

EN140 – 13 24253

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“From Uncertainty to Confidence: My Growth in Research and Rhetoric”

This is my second English class at Southeast Missouri State University since coming to the United States. My first class, EN100, gave me the foundation I needed to step into EN140. Even though I had that starting point, I still felt unsure about my academic writing skills. At the very beginning of the class, I struggled to communicate complex ideas in a clear, academic way. I also found it hard to fully understand the deeper meaning of the texts we read—the emotions, the settings, and the ideas behind the words. Rhetorical principles were especially tricky for me in the beginning. But over time, I’ve come to realize developing comfort with academic writing, critical thinking, and rhetorical strategies is a gradual process. EN140 helped me to take that position. Through the semester, I ended up doing multiple forum assignments, where I analyzed, reviewed, and responded to different texts. The development process continued with each assignment. Some assignments helped me understand how to form a logical argument, others taught me to think critically about sources, and some provided feedback that allowed me to revise my work. This portfolio showcases my journey in academic writing by reflecting on the writing process and the choices I made in both Rhetorical Analysis and Researched Argument essays.

One of the major skills I developed in EN140 was familiarity with the academic research process. In my Research Argument essay, I learned to locate reliable sources, evaluate their credibility, and incorporate them into my argument to effectively support my position. To begin with, I was finding it difficult to get the strong academic sources that provided good and reliable information. However, an EN140 class session on searching using the Kent Library database helped me realize how to spot and get sources most appropriate for my essay. In my TV research analysis essay, I used scholarly sources to support my argument. For example, I wrote, “As Martínez, Maortua, and Orús explain, the show’s portrayal of moral conflict and transformation makes Walter’s descent into villainy both compelling and relatable, prompting the audience to engage with his character despite his immoral actions (383)” (“Power and Pride” p.4). This is a testament not only to the nature of sources I have used but also to the MLA citation skills obtained in the course, including avoiding plagiarism using summarizing, paraphrasing, and proper quoting. The process of constructing my argument through evidence increased my awareness of the way research adds to scholarly writing. My Researched Argument final draft captures this enhancement since I re-wrote it in a way that integrates my sources more smoothly and added transitions to make my overall arguments more cohesive.

My critical thinking and analytical writing improved too, particularly after the Rhetorical Analysis essay. When writing the essay, I was reading a review of The Lion King movie and explaining how the author used rhetorical devices and appeals to persuade the reader. Initially, I merely narrated what transpired in the movie but afterward received criticism from professor that helped me see that there is the need to conduct effective textual analysis. By class reading and class discussion of rhetorical devices including ethos, logos, pathos, and awareness of audience, I learned to think beyond the literal and read more sensitively. I re-drafted my essay to consider how

the writer had structured their argument and the effect that had on the intended audience. Altering my strategy in this way enabled me to be more analytical and precise in my writing. It also taught me how to read more actively and how to question myself regarding the purpose and approach behind every element of a text, something that I apply now to other academic readings. My understanding of rhetorical situations is evident in my analysis of emotional appeal in Dwight Brown's review of *Mufasa: The Lion King*. For example, Brown writes, "champions all the values good parents would want to bestow on their children: finding ways to survive and thrive in the darkest moments, cherishing friendships and family no matter who they may be, and standing up to bullies" (par. 3). I argued that this claim would resonate deeply with audiences seeking a meaningful message and with parents hoping to instill these values in their children (Rhetorical Analysis p.2). This analysis shows my ability to identify and interpret emotional appeals (pathos) within the context of the rhetorical situation.

Another major shift that I observed in EN140 was in how I saw writing as a process. In the past, I would produce one draft and submit it with minimal revision. With peer workshops, instructor comments, and class discussion on revision techniques, however, I could see writing as recursive. For example, my Rhetorical Analysis paper went through drafting process that included class peer review. We were asked to read and critique each other's papers, and I was able to see different ways of writing and seeing. Having feedback provided to me on my own paper—and providing feedback to others—made me have to think critically and pushed me out of my comfort zone. After receiving and giving peer reviews, I made several important changes to my essay. I reorganized paragraphs, improved transitions between ideas, strengthened my thesis statement, and rephrased topic sentences for better clarity. I also focused on proofreading for grammar and punctuation issues, which I had often overlooked in the past.

The two essays that I have chosen to place in my portfolio best represent my progression toward the EN140 course outcomes. The Rhetorical Analysis illustrates my development in rhetorical thinking and critical reading, while the Researched Argument illustrates my development with the research process and structuring an academic argument. Both of the essays were thoroughly rewritten, and I believe the final products are a higher level of polish and organization than I was able to produce early in the semester. While my writing still has its weak spots, I now have a better idea of how to approach writing assignments, consider audience, and make rhetorical choices that maximize clarity and impact. I have learned to write purposefully, and that knowledge has allowed me to feel more prepared for future college writing assignments.

Overall, EN140 has helped me as not only a writer, but as a thinker and communicator. The writing skills I've acquired in this course will have long-lasting significance throughout my academic and professional life. As a Cybersecurity student, I can use these skills to produce effective documentation that persuades and effective technical reports. EN140 also enhanced my research capabilities, allowing me to identify and evaluate sources that are most suitable for supporting my arguments. Through the presentation of my two essays in this portfolio, I am confident to demonstrate how far I've come in understanding the research process, establishing sound arguments, and writing in a more focused and academic tone. This portfolio indicates how far I've come and the foundation I've established for continued academic and professional writing success.

## Rhetorical Analysis Draft 1

## Rhetorical Analysis of Dwight Brown: Mufasa: The Lion King

Dwight Brown's review of "Mufasa: The Lion King" explains both prequel and sequel to "The Lion King (2019)". His tone is cheerful and appreciative, while also maintaining balance by addressing movie flaws at certain points. He proves his appreciation by vividly highlighting the movie's pros while offering a balanced criticism of its narrative structure. Brown effectively connects with diverse audiences, including families and animation enthusiasts, and loyal fans of the franchise, through emotional appeal, comprehensive sensory description, and a mix of praise and critique.

Brown starts by highlighting how the film captures the hearts of families and has strong potential for commercial success. He points out the movie's core values, like resilience and the importance of relationships, which connect with audiences of all ages. He also praises the film's incredible visuals, including its lifelike animation and varied landscapes that add depth to the storytelling. Brown further emphasizes the emotional impact of Lin-Manuel Miranda's songs, which bring greater meaning to the characters' relationships, and the impressive sound design by Onnalee Blank, which creates an immersive experience. While he critiques the storytelling format as occasionally confusing, Brown ultimately concludes that the movie's overall artistic achievements and high-quality production make up for its minor flaws, leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

The writer's target the family audience by stating, "Mufasa: The Lion King will definitely charm families and sell a lot of tickets" (Dwight par. 2). This statement acts as the hook to draw the reader's attention, and he later elaborates on how the movie appeals to families through its

theme and values. This makes the review more engaging for the targeted audience. Brown emphasizes the emotional appeal of the movie in his review by declaring “champions all the values good parents would want to bestow on their children: finding ways to survive and thrive in the darkest moments, cherishing friendships and family no matter who they may be, and standing up to bullies” (Dwight par. 3). This claim will resonate deeply with audiences seeking for the meaningful message and parents looking to instill these values into their children. His writing strategy is so effective for engaging readers of the review, such as crafting hook statements to grab attention and providing well-reasoned arguments.

Brown vividly expressing “captivating, life-like photoreal computer-generated imagery” (Dwight par. 2). By mentioning this statement, he is trying to appeal to the audience who appreciate the complexity of creating visual animation and animation enthusiastic. That point is helping the audience to imagine realistic animation and portraying the sense of complexity and hard work needed to make a movie like this. His mention of landscapes, like “taupe plains to snowy white mountains” (Dwight par. 7), creates a clear picture of film's stunning settings.

Brown does not limit his analysis to visual; he also wants to draw the attention of the readers toward the movie’s thrilling part. By describing the action sequence as “exhilarating” and filled with “kinetic energy,” he employs vivid language to capture the thrilling and engaging nature of these scenes, drawing readers into the intensity of the story. His mention of Lin-Manuel Miranda’s songs, like “I Always Wanted a brother” and “We Go Together,” further appeals to the audience’s emotions, portraying how the music deepens character relationships and enhances the film’s emotional storytelling.

Moreover, Brown's acknowledgment of sound supervising editor Onnalee Blank and the intricate sound effects such as, roaring lions and crashing waters, underscores the film's technical excellence. Not just that, but it occurs with the sensory description so deeply immersive that it relates with the interests of those who would regard the intricacies and artistry of film production. By such an appeal to pathos and admiration for the technicality of the art form, Brown persuades his audience that *Mufasa: The Lion King* is so much a tangible achievement in the cinema world that it should be experienced.

Brown is overwhelmingly positive about it, though he critiques the storytelling format. As highlighted in his point in "The story-within-a-story format gets a bit confusing" (Dwight par.7). Even while pointing out the flaws, he still sticks to the admiration of the movie rather than talking about its negative part. Brown acknowledges the flaw in the story, calling it a "justifiable concern" (Dwight par.7). Yet, according to him, "the rest of the narrative plays out like a gem of an action/adventure/animation/family film." Framing the issue as small in context of the entire film's excellency allows Brown to really balance his critique well: readers can overlook any shortcomings while concentrating on the strengths of the movie. Through this strategy, Brown maintains his appreciative stance while addressing imperfections, which helps him connect with a broader audience by acknowledging different perspectives and fostering trust in his balanced review. However, he could have explained and been more honest about the movie's storytelling and its potential impact on the overall commercial success of the film. If he had made this statement, he could have appealed to an additional audience base interested in the growth and success of films like this.

Brown's review of *Mufasa: The Lion King* is a high-quality art as it contains rhetorical strategies that expose the work to diverse audiences. Employing emotional appeal through sensory

vividness, the technicalities of the film, it found families, animation addicts, and diehard franchise fans. Its praiseworthy balanced view coupled with impeccable constructive criticism adds to his credibility and therefore makes the review resonate well within diverse readership. Through these strategies, therefore, the film is artfully presented by Brown as an entertained yet meaningful cinematic experience. This analysis shows that Brown successfully connects with families, animation enthusiasts, and loyal fans, presenting the film as an entertaining yet meaningful cinematic experience. By discussing both the emotional and the technical aspects of the movie, Brown secures the relevance of his review to a wide readership. In the end, his reflective blend of praise and critique makes this review both engaging and reliable for any person considering the film.



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<https://shorturl.at/Gk8dm>

## Researched Argument Draft 2

### Power and Pride: The Dark Transformation of Walter White in Modern Crime Drama

In a world of dominated crime dramas, few shows manage to capture audience. It's a rare gem, the kind that only emerge once a decade. Enter the world of Breaking bad. Launched in 2008, the show follows the journey of a high school chemistry teacher and the circumstances that led him to become the drug kingpin. It explores theme of morality, power, and his evolving identity. The shows engaging narrative, dynamic characters, and its detailed depiction of a quiet man transformation into the anti-hero makes it standout in today's television story telling. Breaking Bad's success is often attributed to the complex nature of its protagonist, Walter White, whose transformation is one of the most compelling character arcs in modern television. This show examines how power reshapes an individual moral, linking the power to pride and societal pressure like expectation of "being a man." It also explores the American anxiety like midlife crises, and financial struggles, especially the lack of health care, drive individual to make extreme choice for their families.

Breaking bad is deeply embedded in the cultural and societal context of United States, reflecting theme of power, pride and the pressure of financial instability. The show portrays struggle of Walter White fall into the path of crime driven by a combination of personal pride, the expectation of "being a man" in American society, and extreme need to provide for his family. In the very first episode, when a bully mocks his son, Walter becomes violent and feels good gaining

power (The Take, *Breaking Bad: Walter White - How a Man Becomes Evil* 00:00:32). This moment marks the beginning of his transformation, showing how thrill of taking control feeds into his growing pride. There are many societal factors that push Walter White to transform into a bad man. As explained in The Take, his brother-in-law mocks him, saying in Season 1, “You're gonna man up or you're gonna puss out.” Additionally, his boss treats him poorly, and his students show him disrespect. All of these factors contribute to Walter's descent into becoming a bad man (The Take 00:01:28). Walt's life takes a drastic turn after he is diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, and he decides to leave his ethics behind and get involved in the risky business of meth manufacturing. His sole motive is to provide for his family's future, and thus his alter ego (Factual America p.3). *Factual America* states that family and financial insecurity play a crucial role: “His wife is pregnant with an unplanned child, adding to their financial strains, and his teen son, Walt Jr., requires additional care and resources” (*Factual America* p. 8). These pressures, combined with his feelings of inadequacy as a provider, drive Walt to take increasingly desperate and illegal actions. In the series, Walter gains a sense of pride through cooking meth. He feels awakened, sensing that he is finally doing something meaningful and impactful in the world. It marks the rebirth of a new man — talented, passionate, and a demanding genius. The birth of the persona “Heisenberg” allows Walter to have an impact on the world. He transforms from inaction to action, and expressing this new side of himself makes him feel powerful and alive.

The heisenberg persona emerge as Walt’s way of coping with his new criminal lifestyle. *Factual America* stated that change in his lifestyle “he adpots the dark clothing and a distenctive pork pie hat, visually signaling his shift in identity”(Factual p.9). The heisenberg persona helps Walt separate his criminal life from his family life. As heisenberg, he become more confident, and strategic especially with criminals. The name “Heisenberg” itself borrowed from a renowned

physicist, reflects Walt's desire to be respected for his intellect and skills. Factual America states about Walt's Breaking the Moral Boundaries "his moral decay is evident in key decision, such as allowing the Jesse's girlfriend Jane to die and poisoning a child to manipulate Jesse"(Factual p.12). These actions show Walt's increasing readiness to sacrifice others for his own objectives. As Walt gains power, his sense of self-importance grows, boosting his confidence and leadership. However, this also leads to narcissism, where he overestimates his abilities, disregards others' input, and makes decisions alone. Walt's ego fuels his transformation. He seeks recognition and respect, often choosing his pride over safety or morality. The series examines the gradual corruption of Walter's character, showing how power and pride can distort one's sense of right and wrong. His need for control extends to his relationships, manipulating figures like his wife, Skyler, and partner, Jesse, to maintain power. "The iconic "I am the one who knocks" speech embodies Walt's new, dominant identity, where he sees himself as a feared and respected figure, rejecting his former passive role" (Factual America p.11).

In Breaking Bad Season 5, Episode 14 ("Ozymandias"), Walter White experiences the loss of control as his double life as Heisenberg is discovered by Hank. This is the decline of his empire. Hank, who now knows, ambushes Walt in the desert, and it ends up being a violent and tragic standoff. Even as Walt pleads with Hank to beg for his life, Hank refuses to do so. Despite Walter's desperate plea to Jack on Hank's behalf, Jack orders Hank's execution, symbolizing Walter relinquishing control and handing the reins over to Jack. The desolate landscape also helps to emphasize Walter's isolation and fall of his empire, as many of the series pivotal events occur there. The writing and acting in this episode combine to create an emotionally wrenching tale, depicting Walter's transformation from a man who attempted to rescue his family to a coldhearted man, revealing the cost of his pride and ambition. This slump is further intensified as Jesse, who

is being forced into partnership with the white supremacists, is captured and tortured, physically and psychologically, exacerbating his trauma and guilt. As noted by Anna Faktorovich, the realism in *Breaking Bad* is a key element in its emotional impact: “sympathy is really for the actor, and not for the portrayed character”(Faktorovich p.5).

However, the entire series revolves around the anti-hero nature of Walter White, which, despite being anti-heroic, remains appealing to a large number of viewers. As Martínez, Maortua, and Orús explain, the show’s portrayal of moral conflict and transformation makes Walter’s descent into villainy both compelling and relatable, prompting the audience to engage with his character despite his immoral actions (Martínez et al. 383). This visual contrast plays a significant role in shaping the viewer’s moral judgment, as Noël Carroll suggests that our moral responses to audiovisual media are often intuitive and emotionally driven, rather than reasoned (Martínez et al. 389). The *Breaking Bad* series finale was viewed by a staggering 10.3 million viewers, which set a record for viewers and broke expectations. The 18-49-year-old demographic was particularly drawn to the special appeal of the finale, with 6.7 million viewers. The show was also extremely tweetable, and it caused a significant amount of social media buzz with 1.24 million tweets generated by more than 600,000 users (LA Times). Netflix also contributed to the success of *Breaking Bad* by introducing the series to a larger audience and making it a cultural phenomenon. However, the specific circumstances that enabled this to take place will not be replicable in today’s streaming landscape (Vox).

In short, *Breaking Bad* is an excellent depiction of Walter White’s dark transformation from a humble high school educator to a ruthless drug baron, driven by power, ego, and societal pressures. *Breaking Bad* delves deep into moral decline, ego, and the consequences of one’s own

actions, therefore producing an interesting tale about the cost of pride and the price of ambition. Through its grounded depiction of character and inner conflict, *Breaking Bad* creates a high-wire engagement with audiences that evokes sympathy even for the show's most morally abhorrent characters. Walter's descent into evil, coupled with the show's stunning visual contrasts and emotional nuance, makes *Breaking Bad* one of the most compelling crime dramas of the modern age. With its release into new territories through platforms like Netflix, the programme's long-term success is a testament to the quality of its storytelling and of its ability to engage audiences, and is a significant landmark in television's contemporary history.

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