

SUPA WRT 105 Summer Reading Assignment 2017

WRT 105 focuses heavily on analysis and argument. In an effort to sharpen your skills in argument, you will be reading *David & Goliath* by Malcolm Gladwell for your summer reading. Similar to *Outliers*, Gladwell is making an argument throughout his book. What I want you to really focus on is how Gladwell constructs his argument and the devices he uses. Therefore, it would be in your best interest to annotate as you read. The annotations will be very helpful with the final assignment, especially if you spread your reading out over the course of the summer.

After you have read and annotated the book, complete the essay question below. See the list of rhetorical devices below the question. Please email me with any questions.

David & Goliath Essay Question

“Giants are not what we think they are,” says Gladwell in the introduction to *David and Goliath*. The book goes on to argue that people misinterpret contests between the strong and weak by making two mistakes of judgment. First, we forget that being an underdog changes people for the better, and teaches them to win by other, sneaky means. (David slew Goliath because he knew how to use a sling, and could attack the giant from long range.) Second, we ignore the fact that power has its burdens, and what might look to be a clear advantage often hides a hidden set of flaws. (Goliath lost his fight with David because the disease that made him huge impaired his vision and mobility.) Being weak can make you strong, and vice-versa.

In your essay, take a side. Argue whether Gladwell’s assertions about the underdog are correct or oversimplified. Then, the crucial part of your essay is to explain how he successfully or unsuccessfully uses rhetorical devices to prove (or not prove) his claim. Include specific examples from the text to support your analysis. I would strongly suggest outlining your paper first (yes, the dreaded planning) in order to decide which rhetorical devices you are going to focus on and what textual examples you are going to include that will support your analysis.

Rhetorical Strategies Found in Nonfiction Texts

Rhetorical strategy:

- A technique that an author or speaker uses to evoke a response in the audience.
- These responses are central to the meaning of the work or speech, and should also help get the audience's attention.

Appeals to:

Pathos: Verbiage that attempts to influence the listener or reader by appealing to emotion.

Ethos: Improving the truth/value of an assertion by referencing a figure of authority, knowledge, or expertise.

Logos: Improving the truth/value of an assertion by referencing facts and statistics.

Rhetorical Questions: Questions that are posed that do not require an answer.

Analogies: drawing a comparison in order to show a similarity in some respect

Diction: refers to the writer's or the speaker's distinctive vocabulary choices and style of expression. Diction has a direct influence on the author's tone.

Tone: how the author or speaker conveys his/her feeling about the subject matter.

Allusion: a figure of speech that makes a reference to a place, historical event, literary work, myth, or work of art, either directly or by implication. (Think historical, mythological, biblical, etc.)

