abroad, “engaging in studies that are directly connected with people and cultures outside of the United States.” The scholarship asks for students to respond to five questions in “essay form”:

1. What are the dates of the international travel experience you are interested in?
2. Where will you be going? Give a brief description of your travel plans.
3. What are you hoping to learn/study during your international experience?
4. What are your estimated travel costs?
5. Are you receiving any other travel abroad grants or scholarships?

**Undergraduate Research Opportunity Application, College of Arts and Sciences.** This scholarship provides funding for undergraduates in Arts and Sciences and has two major prompts:

1. Brief project description (limited to 500 words):
2. Brief description of your interest in and qualifications for the project. Include how this experience will advance your future professional aspirations (limited to 500 words):

**Graduate Programs, M.S. Program in Horticulture Statement of Purpose.** Though graduate school may be far on the horizon for many of you, it doesn’t hurt to acquaint yourself with the
ways in which you have to represent yourself for graduate programs. This program describes their statement of purpose in this fashion: in 1-2 pages, indicate “your area(s) of research interest, your long-term goals, and why you are interested in graduate study at K-State.”

**Cargill Fellows, Staley School of Leadership Studies.** In addition to a $1,000 scholarship, this program offers internship and mentoring opportunities. Here are the essay questions that they ask candidates:

- Why are you interested in the Cargill Fellows program?
- Access Cargill's Twitter or LinkedIn Account and find an article they posted within the past 90 days. After reading the article, please comment on the following questions: What corporate values were evident in the article? What energizes you about the work Cargill does in the global food industry?

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**Invention Activity: Freewriting Questions**

While you are looking for some opportunities to write for, you can consider several of these following questions as ways to start writing about your academic and professional interests, your contributions, as well as your skills and experiences.

1. How can you differentiate yourself from other applicants? (Can you come up with three things that make you different from others who will be applying for the same opportunity?)
2. What key terms or attributes do you ascribe to yourself? Isolate two or three of them and develop them with explanation and specific examples.
3. What do you see yourself doing in five years? In ten years? What are your long-term goals?
4. What do you know about the departments, sponsoring groups, companies, or organizations that you are applying to? What connections can you make with them based upon your own experiences, academic training and interests, and skills?
5. List all of your academic accomplishments (classes, levels, projects, etc.), work or volunteer experiences, soft skills, technical and linguistic skills, and other related professional experiences. How can you turn these skills and experiences into possible opportunity ideas?
Style: Avoiding Overwriting

Practical arguments, in which you are communicating with and representing yourself professionally to readers who are in positions of authority, are challenging rhetorical situations. In an application letter, for example, you are attempting to enter a new community -- a new workplace or organization -- yet you, unsurprisingly, may not yet feel comfortable in this new role.

When you overwrite, a broad term for language choices that attempt to inflate your writerly ethos, you may end up doing exactly the opposite of what you are intended. When overwriting, you are attempting to sound intelligent and passionate, yet your readers may perceive you as coming across as naive or disingenuous. You may be overwriting to demonstrate that you belong in this new community -- yet your language choices, unfortunately, signal that you are an outsider. Moreover, overwriting is not allowing you to meet your rhetorical purposes. Readers will have to wade through generalizations, cliches, platitudes, and other forms of overwriting to get at your specific and concrete message and explanation.

Here are several examples of overwriting:

- I am writing this letter in my determined endeavor to enter on the path of this new journey of my life.
- In the procurement of more knowledge, I have taken several classes at Kansas State University.
- As you will perceive as you gaze upon my resume, it sparkles with relevant skills and experiences.
- My experiences reflect my deep and committed passion to the world of library science and all that it entails.
- If you decide to employ me, I promise to make sure to knock it out of the park every single day.

Similar to the "You Attitude," you should reread your writing carefully and look for these moments, in which you are trying hard to make a good impression on your readers and yet not expressing yourself usefully and meaningfully for your intended audience. Look for Hallmark Card language (e.g., "new journey"), cliches ("knock it out of the park"), and other examples of overwriting (e.g., "procurement of more knowledge" and "perceive as you gaze") and try to revise to make your message more concrete, specific, vivid, concise, and direct for your readers.

The following table will show some ways to revise several of the previous examples of overwriting:
I am writing this letter in my determined endeavor to enter on the path of this new journey of my life.

I am applying for this internship to contribute to your company and enhance my skills in customer relations.

In the procurement of more knowledge, I have taken several classes at Missouri University.

In order to enhance my ability to work with older patients, I have taken several courses at Missouri University related to gerontology, such as HDFS 7257, Aging in the Family Setting.

As you will perceive as you gaze upon my resume, it sparkles with relevant skills and experiences.

As my resume shows, my educational experiences and job skills make me an ideal candidate for this position.

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### Traditional Letter Formatting

A traditional business letter, one that was meant to be printed or typed out and mailed as a physical copy, has several formatting options. In the table below, you'll find tips on writing in a full-block letter style, in which all of the items are aligned along the left margin of the page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overwriting Examples</th>
<th>Revised Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am writing this letter in my determined endeavor to enter on the path of this new journey of my life.</td>
<td>I am applying for this internship to contribute to your company and enhance my skills in customer relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the procurement of more knowledge, I have taken several classes at Missouri University.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>As you will perceive as you gaze upon my resume, it sparkles with relevant skills and experiences.</td>
<td>As my resume shows, my educational experiences and job skills make me an ideal candidate for this position.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1234 St. Simeon Lane  
Manhattan, KS 66502 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 25, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Shawn Lu  
Operation Manager  
China Visa Solutions  
101 W. Grand Ave., Suite 200  
Chicago, IL 60654 |
| Subject: Concern about Delay in Visa Processing |

Include your return address at the top left. Alternatively, you could use letterhead.

Include a space and then write the date next. Spell out the month and use cardinal numbers (1, 2, 3, not 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.)

After a space, include the inside address. Try to find a contact person and the full address of the company or organization to which you are writing.

Include a concise yet rhetorically meaningful subject line that should help focus your readers. Some letter also include an RE: line, which tells readers the previous document that this correspondence is referring to:

**RE: Article in Asian Travel Magazine**

**RE: Your April 13, 2020 Inquiry**
Dear Mr. Lu:

Include the salutation; to be formal, include the colon after the name; if you are unsure about the reader's title (Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.), then write out the full name.

If you do not have specific contact information, you can use a generic job title for the reader, such as "Dear Property Manager" or "Dear Hiring Committee." Alternatively, you can use an ATTN: line to direct attention to where your letter should be directed within the organization:

ATTN: Customer Service Department

Introduction

After the traditional letter header information, you can then include the introduction, body paragraph(s), and conclusion. Make sure to use paragraphs to help focus your readers on these different rhetorical "chunks" of the letter. Even in a three-paragraph letter, you are doing different type of rhetorical work in the introduction, the body paragraphs, and the conclusion.

Body Paragraph(s)

Conclusion

Include your closing and your name; leave 2-3 spaces if you are going to be signing this letter. Below the signature line, you can also indicate items that you have included:

Sincerely,

encl.: resume

Writer's Name

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**Professional Development Evaluation Criteria**

Here are the main criteria on which your professional development document will be evaluated:

**Persuasiveness & Purpose:** You have used the “You Attitude” and the rhetorical appeals to represent yourself successfully for an educational or professional audience. You have met your application purpose.

**Development:** You have focused your readers on your background, including your previous academic professional experiences, your coursework, and your skills; you have also explained how these are relevant. You satisfy your readers with your level of specificity.
**Organization:** You guide your readers skillfully through the professional development document, using topic sentences, readerly cues, and other typical ways of organizing a brief document. You use an introduction, body paragraph(s), and a conclusion to help focus your readers.

**Style & Tone:** Your language and other rhetorical decisions showcase your credibility and enhance your professionalism. Your writing is concrete, specific, vivid, and active; you avoid cliches, platitudes, and other forms of overwriting.

**Accuracy & Formatting:** You meet the formatting expectations of your readers and the business letter genre, and you have proofread closely to enhance your credibility.

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## Complaint Letter

Unlike the first professional document, in your complaint letter you will be communicating “bad news,” yet you will be doing so in a persuasive manner. You will write a letter that describes a problem you have encountered with a product or service and asks for some action from the reader. Use this opportunity to use your “you attitude” approach, express your concerns, and build goodwill with your reader. Because of the formal expectations of this rhetorical situation, you will be asked to complete this assignment as a business letter.

One challenge you may have is finding the appropriate person to write to. Do not use, “To Whom It May Concern,” as that is a good way to ensure that your letter will not be read. Look up the company or organization with whom you have the concern and try to figure out who is involved in dealing with customers or the public. You might want to use an ATTN: (for ATTENTION) and SUBJECT: line to make sure that your letter is routed to the appropriate person or department.

SUBJECT: Yahoo Sports Internet Package No Longer Valid

ATTN: Yahoo Customer Care

### Organization

Use this following outline as a way to help you get started on your complaint letter:

- **Problem Description**
  - Describe the product or service that you are writing about to complain; be concise yet complete and specific
  - Provide enough background so the reader understands your problem
Consider your tone carefully, as you don’t want to appear that you are attacking your readers.

**Negative Consequences of Problem**
- State why the problem was a problem—how did it inconvenience you? What were some negative consequences because of the problem?

**Action**
- State what you want to be done to address the complaint
- Provide a timeline or ask the reader to act promptly
- Continue to build a rapport with your readers and move toward a common goal

**Conclusion**
- Leave your readers with a good impression and your willingness to work with them

**Activity: Detecting Rhetorical Moves in a Complaint Letter**

Given your knowledge of the rhetorical situation of the complaint letter and the possible organizational strategies, take a look at the example complaint letter below. Identify at least three rhetorical “moves” that the writer is making in this letter in order to persuade the reader to act.

309 Cowan Road
Edinburgh EH11 1RH
UNITED KINGDOM

December 23, 2019

Moore Clements, Customer Relationship Center
HSBC Bank USA
PO Box 2013
Buffalo, NY 14240

SUBJECT: INQUIRY ABOUT ACCOUNT #XXXX8882

Dear Ms. Clements:

My wife and I opened up an HSBC account (#XXXX8882) in June, and we were particularly attracted by the ease of making international money transfers as we were...
going to be living in the United Kingdom for the next 12 months. Unfortunately, despite the fact that we held a sufficient balance and were active users, our account was summarily closed by HSBC this month.

To date, we have yet to receive official notification of the closing of our account, nor do we have any idea as to the status of the balance that was in the account. Additionally, two direct deposits of $750 each were made on December 20; at this time, we have no idea what has happened to those deposits. Altogether, I estimate that our closing balance was approximately $4500.

Within one week of receipt of this letter, can you please email me (drapaulf@gmail.com) or mail me at my temporary UK address the following:

- The official notification that the #XXXX8882 account has been closed.
- A copy of the closing balance of the account.
- An explanation for how the remaining balance, including the December 20 direct deposits, will be distributed to us.

After conducting some Internet research, I have come to understand that the closing of accounts and, more importantly, the poor communication between HSBC and the customers of these closed accounts are problems that are plaguing the reputation of HSBC. I am confident that you are concerned about the poor customer relationship that HSBC has built with me and others and will expedite my inquiry immediately.

Regards,

Dr. Alexander Paul

Consider these two questions:

- What “you attitude” strategies do you see at play in this complaint letter?
- Imagine that you are the reader. What image of the writer do you see? Have they built a successful enough relationship with you to encourage your sympathy and action?

For this following example, what revision suggestions would you have for the writer who wrote this complaint email:

To: Riley County Treasurer
From: Marsha Riley
Subject: Late Property Taxes!!!
I couldn’t believe it when I received a late notice from you about my property tax! And, on top of that, you expect me to pay $45 in interest payments, which to me is nothing but a rip off.

First of all, I have never had any notice about the property taxes and the payment deadlines. I am in the process of changing my mortgage account with my bank, and they have paid it the past five years as part of my escrow account.

This is clearly not my fault, and I certainly do not want to pay the additional payment. I expect you to look into this as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Marsha

Invention Activity: Finding a Complaint Rhetorical Situation

Think back to a recent problem that you encountered with

- An item that you bought online that you were disappointed with
- An item that was damaged
- A piece of technology that was not working correctly
- Service at a restaurant, in a company, or online
- An experience on campus (advising, academics, accessibility, etc.)
- An overcharge

Make sure that the problem is significant enough to warrant a formal complaint letter. List several possibilities and discuss them with a couple of classmates.

Activity: Applying Criteria to a Complaint Letter

Use the criteria above to examine the following complaint letter. How successfully has the writer met the criteria?
841 Houston St.
Manhattan, KS 66502

March 12, 2019

Mr. John Crown
Regional Sales Representative, Tek Supply
1440 Field of Dreams Way
Dyersville, IA 52040

Dear Mr. Crown:

I have been a customer of Tek Supply for ten years and have always been pleased with your products and customer service. In July of 2018, I ordered 10 twin-wall polycarbonate sheets, Stock # 104620C, at a cost of $54.63 each, for a total of $546.30. I installed these as walls for a small greenhouse in my backyard.

In February of 2019, I noticed that the sheets were beginning to yellow. Then, after a rainstorm on March 10, 2019, I saw that the rain had punched small holes in the sheets, causing rain to leak inside the greenhouse. Closer inspection showed that the sheets in fact had become brittle. I am enclosing two photos showing the damage: one showing the holes in the greenhouse walls, and the other a closeup showing the brittleness of a broken piece of a sheet.

These polycarbonate sheets have a 10-year warranty. I believe these sheets were probably from a defective batch. I would like for you to send me replacements for these 10 sheets. I can send you some pieces of the sheets from my greenhouse, if that would help your customer service department to determine the underlying cause of this damage. If indeed an entire batch of sheets were defective, you may be hearing from other customers who may experience the same deterioration of these sheets soon.

I would appreciate receiving the replacement sheets as soon as possible, since the spring growing season will be upon us very soon and we will want to use the greenhouse. My telephone number is 785-211-0060, and my customer number at Tek Supply is 021051.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Amanda Renier
Complaint Letter Evaluation Criteria

You can evaluate your own complaint letters and those of your classmates by using the following criteria:

**Persuasiveness**

- To what degree have you used rhetorical strategies to appeal to your audience in order to induce cooperation and maintain a strong relationship?
- Have you used “you attitude” strategies to reach your readers despite the “bad news” of this rhetorical situation?

**Purpose**

- Does your reader understand why you are writing to them? Have you provided enough information and context? Does your purpose really require the formality of a letter?

**Development**

- Have you included the appropriate amount of detail (evidence, background, facts, etc.) to meet your purpose and to enable your audience to decide on your case?
- Have you sufficiently supported why the problem was a significant inconvenience for you?

**Organization**

- Have you guided your readers smoothly through the basic steps of the complaint letter by using transitions, reader cues, and a logical progression? Have you used the different sections and paragraphs of the complaint letter to guide your readers?

**Accuracy & Formatting**

- Have you enhanced your ethos by closely proofreading your letter?
- Have you met the formatting expectations of a formal business letter?
Performance Review

The performance review is a formal and professional document that asks writers to describe their accomplishments and evaluate them. In this case, you will be asked to write about your performance on the two documents that you wrote in this chapter; importantly, you will be asked to evaluate them according to the three major rhetorical appeals: ethos, logos, and pathos.

Write your performance review as a memo to your instructor, bearing in mind the following formatting expectations:

- Include the typical memo header elements (To:, From:, Date:, Subject:)
- Make your subject line specific and focused on your rhetorical purpose
- Use single-spacing with a space between paragraphs
- Use headings to help focus your readers on the different major chunks of the memo
- Keep your memo under two pages

Organization

As you write your memo, consider this following organizational strategy:

- Introduction
  - Introduce your two documents to your instructor
  - Announce the purpose or goal of this memo (e.g., what will you be doing in this memo—and why?)
  - State an argument about your performance and/or about yourself as a writer and student of rhetoric: how well do you believe you used the rhetorical appeals to persuade the readers of the two documents? what do these two documents show about you as a student and writer?

- Body
  - Describe the rhetorical situations of the two documents, including
    - Your rhetorical goals in the two documents
    - Your messages
    - Your genres
    - Your intended audiences
    - The rhetorical challenges of these audiences and rhetorical situations
Chapter 5 Writing Practical Arguments

Designing Arguments

- Analyze the success (or, any possible weaknesses) of your documents in how they met your rhetorical goals and were persuasive for your intended readers
  - Refer to your two documents and bring in examples
  - Focus on ethos, logos, and pathos
  - Explain how your documents make good (or bad) ethos-, logos-, or pathos-based appeals
  - Explain, if necessary, what you would do differently if you had more time

- Conclusion
  - Leave a strong image of yourself (ethos) with your instructor
  - Emphasize your rhetorical strengths

Invention Activity: Linking Examples to Rhetorical Appeals

As you begin to examine the two documents that make up your performance review, consider this three-part process:

- Create a chart with three columns for the different rhetorical appeals: ethos, logos, and pathos
- For each column, list as many specific examples from your two documents as possible
- Create statements that connect the specific examples to the rhetorical appeals: given your intended audience and the rhetorical situations of these documents, why are these good examples of ethos, logos, and pathos?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethos</th>
<th>Logos</th>
<th>Pathos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask yourself: In my two documents, how am I making myself more credible, fair, and trustworthy for my readers? In what ways do my</td>
<td>Ask yourself: How clear have I made my purpose, goals, and main message to two my readers? How reasonable are my main points? Have I</td>
<td>Ask yourself: When appropriate, do I appeal to the emotions of my audience and their feelings about themselves and their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Here is the start of a student example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethos</th>
<th>Logos</th>
<th>Pathos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I show how I have been an active participant in K-States Park Management program (esp. in the collaborative projects)</td>
<td>I’ve clearly connected my main goal for entering the Park Management Program with my previous experiences (summer camp counselor)</td>
<td>I tell a story from my childhood that relates to my overall goal of entering the Park Management Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the complaint letter, I talk about how I had used the All Ready HVAC/Plumbing company before.</td>
<td>I have shown how the summer camp counseling position is similar to the mission of the Park Management Program</td>
<td>In the complaint letter, I assure my readers that my previous All Ready HVAC/Plumbing experiences have been good ones; I indicate that I would be happy to use them again in the future and recommend them to my friends and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have indicated the academic classwork that connects to this program (esp. my courses in biology)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the complaint letter, I provided the specifics about the problem, the costs ($450), and the fact that a new gas valve for the wall heater was not actually necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In your memo, you could also consider changes you would make to your documents: If you had additional time, or were to complete the revisions for these two documents, what would you do differently—and why? Which of the rhetorical appeals would you be able to enhance—and how?
Typical Memo Format

The following table details the formatting expectations for the professional memo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memorandum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TO: Katherine Schlagel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FROM: Student's Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE: December 22, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT: Performance Review of Practical Arguments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this memo, I...

Body Section Header #1

Body Section Header #2

Conclusion

Typically, memos announce what they are at the top: Memo or Memorandum.

Include the memo header items. For the date, spell out the month and include the cardinal number of the date.

Make your subject line both concise yet useful and meaningful for your reader. Treat it like a title and capitalize the initial letters of all major words.

Leave a space and then begin your memo. After your introduction, you can use descriptive headings to help break up your points and focus your reader on the different sections. Here are two examples for this particular performance review assignment:

Rhetorical Strategies in Application Letter

Rhetorical Strategies in Complaint Letter

Performance Review Evaluation Criteria

You can use the following criteria and questions to evaluate your own performance review as well as those of your classmates.

Purpose

- Have you evaluated your performance on the practical arguments, including your rhetorical strengths and weaknesses?
- Have you showcased a "big picture" claim about yourself as a writer and as a student of rhetoric, given your practical arguments?
- Have you demonstrated your knowledge of and comfort with the rhetorical appeals and other strategies and concepts?
Chapter 5 Writing Practical Arguments

Designing Arguments

Development

- Do you summarize the rhetorical situations of the practical arguments?
- Do you identify and use specifics from your practical arguments?
- Do you match these specifics with the the appeals or rhetorical concepts that you are using?
- Do you explain why your language and rhetorical choices have been effective (or not) for your intended audiences?
- If necessary, have you explained what you would do differently if you had more time and an opportunity to revise?

Organization

- Do you focus readers by including an introduction, body paragraph(s), and a conclusion?
- Do you navigate for your readers what appeals or rhetorical concepts you are using?
- Do you use topic sentences, readerly cues, transitions, and other strategies to guide your readers?

Style & Tone

- Do you maintain a confident, active, and professional style and tone with your intended reader?

Accuracy & Formatting

- Do you meet the expectations of the memo genre?
- Have you carefully proofread to enhance your credibility?
Student Example

Liz Oltjen wrote these practical arguments in Phillip Marzluf’s online ENGL 200 class.

Application Letter

211 Nacon Lane
Manhattan, KS 66502

November 10, 2020

UMKC Office of Admissions
5000 Holmes St
Kansas City, MO 64110

SUBJECT: DDS Reserved Admission Program Application

Dear UMKC Admissions Coordinator:

I am writing to express my strong interest in your Reserved Admissions Program for pre-dental undergraduate students. It is with eager desire that I hope to navigate my dental journey through such a qualified and well-respected institution. I have extensive experience working as a sterilization technician in oral surgery and orthodontics, and I am confident that I am ready to take the next step in furthering my knowledge and skill set in the world of dentistry.

I believe I am a strong candidate because I have spent the past few years committed to the development of my understanding of dentistry, both through shadowing and working for professionals in different areas of the dental field including: general dentistry, pediatric dentistry, orthodontics, and oral surgery. From my experiences in these offices, I’ve had the privilege of learning and furthering my insight on the responsibilities of a dentist, and I’m certain that I have the skills necessary to eventually take on this role.
Aside from my dedication to hands-on experience, I have held myself to strong academic standards as evidenced by my completion of the required 15 hours per semester and 4.0 GPA. I understand that intellectual growth is of high priority in your program, and I feel fully prepared to meet its challenging expectations. Outside of studying, I’ve devoted much of my time to community service working with Kansas State’s special needs cheerleading team, serving as Director of Community Service for my sorority, and volunteering for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. I am passionate about giving back to my community, and I hope to one day be able to do this through dentistry.

Given my qualifications, I feel strongly that I am not only the right fit for UMKC but would excel in your program. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration, and I hope to have the opportunity to speak with you directly regarding my application.

Sincerely,

Liz Oltjen

Complaint Letter

211 Nacon Lane
Manhattan, KS 66502

November 10, 2020

Chester E. Peters Recreation Complex
1831 Olympic Street
Manhattan, KS 66506

SUBJECT: Complaint About Mask Policy

Dear Kansas State University Recreational Services:

The purpose of this letter is to address the decision that, in response to COVID-19, masks be worn at all times inside the Recreation Complex. I understand that minimizing public exposure to coronavirus is your top priority, and I cannot stress enough how much I appreciate your dedication to the safety of all who utilize your facility. However, when it comes to working out, there are multiple factors to consider when determining the safest course of action. Based on current research, it is arguably more unsafe to wear a mask while working out in some instances, specifically those involving high intensity cardio.

First, as someone who uses the Rec on a daily basis, I feel very strongly that we take expert advice into consideration when creating policies around safety due to the serious nature of this issue. The World Health Organization argues against wearing masks during exercise, especially in...
cases of high-intensity cardio; this is due to the fact that masks can make breathing more difficult while working out. In addition, side effects such as dizziness and light-headedness are also increased, putting some people at higher risk for heart attack and other serious medical conditions.

Second, the Center for Disease Control recommends wearing a mask when social distancing cannot be maintained. Yet, as you know, the cardio equipment in the Rec has been rearranged to meet social distancing requirements. Because of this, I propose that students only be required to wear a mask when not using one of the aforementioned machines, as they would still be in compliance with the CDC’s recommended social distancing guidelines.

Thank you for hearing my concern, and I appreciate your thoughtful consideration in reevaluating whether your current mask policy is the best option concerning students’ health.

Sincerely,

Liz Oltjen

Performance Review

Memorandum

TO: Phillip Marzluf
FROM: Liz R. Oltjen
DATE: November 22, 2020
SUBJECT: Performance Review of Application Letter and Complaint Letter

For our final task in ENGL 200, we were assigned to review our growth in this class by showcasing our newfound knowledge and strengths in both an application and complaint argument. As a writer and as a student, I would first like to express sincere gratitude for the opportunity to reflect on my learning through such an unprecedented semester in this way. Although I wasn’t expecting my composition skills to both develop and flourish in an online environment, I couldn’t have been more wrong, and I feel that my two letters are strong evidence of such.

At the beginning of this semester, I couldn’t provide a solid definition of ethos, logos, and pathos; I’d heard them in the past, but my ability to apply them was lacking. This may come as a surprise considering my current writing, as I make strong appeals to each rhetorical element in both letters, which are equally effective in working together to persuade my intended audiences. Thus, as my predominant area of growth, I argue that my usage of rhetorical strategies has not only improved significantly over the course of this class but become very strong.
First, I would like to begin by focusing on how I incorporated ethos into my work, establishing my credibility as an author. Ethos was a critical component in both my application and complaint letter, as it was pivotal in each case that my audience take me seriously. For instance, when writing to the UMKC DDS reserved admissions coordinator, I purposely stress my “extensive experience” shadowing and working in the dental field; in doing so, I not only prove my commitment, but portray myself as an equipped candidate. Later on, I reference, “... my completion of the required 15 hours per semester and 4.0 GPA,” further displaying my familiarity and fulfillment of their core program requirements, again validating my credibility.

In my complaint letter, I took a different approach in terms of ethical appeals. Because I’m not a COVID-19 expert, I chose not to focus on my own knowledge of the virus itself; instead, I felt it would be more effective to establish why wearing a mask during high intensity exercise is relevant to me, saying, “As someone who uses the Rec on a daily basis...” Along with this, I work to earn my audience’s respect by acknowledging the “serious nature of this issue” and concern for “the safest course of action.” Through the aforementioned appeals in both letters, I am confident that my understanding of ethos is both clear and telling of my progress in ENGL 200.

Next, I feel it is important to review my use of logos in each practical argument, playing on the logical assumptions of my audience as a mechanism to persuade. For example, right off the bat in the introduction of my application letter, I intentionally refer to UMKC as, “such a well-respected and qualified institution,” alluding to the research I’ve done on the program’s credentials. I further build on this appeal in the body of my writing by acknowledging UMKC’s widely known “challenging expectations.” Yet, I don’t stop at simply meeting the logical assumptions of my audience; I meet my own as well. I say, “I understand that intellectual growth is of high priority in your program,” using my own rational thinking as another way of painting myself as a sensible applicant.

Logos, however, is more often used in the form of hard evidence and statistics -- and while I didn’t feel this type of logical appeal was fitting in my application letter, it worked very effectively in my complaint scenario. I would even argue that the most persuasive aspect of my complaint letter is through my purposeful presentation of “expert advice,” quoting both the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control. By employing facts “based on current research,” I guide my audience to the logical assumption that because the cardio equipment has already been properly socially distanced, wearing a mask while using them isn’t necessary. Further, I don’t present this information as my own opinion, but as a matter of fact.

The last rhetorical appeal I want to consider in both of my letters is that of pathos, analyzing how I evoke emotion from my intended audiences. In my application letter, I do this primarily through eloquent word choice, using phrases such as “strong interest... eager desire... passionate...dedication...” -- the list goes on. I do this so that the UMKC admissions coordinator gets a strong feeling of how important the opportunity is to me. I also appeal to selflessness, citing my love for community service and helping others. By incorporating this pathetic component, I further my audience’s respect for me not only as a candidate, but a person as well.
The main way in which I appeal to pathos in my complaint letter is through my expression of gratitude for the Rec’s staff, primarily for being “dedicated to safety.” As in my application letter, I am very careful with word choice, characterizing my audience as caring individuals who only want the “best option concerning students’ health,” rather than people who wander around aimlessly at work enforcing a pointless policy. Going about the former uses the “You” attitude, which I’ve learned is a much more effective persuasive strategy.

Lastly, in both my application and complaint letter conclusions, I demonstrate my genuine nature by thanking my readers for their “thoughtful consideration.” In both cases, I keep a calm and respectful tone, as I understand the importance of leaving a positive final impression on my readers.

That said, I would like to do the same for this assignment; thank you, Dr. Marzluf, for guiding my writing this semester. Your commitment to students’ success is evident, and I appreciate the work you’ve put in to making online learning feel as close to normal as possible. I hope you enjoy your time off, and I wish you all the best.

**Conclusion: Summary of Key Rhetorical Concepts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bad News: Arguments in which the audience will perceive the message and purpose as negative.</th>
<th>Good News: Arguments that imply positive audiences, purposes, and messages.</th>
<th>Goodwill: A rhetorical quality in which writers attempt to build productive relationships with their readers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overwriting: A quality of writing in which the writer is trying too hard to impress their readers.</td>
<td>Practical Arguments: Arguments that writers make to persuade more local and specific audiences for personal purposes.</td>
<td>You Attitude: A writing style in which the writer takes on the perspective of their readers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>