

Writing an Argument Summary – Rhetorical Précis

Skills to develop:

1. Analyze arguments
2. Accurately describe the rhetorical techniques used in a work

Two Purposes for Rhetorical Précis:

1. To practice writing a concise summary of an argument
2. To demonstrate comprehension of the complexities and nuances found in sophisticated discourse

Four Sentence Rhetorical Précis Template:

1. Sentence 1: Introduce the writer or speaker, the text, and the central claim
2. Sentence 2: Explain how the author develops or advances the argument
3. Sentence 3: State the author's purpose of the text and why
4. Sentence 4: Describe the tone and the intended audience

Sentence 1: Introduce the writer or speaker, the text, and the central claim

Template:

_____ (author's credentials), _____ (author's first and last name) in his/her _____ (genre: article, essay, short story, editorial, sermon, etc) _____, _____ (title of text appropriately punctuated, underlined or in quotation marks) _____ argues (or suggests, implies, claims, notes) that _____ (major assertion or thesis statement of author's text) _____.

Write yours below:

Sentence 2: Explain how the author develops or advances the argument:

Template:

He/she supports (or develops) his/her claim by first _____ (comparing, narrating, illustrating, defining, etc) _____, then _____, and finally _____
_____. [Can be split into multiple sentences]

Write yours below:

Sentence 3: State the author's purpose of the text and why

Template:

_____ (Author's last name) _____'s purpose is to _____ (persuade, criticize, explain, entertain, inform, describe, prove, convince, bring about change, recommend, warn, etc) _____ in order to _____ (to accomplish what?) _____.

Write yours below:**Sentence 4: Describe the tone and the intended audience**

Template:

He/she _____ (verb: adopts, establishes, creates, etc) _____ a(n) _____ (informative, infuriated, thoughtful, serious, hopeful, etc) _____ tone for _____ (intended audience) _____.

Write yours below:**Complete Précis:****Write yours below:**

Writing an Argument Summary – Rhetorical Précis

Skills to develop:

1. Analyze arguments
2. Accurately describe the rhetorical techniques used in a work

Two Purposes for Rhetorical Précis:

1. To practice writing a concise summary of an argument
2. To demonstrate comprehension of the complexities and nuances found in sophisticated discourse

Four Sentence Rhetorical Précis Template:

1. Sentence 1: Introduce the writer or speaker, the text, and the central claim
2. Sentence 2: Explain how the author develops or advances the argument
3. Sentence 3: State the author’s purpose of the text and why
4. Sentence 4: Describe the tone and the intended audience

Sentence 1: Introduce the writer or speaker, the text, and the central claim

Template:

_____ (author’s credentials) _____, _____ (author’s first and last name) _____ in his/her _____ (genre: article, essay, short story, editorial, sermon, etc) _____, _____ (title of text appropriately punctuated, underlined or in quotation marks) _____ argues (or suggests, implies, claims, notes) that _____ (major assertion or thesis statement of author’s text) _____.

Sample:

One of the most prominent Civil Rights activists, Martin Luther King Jr, in his epic “I Have a Dream” speech, argues that America has failed to fulfill its claim in the Declaration of Independence that ALL men have the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Sentence 2: Explain how the author develops or advances the argument:

Template:

He/she supports (or develops) his/her claim by first _____ (comparing, narrating, illustrating, defining, etc) _____, then _____, and finally _____ . [Can be split into multiple sentences]

Sample:

He develops this claim by first using a metaphor that compares the Declaration of Independence to a promissory note, the lack of rights black people have to a bad check, and justice as being “bankrupt.” Then King establishes the “urgency of now” to encourage the people to take action against the discrimination of African Americans. Finally, King proceeds to state his “dreams” for the future of equality for black and white citizens, using descriptions of families of slaves and families of slave owners sitting together in harmony.

Sentence 3: State the author's purpose of the text and why

Template:

_____ (Author's last name) _____'s purpose is to _____ (persuade, criticize, explain, entertain, inform, describe, prove, convince, bring about change, recommend, warn, etc) _____ in order to _____ (to accomplish what?) _____.

Sample:

King's purpose is to convince both his followers and non-followers to consider the current situation that black people are in in order to take action against discrimination alongside King.

Sentence 4: Describe the tone and the intended audience

Template:

He/she _____ (verb: adopts, establishes, creates, etc) _____ a(n) _____ (informative, infuriated, thoughtful, serious, hopeful, etc) _____ tone for _____ (intended audience) _____.

Sample:

He establishes an encouraging and motivating tone for his audience of activists, both black and white, and for any citizen concerned with the unfair treatment of African Americans, whether they are present at the Million Man March or not.

Complete Précis:

One of the most prominent Civil Rights activists, Martin Luther King Jr, in his epic "I Have a Dream" speech, argues that America has failed to fulfill its claim in the Declaration of Independence that ALL men have the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." He develops this claim by first using a metaphor that compares the Declaration of Independence to a promissory note, the lack of rights black people have to a bad check, and justice as being "bankrupt." Then King establishes the "urgency of now" to encourage the people to take action against the discrimination of African Americans. Finally, King proceeds to state his "dreams" for the future of equality for black and white citizens, using descriptions of families of slaves and families of slave owners sitting together in harmony. King's purpose is to convince both his followers and non-followers to consider the current situation that black people are in in order to take action against discrimination alongside King. He establishes an encouraging and motivating tone for his audience of activists, both black and white, and for any citizen concerned with the unfair treatment of African Americans, whether they are present at the Million Man March or not.