Textual Analysis Quick Guide
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The purpose of *textual analysis* is to describe the content, structure, and functions of the messages contained in texts.

Textual analysis may involve: consideration of audience; attention to the visual, written and verbal language; formatting and design elements; assessing the text for what it is attempting to do; and your response.

Below is a quick guide for helping you analyze text based on content and functions of the messages contained in the text:

**Rhetorical Triangle** (See Responding Using the Rhetorical Situation)

- Ethos: How does the author’s credibility affect what is being said?
- Logos: What evidence does the text provide?
- Pathos: How does the text appeal to emotional responses?
- Does the text have a balanced use of ethos, pathos, logos, or is one appeal emphasized? Why would that appeal be emphasized?

**Audience**

- *Who* is the author/publisher targeting?
  - Example: For a cereal advertisement, is the cereal company targeting the parents who buy the cereal or the children who consume it?

**Visual, Written, and Verbal Language**

- *How* is your source targeting a specific audience?
  - Visual Example: If the cereal ad is full of bright colors with cartoon characters, who is the target audience? – children
  - Written Example: Words on a cereal box that is targeting children will be simple and understandable.
- Ask yourself: How are those words presented? Who do those words speak to?
- Verbal Language Example: When listening to a music video, how is the artist using her/his voice? Is the *delivery* of the lyrics in contrast to the *meaning* of the lyrics?
Providing Textual Evidence

- This is where you provide evidence of your claim about the text; *not* discuss what evidence the text/author is providing.
  - Example: If your claim is that the cartooning on the cereal is targeting children, provide details from the ad that support this? What does the cartoon look like? How does that specific cartoon speak to children rather than adults?
  - Example: If the text brings in a famous quote that helps drive home a point, how is the quote poignant?
    - Don’t forget to use proper quotation marks, and always cite your source (even when paraphrasing).
- When considering verbal text, does the author’s word choice make the claim successful for the intended audience?

Speak to the Bigger Picture

- How does this fit into the bigger picture in terms of cultural framework?
- Example: If you are talking about cereal ads marketing to children, what does that say about American marketing (or any other bigger concept)?