Textual analysis is a method of studying a text in order to understand the author's deliberate meaning.

This may sound grandiose but think of it this way: when you analyze part of a novel and write your conclusions, you are writing and explaining your understanding of it. You should always aim to help others to understand the meanings or possible meanings of the text.

To accomplish this goal, you can use textual analysis to identify the who, what, when, where, why, and how of a text by asking the following questions:

➢ **Who wrote it and for whom?** Consider the author and audience.
➢ **What was written?** Consider what type of text you are analyzing, e.g., is it an informative newspaper article or a speech?
➢ **When was it written and read?** Consider the historical context.
➢ **Where was it written and read?** Consider the place and culture in which the text was written.
➢ **Why was it written and read?** Consider the author's intention behind writing the text.
➢ **How was it written?** Consider the purpose of a text. Often, a textual analysis of "how" will analyze the text's structure, central idea, characters, setting, vocabulary, rhetoric, and citations.

Remember:

The question **"how?"** is often the starting point for writing a literary analysis. While the other five modalities focus more on objective history, the how begins to explore a more tailored view of the text, such as the word choice of the text itself, which is largely interpreted by the reader. A more historical or scientific essay will often focus more on the first five modalities to support its points.

Types of Textual Analysis

➢ A textual analysis often comes in the form of an essay with a thesis, but textual analysis can also be found anywhere. If at any point you analyze the who, what, when, where, why, and how of a text, it is a textual analysis. As such, a textual analysis essay is made up of a variety of interlinking analyses.

Remember:

Thesis or thesis statement: is a sentence that sums up the central point of your paper or essay. A thesis statement clearly identifies the topic being discussed, includes the points discussed in the paper, and is written for a specific audience. Your thesis statement belongs at the end of your first paragraph, also known as your introduction.

> A textual analysis may also come in the form of a history or a deconstruction.

A history analysis is the explanation and analysis of a single text, with a focus on its time.

A deconstruction analysis is the breakdown of a scene, rhetorical device, character, or any other piece of a text into its constituents (i.e., the parts that make it up). A deconstruction is focused on the parts of the whole.

In short, anything that aims to classify or decode a text is a piece of textual analysis.

Structure of a Textual Analysis Essay

When writing a textual analysis essay, keep these four things in mind:

> summary and context
> statement of intent
> Evidence
> the bigger picture.

1) Summary and Context: textual analysis will summarize and contextualize the text, usually in or near the introduction. A textual analysis might introduce the temporal, cultural, or geographical context of the text. Depending on your audience, you might also include a summary of the text itself in order to hit their memory and remind them of the critical details you will be discussing.

2) Statement of Intent: textual analysis will include some sort of statement of intent. If the analyst is focusing on the history of the text, they might include why the contents of the text are important to preserve. In the case of an essay, the analyst will include a thesis statement explaining why the text should be interpreted a certain way.

3) Evidence: textual analysis will have some form of evidence. If the analyst is focusing on the history of a text, the analyst will frequently cite the historical text or related histories. In a deconstruction of a text, the analyst will repeatedly cite the focal text. In an essay, the analyst will use evidence from the text to support a thesis.

4) The Bigger Picture: textual analysis will speak to the bigger picture, usually in the conclusion. Without generalizing or making sweeping conclusions about "society" or "the world," be sure to cover the text's future or continuing relevance. Include this in your conclusion, alongside other avenues for future analysis. Remember: the bulk of your essay is meant to contribute to the conversation on the text.

How to Write a Textual Analysis Essay

> Is the text you are analyzing nonfiction or fiction?

Nonfiction is any written work that is about facts and true events.
Examples of nonfiction include memoirs, diaries, autobiographies and biographies, scientific papers, news articles, journals, and magazines.

Fiction is any written work invented by someone's imagination. Any work that includes an imagined reality is a work of fiction, including any work that includes imaginative elements such as historical fiction.

examples include novels, novellas, short stories, fables and myths, epic poems and sagas, and many screenplays and scripts.

Once you know whether the written work is fiction or nonfiction, move on to your analysis.

How to Analyze Nonfiction

When analyzing nonfiction, you are more likely to focus on the who, what, when, where, and why of a text. This is because nonfiction deals with the realities of the world.

Your analysis of nonfiction could be very simple and draw close comparisons to an explanation. However, if you are writing an essay, your analysis will be more complicated because you will be using objective realities, facts, and evidence to support a conclusion.

When analyzing nonfiction, you will also analyze the author's rhetoric to explore how.

Remember:

Rhetoric: is the convincing way an author makes a point. It can also be described as a rhetorical mode. It is an academic discipline within the humanities, rhetoric aims to study the techniques that speakers or writers use to inform, persuade, and motivate their audiences.

Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. Aristotle also identified three persuasive audience appeals: logos, pathos, and ethos.

How to Analyze Fiction

When analyzing fiction, you are more likely to focus on how a text conveys an idea. This is because a writer has invented all aspects of the story. The story the author has written has its own answers to the questions "who?" (the characters), "what?" (the story), "when?" (the period), "where?" (the setting), "why?" (the themes), and "how?" (the narrator).

So, when you unpack the how of a piece of fiction, you are unpacking an entire fictional reality as well. Every aspect of this reality has been constructed by the author using words. This leaves a lot for you to analyze, including the author's relationship between their own reality and their fictional reality. Textual analysis is really like exploring an all-new world.

When analyzing fiction, you should analyze the author's rhetoric and whether the author's choice of rhetorical modes is effective. Some examples of rhetoric that a fiction author might employ are themes, mood, descriptions, specialized word choice, syntax, and narration.

Rhetoric is:

➢ an academic discipline within the humanities, rhetoric aims to study the techniques that speakers or writers use to inform, persuade, and motivate their audiences.
➢ the study of the technique of using language to convince.
➢ the art of using speech or writing to persuade, influence, or please.
➢ use of ornamentation in spoken or written discourse.
  • Ornamentation: the act of adding extraneous decorations to beautify something.
➢ the art of using words effectively in speaking or writing. The art of speech, prose and verse.
➢ use of eloquence; language that is showy and elaborate.
  • eloquence: the quality of delivering clear, elaborated and strong messages.

Rhetorical (stylistic) devices

Rhetoric is the name for the study of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion. Students need to know the specific labels for certain writing techniques in order to use them effectively, it is sometimes helpful to have a handy catalog for the ways in which words and ideas are arranged. This can help to discuss and isolate ideas. Many of these rhetorical (stylistic) devices come from Greek. They include:

1) **Alliteration:** the repetition of usually initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables.
   ex: wild and woolly, threatening throngs
2) **Anacoluthia:** the midway interruption of one grammatical sequence and shift to another within a single sentence. The 2 pieces of the sentence do not fit together. Some writers use it to surprise or confuse their readers. The author begins a sentence in a way that implies a certain logical resolution and then ends it differently. The deliberate failure to complete a sentence according to the structural plan it was started and concluding it differently than expected.
   ex: We should get the furniture------ for God's sake darling stop chewing so loudly.
3) **Anadiplosis:** is the repetition of the last word of a preceding clause. The word is used at the end of a sentence and then used again at the beginning of the next sentence
   ex: Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your values, your values become your destiny.
4) **Analepsis:** a narrative technique which consists of relating some events of a story at a point in the narrative after later story-events have already been recounted (literary flashback).
5) **Anaphora:** Repetition of a word or expression at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, sentences, or verses for rhetorical or poetic effect.
   ex: We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this man!
6) **Antanaclasis:** the repetition of a word within a phrase or sentence in which the second occurrence utilizes a different and sometimes contrary meaning from the first.

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ex: We must all hang together or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.

7) **Antiphrasis:** The usually ironic or humorous use of words in senses opposite to the generally accepted meanings.

ex: This giant of 3 feet 4 inches.

8) **Apophasis:** the speaker describes what he will not say, and mentions it, or at least a bit of it.

ex: I say nothing of your midnight sins, I pass over your uncontrolled and impolite conduct.

9) **Aporia:** An expression of deliberation with oneself regarding uncertainty or doubt as to how to proceed. especially in a text's meaning; a logical impasse suggested by a text or speaker.

ex: To be or not to be, that's the question.

10) **Dysphemism**: The use of a word or phrase carrying negative connotations or imagery (especially one that is offensive or vulgar) to replace a (more) neutral original word.

ex: Greasy spoon is a dysphemism for the word diner.

Boiled leaves is a dysphemism for the word tea.

Mud is a dysphemism for the word coffee.

Baked beans is a dysphemism for the word bullets.

11) **Epistrophe:** Repetition of a word or expression at the end of successive phrases, clauses, sentences, or verses especially for rhetorical or poetic effect.

ex: of the people, by the people, for the people.

12) **Hyperbole:** Excessive exaggeration.

ex: a mile-high ice-cream cone.

I'm so hungry, I could eat a horse.

My feet are killing me.

That car ride took forever.

I love you to the moon and back.

I've told you this 20,000 times.

Cry me a river.

13) **Metaphor:** Words or expressions that mean something different from their literal definition.

ex: My mom has a heart of gold.

My friend's sister, Sharon, is a night owl.

Jane has a stone heart.

She was an autumn leaf.

Time is a thief.

America is a melting pot.

She's red hot with anger.

I wear my heart on my sleeve.

14) **Pleonasm:** the use of more words than are needed to express a meaning, done either unintentionally or for emphasis.

ex: I heard it with my own ears.

kick it with your feet.

15) **Simile:** the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid.
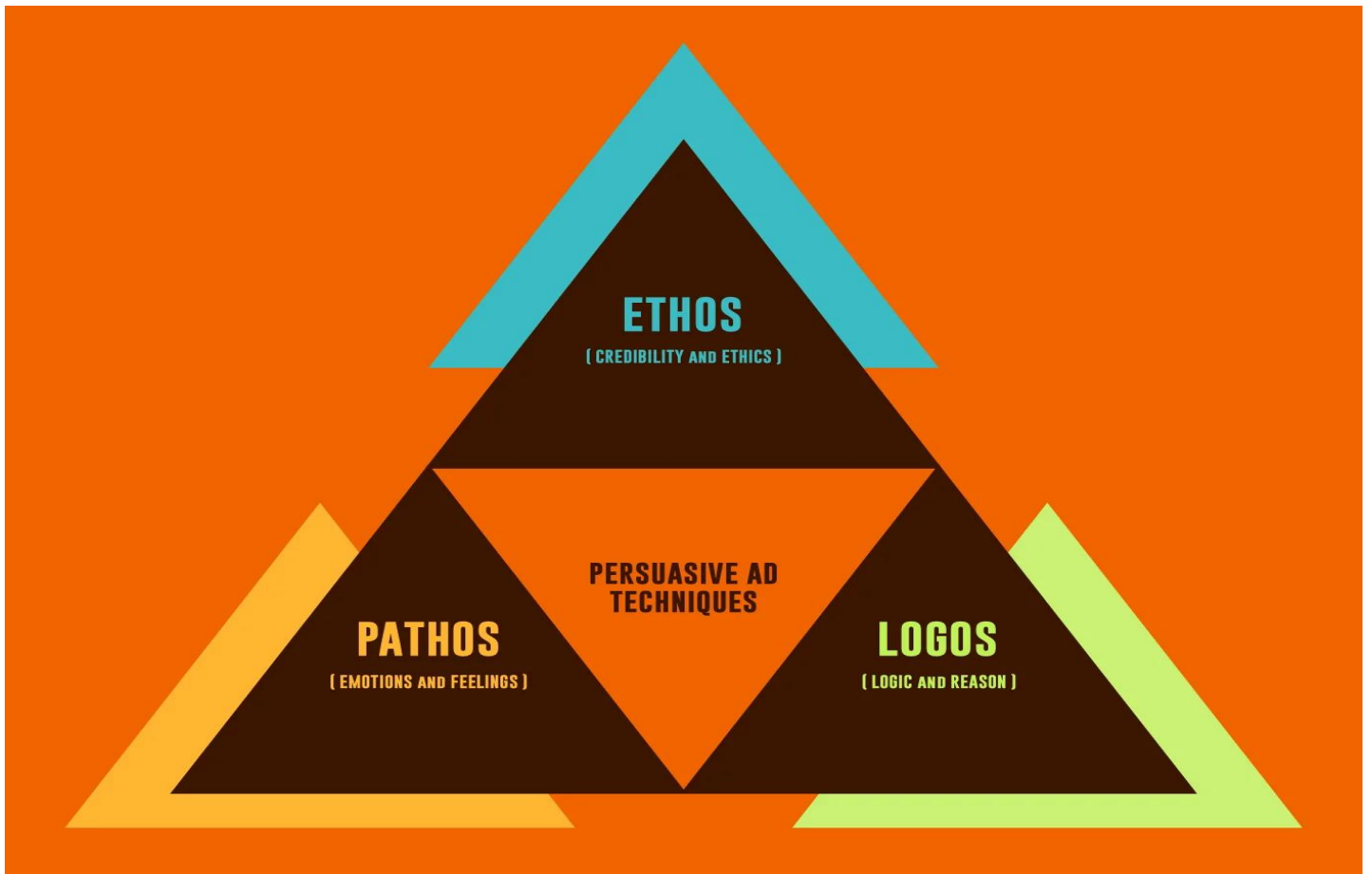
ex: as brave as a lion.

as strong as an ox.

Hungry like a wolf.

16) **Syllepsis:** The use of a word in the same grammatical relation to two adjacent words in the context with one literal and the other metaphorical in sense.

ex: she blew my nose and then she blew my mind.

Lesson 3: Ethos, pathos and logos

Rhetorical Triangle

Most people are able to drive a car without fully understanding how the car operates. Making an argument is the same way. Most of us attempt to persuade people every day without

understanding how persuasion works. Learning how a strong argument is crafted empowers us to better communicate and persuade others to understand our viewpoints.

What Are Pathos, Logos, and Ethos?

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos are three strategies commonly employed when attempting to persuade a reader.

- ✓ **Ethos** is used to convey the writer's credibility and authority. When evaluating a piece of writing, the reader must know if the writer is qualified to comment on this issue. The writer can communicate their authority by using credible sources; choosing appropriate language; demonstrating that they have fairly examined the issue (by considering the counterargument); introducing their own professional, academic or authorial credentials; introducing their own personal experience with the issue; and using correct grammar and syntax.

- ✓ **Pathos** appeal emotion, means to persuade an audience by purposely evoking certain emotions to make them feel the way the author wants them to feel. Authors make deliberate word choices, use meaningful language, and use examples and stories that evoke emotion. Authors can desire a range of emotional responses, including sympathy, anger, frustration, or even amusement.

- ✓ **Logos** appeal logic, means to appeal to the audiences' sense of reason or logic. To use logos, the author makes clear, logical connections between ideas, and includes the use of facts and statistics. Using historical and literal analogies to make a logical argument is another strategy. There should be no holes in the argument, also known as logical fallacies, which are unclear or wrong assumptions or connections between ideas.

Sample Paragraph

A small dog sits in a dark, cold garage. His hair is intertwined and dirty; he is skinny and weak from going days without food. There is no water for him to drink, no person to give him love and no blanket to keep him warm at night. **1** *While this might be a hard scenario to imagine, it is not an uncommon one in America today. According to the Humane Society of the United States, nearly 1,000,000 animals are abused or die from abuse every year.* **2** *As a veterinarian with 30 years of experience, I have seen how even one incident of abuse can affect an animal for the rest of its life.* **3** *As a society, we need to be more aware of this terrible problem and address this issue before it gets worse.*

1.Pathos: the author paints a vivid picture to evoke a feeling from the reader—sadness and pity for the abused animal.

2.Logos: the author uses a surprising statistic to appeal to our intellect. This sentence qualifies as both Logos and Ethos because it cites a reputable organization, so we know the author is using credible sources.

3.Ethos: the author establishes their own credibility by stating their occupation and experience.

How Do I Know if the Author is Using Pathos, Logos or Ethos?

Pathos—does the writer appeal to the emotions of their reader?

- Do they use individuals' stories to "put a face" on the problem you're exploring? For example, using an individual's story about losing their home during the mortgage crisis of the 2008 Recession may be more powerful than using only statistics.
- Do they use charged language or words that carry appropriate connotations? For example, if a writer describes a gun as a "sleek, silver piece of sophisticated weaponry," they are delivering a much different image than if she writes, "a cold hunk of metal, dark and barbaric and ready to kill."

Logos—does the writer appeal to the rational mind by using logic and evidence?

- Do they include facts and statistics that support their point? It's more convincing to tell the reader that "80% of students have committed some form of plagiarism," than simply saying that "Lots of students have plagiarized."
- Do they walk us through the logical quality of their argument? Do they show us how ideas connect in a rational way? For example: "English students have been able to raise their overall grade by meeting with peer tutors, so it's safe to assume that math students could also benefit from frequent tutoring sessions." This example points out that logically, if the result has been seen in one situation, then it should be seen in a different but similar situation.
- Do they avoid logical fallacies? A few examples of these are:
  - Hasty generalizations: "Even though the movie just started, I know it's going to be boring."
  - Slippery Slope: "If the government legalizes marijuana, eventually they'll legalize all drugs."
  - Circular Argument: "Barack Obama is a good communicator because he speaks effectively."

Ethos—is this writer trustworthy?

- What are their credentials? Are they an expert in the field? Have they written past essays, articles or books about this topic?
- Do they use honest sources? Do they support her statements with sources from established publications like The New York Times or a government report? Do they fail to mention any sources?
- Are they a fair-minded person who has considered all sides of this issue? Have they acknowledged any common ground they share with the opposite side? Do they include a counterargument and rejection?

In logic, we often refer to the two broad methods of reasoning as the deductive and inductive approaches.

Deductive reasoning works from the more general to the more specific. Sometimes this is informally called a "top-down" approach. We might begin with thinking up a theory about our topic of interest. We then narrow that down into more specific hypotheses that we can test. We narrow down even further when we collect observations to address the hypotheses. This ultimately leads us to be able to test the hypotheses with specific data – a confirmation (or not) of our original theories.
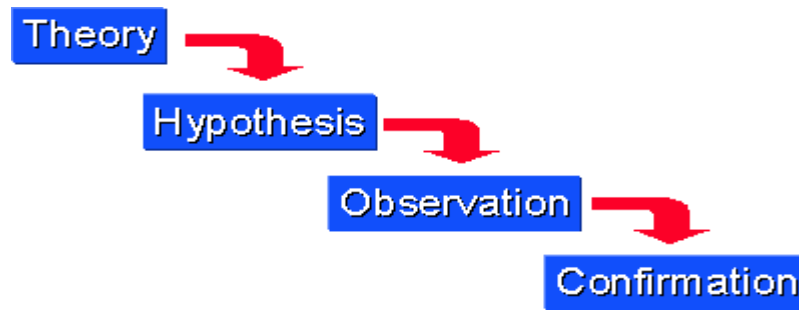
Inductive reasoning works the reverse way, moving from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories. Informally, we sometimes call this a "bottom up" approach (please note that it's "bottom up" and not "bottoms up" which is the kind of thing the bartender says to customers when he's trying to close for the night!). In inductive reasoning, we begin with specific observations and measures, begin to detect patterns and regularities, formulate some tentative hypotheses that we can explore, and finally end up developing some general conclusions or theories.
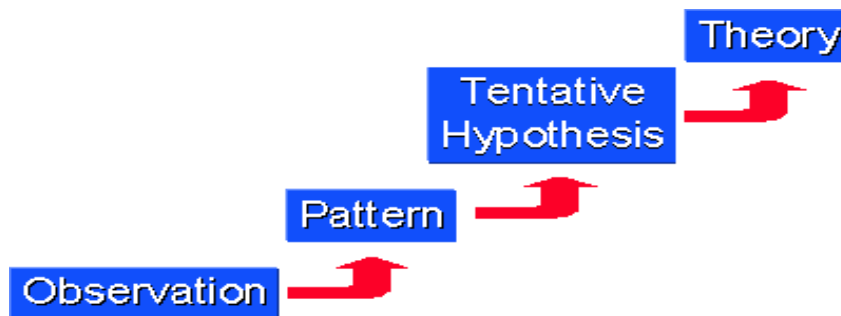
Inductive reasoning, by its very nature, is more open-ended and exploratory, especially at the beginning. Deductive reasoning is more narrow in nature and is concerned with testing or confirming hypotheses. Even though a particular study may look like it's purely deductive (e.g., an experiment designed to test the hypothesized effects of some treatment on some outcome), most social research involves both inductive and deductive reasoning processes at some time in the project. In fact, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that we could assemble the two graphs above into a single circular one that continually cycles from theories down to observations and back up again to theories. Even in the most constrained experiment, the researchers may observe patterns in the data that lead them to develop new theories.

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