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Rhetorical Analysis

Hearing is one of our five senses. Of course, we would hate to lose any of them, but one is closer to being nonexistent than you think. According to a study published by The Journal of the American Medical Association as written by Virginia, one in five teenagers in America can’t hear rustles or whispers. And they think headphones are to blame. Having the New York Times publish this article, it already grabs the reader’s attention as it shows that it is the entity that published it and supports it, not just the person. In this article written by The New York Times, Virginia forms a strong argument that teenagers wearing headphones and the background noise around them are to blame for hearing loss. They use persuasion by making you believe what they are saying through the power of facts and history to make the reader of this article think that their initial claim is correct.

A big claim that the author of this article made right away in the first sentence was “one in five teenagers in America can’t hear rustles or whispers,” (Virginia, NY Times) which is a big claim to state outright. Right away Virginia gets the reader’s attention and convince them to believe what they say because after that statement they support their claim with a study saying, “according to a study published in August in The Journal of the American Medical Association.” (Virginia, NY Times) This is a strong first sentence to grab the reader’s attention and trust because they then go into how they can support that claim even more. I found that as I was reading this article it always had my attention because who wants to lose their hearing? I kept reading looking for them to say, “don’t do this, do that to get your hearing back,” and lucky for me it was at the very end where they made their claim that over ear headphones block out background noise better than in ear ones.

Another way this article persuades us to believe that in ear headphones are destroying hearing in teenagers is by relating history to the present. This technique is known as cross thinking and relating subjects. The way this text is formed is very strategic. First the author lists some facts and then they give us the history of how headphones has progressed. This is very strategic because the author has us trust him/her right away and then uses history to convince us that what they are saying is correct. For example, they use facts and history like “the number of teenagers with hearing loss – from slight to severe – has jumped 33 percent since 1994,” (The Journal of American Medical Association) to show us why blasting music in headphones are bad for your hearing. Sometime today when you step outside look at someone who has earphones in and try to listen and see if you can hear their music. Most likely you will hear someone’s music being played too loud. They also state that the background noise of wearing in ear headphones in public can be bad because of the background noise forcing you to raise the volume to hear your music. Many who have read this experienced it first-hand. Here they are relating their claim again to their customer. They say that wearing over the ear headphones block out more of the background noise but they do not go more into how that is true. They make us think about it, showing us that we can most likely relate to their overall point, that blasting music “in public” is bad.

We all listen to music or podcasts or something with headphones, they are essential to our everyday living. Every day I have my headphones in my ears. Most of the times we don’t even think about what it could do to our hearing. This article shows us the history of headphones and how they have been around for a very long time and has unexpected consequences. When this article makes statements and shows facts that headphones are bad and then concludes on “make it a New Year’s resolution, then, to use headphones less,” (Virginia, NY Times) it is showing the customer that they think overusing headphones is bad. They make us believe this and make us want to change because they persuade us in doing so by making us look through facts and relating it to our own lives. When someone says something is bad for your health you want to change that and live a healthy lifestyle so you can live your life to the fullest and live a long healthy and good life. This article does just that. It makes us believe headphones are bad for your hearing overtime and makes us want to believe that we should change our headphone use overtime.

This article kept my attention the whole time, leading us to see how we can be better with our headphone and volume usage. This author persuaded me in being on her side with her initial claim and in the end, I will try to be better. Also, a major component before even reading the article that already grabbed the readers trust is who published the article. Not the person but the entity. It was published by New York Times which is a very trusted source throughout the US and some of the world I would like to think. So, the reader already trusts the source and is already paying close attention to what the article has to say. In conclusion, this article makes a strong claim and supports it until the very end, using persuasion techniques to grab the readers attention.

**Citation:**

Hefferan, Virginia. “The Argument Against Headphones.” *The New York Times,* The New York Times, 7 Jan. 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/09/magazine/09FOB-medium-t.html?mcubz=1>