

HW 3 Critical Thinking

Rhetorical Devices and Emotional Appeals

Identify any inappropriate rhetorical devices or emotional appeals in the following passages:

1. Once you've made our Day Planner a part of your business life, there's a good chance you'll never miss or be late for another appointment.
2. "Trivial pursuit" is the name of a game played by the California Supreme Court, which will seek any nit-picking excuse preventing murderers from receiving justice.
3. We should not pass gun control laws. It would go against the Second Amendment that is over 200 years old, and that was formulated by our founding fathers.
4. Student to teacher: "What is it about your teaching style that makes us not understand the material?"
5. Can anyone explain me the mad dash to distribute free condoms in our public schools?
6. It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It is the impurities in our air and water that are doing it.
- Former Vice President Dan Quayle
7. Are you against the Republicans and prosperity?
8. "18,812,563 customers can't be wrong"
-*Worldwide Auto Parts* (billboard advertisement)
9. That, in sum, is my proposal, ladies and gentlemen. You know that I trust and value your judgment, and I am aware I could not find a more astute panel of experts to evaluate my suggestion. Thank you.
10. My opponent, the evolutionist, offers you a different history and a different self-image from the one I suggest. While I believe that you and I are made in the image of God and are only one step out of the garden of Eden, he believes that you are made in the image of a monkey and are only one step out of the zoo.

Fallacies

Identify any fallacies in the following passages:

1. Every event has a cause other than itself, since if it didn't, it would have to cause itself, which is impossible.
2. Obviously it was right for the United States to attack Iraq in 1991. Polls at the time showed that over 90 percent of Americans thought the war was justified.
3. Sure dad, a new car is expensive. However, I can't keep on driving around in this pile of junk, can I?
4. We must take Schopenhauer's famous essay denouncing women with a grain of salt. Any psychiatrist would at once explain this essay by reference to the strained relationship between Schopenhauer and his mother.
5. No, I don't believe we ought to reinstate the death penalty in this state. Doing it isn't going to prevent all crime, and you know it.
6. All this talk about secondhand smoke causing cancer, I just don't get it. I mean, when does it happen? The first time you take a breath in a smoky room? The second time? Tenth? You can never pin it down, can you? Seems to me the whole debate is stupid.
7. Poet Allen Ginsberg has argued in favor of abolishing censorship of pornographic literature. But Ginsberg's arguments are nothing but trash. Ginsberg, you know, is a marijuana-smoking homosexual and a thoroughgoing advocate of the drug culture.
8. Senator Jones says that we should not fund the attack submarine program. I disagree entirely. I can't understand why he wants to leave us defenseless like that.
9. America: love it or leave it.
10. Once we let these uptight guardians of morality have their way and start censoring Playboy and Penthouse, the next thing you know they'll be dictating everything we can read. We'll be in fine shape when they decide that Webster's should be pulled from the shelves.

From Bram's Personal Collection

Point out all rhetorical devices, emotional appeals, and fallacies in the passages below.

Death row is no place for IQ tests

The never-ending battle of the left to keep people from being held responsible for the consequences of their own actions is now in the Supreme Court of the United States, where the justices are being urged to exempt murderers from the death penalty if they score below some number on the IQ scale.

Many of the same people who have been telling us for years that IQ and other mental test scores are not really valid, when it comes to determining people's "real" ability to do academic work, have now turned around 180 degrees and made a low IQ score an exemption from paying the price for killing a fellow human being.

-Thomas Sowell, *Times Union*

For those who are in haste to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, please consider other sources of the gas. The head on your beer is produced by carbon dioxide, as are the bubbles in the multimillion soft drinks consumed daily. We produce millions of tons of carbon dioxide in order to have the buzz in carbonated beverages. The holes in a loaf of bread are produced by fermentation. Otherwise, a loaf of bread would be as flat as a pancake. The same is true of cakes and other delights. The socialists of the world and also in this country will have us consuming flat beverages, flat cookies and bread. Where will they end their false crusade?

- Letter to the editor, *Times Union*

When at a Congressional hearing it was suggested that SUVs should be made safer by making them absorb more energy in a crash and making them more crash compatible with cars, the CEO of one of the major car manufacturers dismissed this suggestion by saying: "Look, even if people would drive tanks, they still would get killed when hit by a train".

-adopted from Keith Bradsher in "*High and Mighty*"

Defense Of Marriage Act

The Defense Of Marriage Act (DOMA) was signed in 1996, and specified that, at a federal level, marriage is a union between a man and a woman (which implies that a gay couple cannot marry). In 2010, a federal court judge ruled that DOMA was unconstitutional, and last year, the Obama Administration came out stating it agrees with this finding, and instructing the Department of Justice to no longer defend the constitutionality of DOMA in the courts (though still enforcing it). As one can expect, emotions ran pretty high among proponents and opponents of gay marriage. Below is a sample from an online discussion forum. You know what to do!

What other laws is our Almighty King Obama going to decide he doesn't like!!!!????

Where were you when G.W. Bush was signing laws with one hand and stating he was exempt from them with another?

Your opinion shows you don't understand how law works. No president is obligated to defend a law they think is unconstitutional in court. Every modern president has done the same thing that Obama has done in this case.

Obama makes up rules/laws as he goes along. Judge rules that he can't ban drilling-he does it anyway. Judge rules that Obamacare is unconstitutional-he keeps implementing it. The Dems in charge are completely LAWLESS.

Hey Feisty, lower court judges do not set law, I thought you guys were against judicial activism. I guess that only applies to the decisions you like. More judges have upheld the HCR than have declared it or parts of it unconstitutional. It has to work its way up to the Supreme Court before it gets struck down, for real. Your method smacks of fascism. Did you sleep through civics class?

Let's pretend that a judge rules that guns must be banned. Would you be screaming if Obama failed to support such an unconstitutional law if he were to respond to it the same way?

Does it really matter what this administration does? After 2012 there may be no Democrat party left. But you got to wonder, if there are no democrats, who will represent the socialists, communists, marxists, and gays?

Well, the Republicans have the gays covered. Also the ho'bangers, the pedophiles, and the draft-dodgers.

Being gay is a choice, and therefore not natural. Hence, homosexuality is wrong.