

## RWS 100: GLOSSARY

### Argument

Any piece of written, spoken or visual language designed to bring about some change in a reader's, listener's or hearer's ideas or attitudes. An argument asks us to consider, believe or do something. It is a conclusion or claim based on evidence. In rhetoric, argument does not refer to a situation in which people are fighting. Rather, it refers to a situation in which people are making a case for a way of seeing things.

### Claim

One component of an argument. A claim is an arguable assertion. It is a conclusion based on information or data. To make a claim is to assert that something is the case. Usually it is possible to identify a claim that is the central point or conclusion that an argument makes. A claim may appear at the beginning or end of a text, but it may appear at any point in an argument, or it may not appear explicitly anywhere in the argument, in which case the reader must infer it from the evidence in the text. Often arguments make more than one claim. They sometimes also make one or more sub-claims. Claims are supported by reasons.

### Context

The larger textual and cultural environment in which specific rhetorical acts take place.

Texts in this folder:

"Ways to think about the term *Context*"

### Ethos

The character of the speaker or writer as it comes through in his or her words. For example, certain words or passages could create an ethos of trustworthiness, fair-mindedness, credibility, kindness, or humanity. Ethos is not a matter of who a writer really is, but is the character that emerges in his or her work. A writer could create a very different ethos in each of two different pieces of writing. Ethos is one category of rhetorical strategy and can overlap with pathos and logos. For example, well-chosen examples might make an argument (logos) seem reasonable, but they could also tap beliefs, values or experiences in an emotional way (pathos), and they could show the writer who chose them to be a person of a certain kind of character (ethos).

### Logos

The argument itself; the reasoning that a writer uses. Claims and reasons are elements of logos. So are examples and evidence, information and data, and conclusions drawn from them. Logos is a broader term than logic; it may include logic, but does not equate with logic. Logos is one category of rhetorical strategy and can overlap with ethos and pathos. For example, well-chosen examples might make an argument (logos) seem reasonable, but they could also tap beliefs, values or experiences in an emotional way (pathos), and they could show the writer who chose them to be a person of a certain kind of character (ethos).

### Metadiscourse

Language about language. Often, metadiscourse announces what a paper will be about and what it will

do. Metadiscourse can be used both to announce the overall project or purpose of the paper and to announce its argument.

Metadiscourse also provides signposts along the way, guiding the reader to what will come next and showing how that is connected to what has come before.

Metadiscourse announces what the writer is doing, helping you to recognize the author's plan.

### Pathos

Words or passages that activate emotions, usually because they relate to readers' or hearers' deeply held values or beliefs. Pathos is not necessarily a strategy of writing about emotional subjects or of describing strong emotions. It is a strategy of using language in ways that evoke emotions in audiences. It is a strategy that may dispose the audience to have a certain attitude toward the writer, or to feeling that what the writer proposes is desirable or undesirable. Pathos is one category of rhetorical strategy and can overlap with ethos and logos. For example, well-chosen examples might make an argument (logos) seem reasonable, but they could also tap beliefs, values or experiences in an emotional way (pathos), and they could show the writer who chose them to be a person of a certain kind of character (ethos).

### Project

The kind of work that a writer is setting out to do. The overall activity that the writer is engaged in-- researching, investigating, experimenting, interviewing, documenting, etc. To articulate a project, you need a verb, such as researches, investigates, studies, presents, connects A with B, etc.

Texts in this folder:

"Examples of Projects"

### Reason (Grounds, Evidence, Data)

One component of an argument. A reason is evidence, data, or information given to support a claim. To find reasons, ask why the claim can be made. What have you got to go on? What evidence is there to support this claim?

### Rhetoric

The term rhetoric refers to the study, uses, and effects of written, spoken, and visual language.

### Rhetorical Analysis

"An effort to understand how people within specific social situations attempt to influence others through language" (Jack Selzer). This work may include describing rhetorical strategies, textual arrangements, and ways of framing and contextualizing.

### Rhetorical Strategy

A particular way in which authors craft language so as to have an effect on readers. Strategies are means of persuasion, ways of using language to get readers' attention, interest, or agreement.

### Signaling a Topic

The *metadiscourse*, or language about language, that announces what the paper will be about and what it will do. Metadiscourse can be used both to announce the overall project or purpose of the paper and to announce its argument.