

The Rhetoric of Expository Writing/Reading

Surveying the Text:

Look at the article “A Change of Heart About Animals.” Think about the following questions:

1. Where and when was this article published?
2. Who wrote the article? Do you know anything about this writer?
3. What is the subtitle of the article? What does that tell you about what the article might say?
4. The article was published on the editorial page. What does that mean?

Making Predictions:

As you look at the text of the article, answer and then discuss the following questions:

1. What does it mean to have “a change of heart”?
2. What kinds of things might cause someone to change his or her ideas or feelings about animals?
3. What are some groups of people who have strong feelings about how animals are treated? What do you know about them?
4. What is a vegetarian or a vegan? Do you know anyone who is a vegetarian?

Reading the Article:

Read *as if you trust Rifkin* and focus on what he is trying to say. When you are finished, answer the questions below.

1. What predictions you made turned out to be true?
2. What surprised you?
3. What does Rifkin want us to believe?
4. What are some of the things that people believe humans can do that animals can't do? How does Rifkin challenge these beliefs?
5. What authorities does Rifkin use to support his case?
6. What action does Rifkin want us to take?
7. How does Rifkin organize his essay? Is it an effective organization?

Rereading the article:

This time, *read to question the text, playing the "doubting game."* As you read, do the following:

1. Underline or highlight the thesis and major claims made in the article
2. Double-underline (or highlight in a second color) the evidence or support of the claims

After rereading, answer the questions below.

1. What is the thesis of this article?
2. Are there any claims made by Rifkin that you disagree with? What are they?
3. Are there any claims that lack support?

Analyzing Stylistic Choices:

1. How would you describe the style of this article? (formal, informal, academic, scientific...)
2. What is the effect of giving the names of most of the animals involved in the experiments, but not the names of the scientists?
3. Throughout most of the article, Rifkin refers to “researchers,” and “scientists,” but in paragraph 13, he directly quotes Stephen M. Sivity, “a behavioral scientist at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania.” What is the effect of this sudden specificity?
4. What is the effect of all of the rhetorical questions in paragraph 15, followed by “Such questions are being raised” in the next paragraph?

Considering Text Structure:

Divide the text into sections:

1. Draw a line where the introduction ends. Is it after the first paragraph, or are there more introductory paragraphs?
2. Divide the body of the essay into sections based on topics.
3. Draw a line where the conclusion begins. Is it the last paragraph, or does it begin before that?

Descriptive Outlining:

1. What does each section of the article do for the reader? What is the writer trying to accomplish?
2. What does each section say? What is the content?
3. Which section is most developed?
4. Which is least developed?
5. Which section is the most persuasive? The least?
6. What is the essay's main argument? Is it implicit (not stated directly; implied) or explicit(directly stated)?

Now you are ready to look for LOGOS, ETHOS, AND PATHOS!

LOGOS QUESTIONS (these are questions regarding _____):

1. Think about the MAJOR CLAIMS (you already identified these – look up what you wrote down). Ask yourself, “Do I agree with Rifkin’s claim that....?”
2. Look at support for those major claims and ask “Is there any claim that appears to be weak or unsupported? Which one and why?”
3. Can you think of counter-arguments that the author doesn’t deal with?
4. Do you think Rifkin has left something out on purpose? Why or why not?

ETHOS QUESTIONS (these are questions regarding _____):

1. Does it appear that Rifkin has the credentials to speak with authority on this subject?
2. What does the author’s style and language tell you about him or her?
3. Do you trust this author? Do you think he is deceptive? Explain.

PATHOS QUESTIONS (these are questions regarding _____):

1. Rifkin says that Germany is encouraging farmers to give pigs human contact and toys. Does this fact have an emotional impact on the reader? If so, what triggers it? What are some other passages that have an emotional effect?
2. Consider the title Rifkin gives his essay. Does it imply that the scientific discoveries that he summarizes here should change how we FEEL about animals?
3. Does this piece affect you emotionally? What parts?
4. Do you think Rifkin is trying to manipulate your emotions? How?
5. Do your emotions conflict with your logical interpretation of the arguments? In what ways?