

Literate Rhetor

Walking into my Honors English 151 class, I expected to learn how to become a better writer and not dread writing long essays. However, what I obtained was a literacy that is worth far more than pure insipid writing—it is a literacy that enables me to argue my opinions through the use of rhetoric. Looking back at my writing from the previous semester, I would never have guessed that the simple use of rhetoric could make my papers so multidimensional. I learned that earning the right to become a proficient rhetorician was not a walk in the park, but it was a learning experience from which I was able to produce two works that I am very proud to have written and include in this portfolio. These two works include *Driving Clean While Going Green* and *Animal Research: Worth the Sacrifice?*

In *Driving Clean While Going Green*, I enjoyed taking on a creative attitude and introducing the essay through a short scenario that described the success of Toyota's advertisement of its Hybrid Prius. By writing this essay I became more proficient at understanding underlying messages made in advertisements and how to deduce these messages based on "the use of pathos, ethos, and logos in conjunction with immediate verbal context" (Kogan). Furthermore, I learned something new about writing from my peer reviewer, Chris

Toscano, that I had never known before. I never knew that “it’s never good to use two quotes from two different sources back to back because it makes it look like you are combining two ideas from different sources to advance your argument even if they are taken out of context” (Toscano).

Likewise, I learned a great deal from writing *Animal Research: Worth the Sacrifice?* In this essay I discussed my reasons for supporting continued advances in animal testing while building common ground with an opposing audience by explaining some of their views that I agree with. At the end of this essay, I was able to resolve any issues concerned with animal testing by combining ideas on how to improve such research from the opposing audience with my own ideas. This was a great opportunity because it enabled me to reevaluate my views on certain aspects of this issue and realize that my blatant acceptance of animal testing should be supported. Additionally, it taught me to become a more levelheaded person that is able to argue her viewpoint calmly by addressing both aspects of an issue.

However, unlike with *Driving Clean While Going Green*, I had a lot more difficulty writing my essay on animal research because it had to follow the Rogerian argument style. Prior to this class, I had never written argumentative papers using any style other than the traditional

argument style. In a traditional argument I had to convince an audience that my claim is valid and that I am right based on logical reasoning and evidence (Wood 201). Contrary to this, a Rogerian argument is based on "establishing common ground between people who hold divergent positions and may at times express hostility toward each other" (Wood 201). As a person that likes to be correct for the majority of the time, writing a Rogerian argument based paper was especially frustrating because it made me feel like my ideas and values were being threatened. Yet this experience forced me to grow as a writer and continue growing because it made me accept the fact that there are opposing views to my ideas and that sometimes those opposing views are correct. Moreover, by learning to write in the format of a Rogerian argument I gained literacy in rhetoric because I was able to "understand, use, and create tools of expression in a system of communication" (class).

In addition to gaining rhetorical literacy and having the opportunity to write using argumentative styles that I have never used before, I had the pleasure of having my work proofread by peer reviewers. I greatly appreciated this part of the class because it showed me what other people thought about my work and how it could be improved. For example, Tovah Lehrfield noticed many grammatical errors in my Rogerian argument and flagged them, but

also suggested possible changes to these errors. Furthermore, she added funny little comments or motivational phrases that didn't make me feel too bad about the mistakes she found within my paper. Consequently, with the help of my peer reviewers, I was able to redraft my essays into two complete, well-written essays.

Even though my many drafts and peer review sessions are over, my learning various styles of writing will not stop with Honors English 151. I will continue advancing my writing by practicing on building common ground with an audience in every future work I write. Additionally, I will continue thinking about English in a rhetorical manner.

As a product of all the many drafts and peer reviews, in conjunction with all of my hard work and dedication to Honors English 151, I was able to go beyond my previous writing abilities and write in ways that I have never written in before. Thus, I present to you, my Honors English 151 portfolio.