



CRITICAL

WRITING SKILLS

(1) ESSAY BASICS:

o Title

- topic + main idea

o Thesis

- topic + main idea + support

o Support

- order, tone, relevance, accuracy

o Conclusion

- reiteration, justification,
- conclusions, recommendations

(2) TOULMIN METHOD:

o Claims

- evaluate YOUR thesis, main point

o Grounds

- evaluate support, proof

o Warrants

- determine justification, So What?!
- after supporting your claims with ample, accurate, and relevant evidence, you should take your ideas to the next level
 - o you should make recommendations and/or suggestions—
 - o fodder for the next essay
 - more than just griping

(3) PERSUASIVE APPEALS:

o Logos

- *logical* appeals:
- reasons, stats, facts, figures, examples

o Pathos

- *emotional* appeals:
- eye-witness accounts, anecdotes, pleas, graphics

o Ethos

- *ethical* appeals:
- credibility; full, fair, objective treatment; credentials
- Rogerian Method

(4) “ANALYZE”:

o Questions (?)

- ask questions raised by the essay
- (reader=skeptical of a point/fact) ... & fix

o Insights (!)

- note great lines, insightful remarks,

o Assumptions

- note where you assume rather than state facts ... & fix
- (groundless claims)

o Overgeneralizations (?!)

- note where you rely on stereotypes and overgeneralizations, oversimplifications ... & fix

(5) AUTHORITIES and STATISTICS:

o Authorities

- note the source's credentials;
- beware of bias related to credentials

o Stats

- beware of too many, misleading
- you should
 - qualify; contextualize
 - explain, interpret, infer

(6) SUBTEXT:

- o “Psychology of Argument” (p.200)
- o note the your
 - suggested/IMPLIED/inferred
 - o values, attitudes, beliefs
- o read between the lines

(7) OUTLINE, SUMMARIZE, REPORT:

o Outline

- remain objective, paraphrase or directly quote, create skeletal view of argument in order

o Summary

- remain objective; give author, title, date, thesis; paraphrase or directly quote; follow author's organization of main reasons & examples; write a 1-paragraph detailed compression of the original

o Report

- Outline + Summary + Essay Basics/Toulmin Method + "analyze"

(8) ROGERIAN METHOD:

- o give a full, fair, objective presentation of material
- o present both sides of the issue (if not more)
- o present the Other Side fully, fairly, objectively

(9) LOGICAL FALLACIES:

- o Analyze your
 - Induction and Deduction
- o Determine if claims are based on
 - facts vs. implications, assumptions, inferences
- o Note your use of
 - insufficient, irrelevant, ambiguous evidence
 - and faulty reasoning

(10) DOCUMENTATION:

- o Do you cite sources for her/his claims and grounds?
- o Are there parenthetical citations?
- o Are there footnotes or endnotes?
- o Is there a Works Cited, Works Consulted, or Bibliography page?
- o Are the sources in proper MLA format?
- o Are the sources relevant, impartial, balanced, professional, and scholarly?
- o Is there a list of references or works for further reading?
- o Is there any evidence of plagiarism, substandard research, or lazy documentation?
- o Do you correctly paraphrase and summarize borrowed information?
- o Do you directly quote sources in a proper manner?