

MEMORANDUM

Date: 02/24/2023
To: Dr. Schwartz
From: Christopher Frost
Re: Short Writing Assignments 1 & 2

The purpose of this document is to discuss the rhetorical decisions I made whilst writing the first two writing assignments for English 2210. This will also discuss some of the course learning outcomes those documents met.

In the first assignment, I decided to write a complaint letter to Netflix about their decision to raise their prices. I chose this specifically because it was a recent announcement Netflix made, as well as a common grievance Netflix subscribers face. Making it a topical complaint and a situation I may likely see while working for a company. To rhetorically get Ted Sarandos' (co-CEO of Netflix) attention I made sure to talk about Netflix's main competitors. In the letter, I wrote how Hulu and other streaming platforms release content in a more strategic matter that ensures users will subscribe to their services for longer periods. I also informed Mr. Sarandos that viewers binge watching their shows was actually losing them money. However, I knew that bold claims like this don't have much weight if there isn't anything to validate them. So, I backed them up with an actual experiment that was conducted by students from The University of Melbourne. Lastly, I offered an alternative work around. I mentioned how more effective advertising to their clientele could also increase their revenue. I also included a personal experience in regards to insufficient advertising saying that "in the past I have been interested in shows that would be released on Netflix in a couple of months or so, yet when the shows were later released, I was not made aware and had to actively dig through your site to find it."

The second writing assignment was a response to the complaint letter, where I specifically wrote a refusal letter. I started this letter by thanking the writer for their letter and by restating their main point; "Thank you for your thoughtful letter. We here at Netflix understand that a change in our pricing is always a sensitive subject that impacts each of our subscribers." This made sure that they knew that I had actually taken the time to read their complaint and took what they had to say seriously. I then made sure to let the writer know that they had strong, well-credited arguments so that my refusal didn't seem to belittle or disregard the research they did. In fact, what I believe made this refusal so well written, is that I pivoted their own research against them. I brought up some of the statistics and findings from the study that were omitted in the initial complaint letter that strengthened my refusal. Specifically, I wrote "In their surveying, it was found that people who watch episodes weekly had to expend more effort mentally when watching a show and that the viewing method had no impact on how individuals thought a show would perform." This showed the writer that I investigated their credited sources and found data that backs up why Netflix releases entire seasons of shows at once. On top of that, I informed them that Netflix offers a variety of content, not just shows—so the proposed strategy of increasing revenue wasn't all that realistic. I then went on to let them know in detail some of the factors that led to the price increase, and how Netflix has already tested these higher price models in other countries. This let the writer know that this price restructuring was carefully considered and tested, not a greedy or spontaneous choice. When giving them the bad news that

Netflix will be continuing forward with their plans, I made sure to immediately follow it up with a discount, that way they weren't turned away and would be likely to continue to subscribe to Netflix. I ended this assignment with a statement saying that Netflix hopes to keep them as a subscriber.

As far as learning outcomes, I would say these two assignments mainly met outcomes one and five. Outcome one is about project planning, whether it be collectively or individually. For the first assignment, I knew that I needed to find a real-world problem that I could write a complaint letter on, and, once I knew my topic, I knew I needed to do some research to effectively voice my complaint. This aligns with learning outcome one because I knew there was some work I had to get done before I could even start writing the letter, so I planned ahead to allow myself time to research Netflix and the psychology of binge-watching shows while also ensuring I had ample time to write and style the document itself. The fifth outcome was met by both of the writing assignments (and even this third one, if were to get meta). The concern of the fifth outcome is written communication and making sure that what I write for this course is understood and meets the audiences' needs. With each assignment so far, I have taken into account who might be reading the document and make sure that my word choices, albeit professional, can be understood by all potential readers.

Thank you for giving me your time. If you have any questions regarding anything that was discussed in this memo, please feel free to contact me at cfrost6@unm.edu, I will be happy to discuss this further.

February 3, 2023

Ted Sarandos, Co-CEO
Netflix
100 Winchester Circle
Los Gatos, California 95032

Dear Mr. Sarandos:

I am a huge fan of your platform and find myself watching content on Netflix all the time. I am writing you in regard to your plans to increase prices and limit password sharing. While I do understand that your company is needing more revenue, I don't think this is the way to do so. Instead, I believe that more effective marketing and release dates can help bring in more revenue to Netflix.

One of the big issues I see with your release of content is that shows/ seasons are released all at once. Your competitors on the other hand typically only release a single episode per week, like *The Last of Us* on Hulu. Releasing content slower not only gives you time to work on the production of other shows and movies, but also keeps viewers more engaged! Studies such as *The Impact of Binge Watching on Memory and Perceived Comprehension* show that, counterintuitively, people who binge watch shows actually enjoy their experience less than people who watch an episode a week. This means that you can stretch out releasing shows to give users more enjoyment and lead to less demand/ stress for content from your staff.

The other improvement I think should be made is in the advertisement of new content. With new content coming to your platform often, it is crucial that you properly advertise it to your viewers. In the past I have been interested in shows that would be released on Netflix in a couple of months or so, yet when the shows were later released, I was not made aware and had to actively dig through your site to find it. Not showing content to viewers who want to watch it is a huge missed opportunity. Reworking the recommended section or welcome banner of the site to address this problem will help keep clients engaged, bringing them back to your platform.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this and hope you carefully reconsider your plan to increase prices. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this issue further, don't hesitate to reach out to me at cfrost6@unm.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher Frost". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Christopher Frost
Student, University of New Mexico



February 7, 2023

Christopher Frost, Student
University of New Mexico
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131

Dear Mr. Frost,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter. We here at Netflix understand that a change in our pricing is always a sensitive subject that impacts each of our subscribers. It has been with careful consideration and planning that we have decided to raise our prices.

In the letter you sent to us on February 3, you brought up some great points. While you are right that, according to *The Impact of Binge Watching on Memory and Perceived Comprehension*, people ranked their enjoyment of a show higher if they were to watch episodes weekly rather than binging a show, there are some other statistics from that study that are worth pointing out. In their surveying, it was found that people who watch episodes weekly had to expend more effort mentally when watching a show and that the viewing method had no impact on how individuals thought a show would perform. What's more, television shows are only a portion of the media that we offer. Netflix also has a range of movies that accounts for a large portion of our content. While releasing episodes of shows more slowly may work for a series, as you suggested, we cannot extend the same process to movies. So, although we commend your well executed research, we will be continuing forward with our plans to increase prices.

Aside from production costs, we also evaluate our subscription prices by market changes, inflation, and local tax changes. In fact, we have already done testing with our new price model in countries outside of the United States. Peru, Chile, and Costa Rica have been paying more since last year and we have maintained more or less the same number of subscribers from those countries. We will be rolling out this new model early this year, and it should take effect in the United States in March.

We understand that our decision to carry on with our plans may lead you into considering other platforms for your choice of entertainment. So, we are offering you a free 3-month subscription to Netflix at this time. Enclosed are instructions to redeem this offer.

We apologize for any inconvenience caused by a raise in our prices. We do value you for choosing Netflix and hope to continue releasing movies and shows for you to enjoy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted Sarandos".

Ted Sarandos
Co-CEO

Enclosed: 3-Month Paid Subscription Offer