



SENDING MESSAGES TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE HOW THE WRITTEN WORD ADDS POWER TO WRITING

Cristina Guarneri, Ed.D., M.F.A.¹

cristina.guarneri@shu.edu

Adjunct Professor, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey

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Abstract: Writing is one of the most influential ways to reach a target audience. It is through words that we can send a message of strength. Such writing often will lead to action, both positive and negative. The greatest power of writing is its ability to affect others with words. Written words are stronger and possess great emphasis compared to spoken words. Writing is a gift to educate, influence, and inspire others; it has this positive vibe in spreading messages about different topics.

Keywords: *writing; thesis statements; power; persuasion..*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most influential ways to reach a target audience. It is through words that we can send a message of strength. Such writing often will lead to action, both positive and negative. The greatest power of writing is its ability to affect others with words. Written words are stronger and possess great emphasis compared to spoken words. Writing is a gift to educate, influence, and inspire others; it has this positive vibe in spreading messages about different topics.

Words when written become more direct with clearer messages. Compared to the spoken word, the influence can be caused by many factors such as body language, tone of voice, and the use of thesis statements. Writing effectively relies only upon the words, and yet, the impact is much stronger. Since written words are not affected by volume and the tone of voice of the speaker, writing gives a more quiet and solid message. When looking to

emphasize a topic of importance, it is best to write it.

Writing is a gift that is able to educate, influence, and inspire readers; as it provides a vibe in sending messages about various topics. Audiences are more likely to respond when the message is written to them. According to Flores and Machado, in the act of composing, writing gives way “to remember, to heal, to speak the truth, to cultivate your voice, and to carve out your place in the world” (68). Writing allows for personal storytelling, a sharing of history, and an ability to be heard. Jacqueline Woodson states in *The Day You Begin*, “There will be times when you walk into a room and no one there is quite like you until the day you begin to share your stories” (Flores & Machado, 68). The power of the pen to power to begin to understand our voices more deeply. Writing, though fraught for so many of us, have such power—to heal, to empower, and to understand. Writing can be “a lantern glowing in the dark” for all of us—but only we can find it.

¹ Corresponding author

Recognizing the power of the written word also means the importance of including structural parts to writing, such as sentence structure and more importantly, the thesis statement.

Persuading through Thesis Statements

The thesis statement is one of the most crucial skills every writer must master to be an excellent writer, as it is the one sentence that summarizes the overall point of the paragraph. For each paragraph, the writer must ask themselves what conclusion they would like the reader to reach by the end of that paragraph and then craft a sentence that explicitly communicates that same conclusion — the thesis sentence. Thus, a thesis sentence is unlike a topic sentence given that the latter merely introduces the point of the paragraph without going one step further, as a thesis sentence must, and providing the substance of that point of view to their target audience. For example, when developing a powerful thesis sentence in argumentative writing, there are four main points, as found in figure 1, they are as follows: 1) a good argumentative thesis is focused and not too broad, 2) a good argumentative thesis is centered on a debatable topic, 3) a good argumentative thesis picks a side, and 4) a good thesis makes claims that will be supported later in the paper.

When developing thesis statements, the use of these four main points is important to developing persuasive ideas and sentences. Often, readers are skeptical of what they read. They are unlikely to accept a proposition simply because the writer says it is so. Instead, as they read, readers are constantly testing all assertions to see if they agree. This task is made much easier if the reader is constantly aware of the precise hypothesis or assertion they should be testing at that point in the paper. The reader will approach each paragraph with two questions inside: 1) what is the point of this paragraph, and 2) do I agree with that point? Because the reader cannot gauge the credibility of any particular point until they first identify that point, the writer must identify that point at the earliest point in the paragraph.

Moreover, in academia, there are challenges for students when faced with trying to write organized texts using effective thesis statements. The use of thesis statements to further develop power is characteristic to developing the Ethos, Logos, and Pathos or persuasion essential to writing.

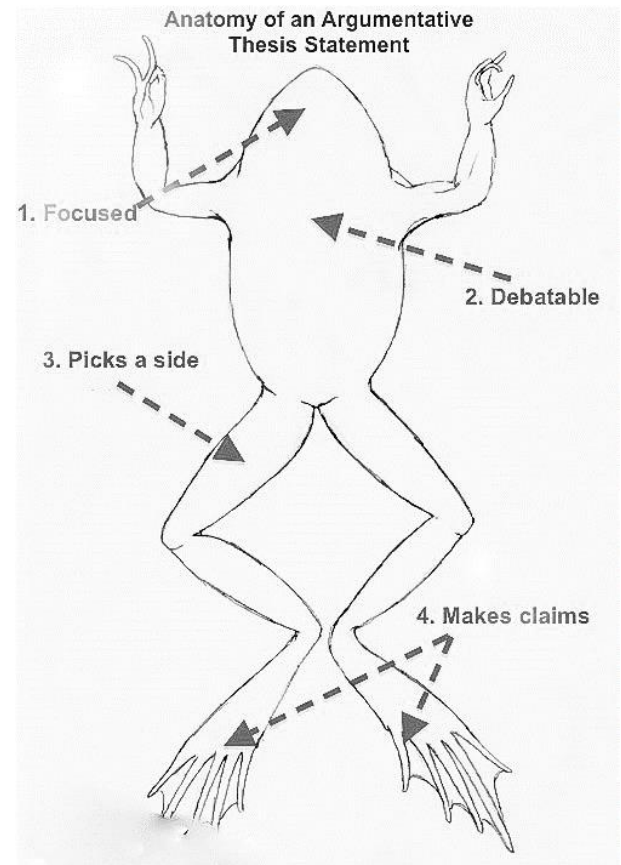


Figure 1: Wilbur, thesis frog used when developing argumentative thesis statements.

Writing in Academia and Beyond

The most common starting place for studying these forms and situations in courses like freshman composition—the study of formal systems of argument, such as those of Aristotle, Toulmin, and Rogers—ends up being a long diversion from the actual work of rhetorical analysis and practice. We can get into the work faster, with no loss of intellectual rigor, by teasing out the meanings of



such expressions as “appeal to an audience, “the appeal to Nature,” or “the film’s appeal” as they are used in ordinary language. Then we can link those implications to rhetorical concepts that lend them new interpretive and productive power” (1). There are four elements—three positions and a medium of exchange. The three positions are

- the position of the author (or agent of production),
- the position of the audience (the reader, viewer, user, judge, jury), and
- a position of value to which the author refers (such as economic well-being, moral goodness, physical health, spiritual enlightenment, family attachment, community solidarity, amusement and diversion, anything that has worth or value in one’s life).

Writing for Appeal and Persuasion

Authors communicate to an audience through a medium such as spoken language, writing, radio, television, or e-mail, working indirectly by appealing to the position of value. Successful appeals, through the use of words, move the audience, the result of which is the alignment of the three positions using Ethos, Logos, and Pathos. Aristotle’s Rhetoric, with its famous notion of the three appeals—ethos (appeal to character), logos (appeal to reason), and pathos (appeal to feeling). Aristotle’s “appeals” may not be appeals at all, but rather to define the concept that links ethos, pathos, and logos in Aristotle’s system is not “appeal” but rather “mode of persuasion” or “means of persuasion,” or simply “proof.” In the everyday world of television news, courtroom interchange, and commercial discourse, “appeal” means one of two ways:

- An appeal can mean “to plead one’s case,” usually before a higher authority. We can thus appeal to the Supreme Court, for example—or in a more metaphysical vein,

we can appeal to Nature or some other supreme being.

- An appeal can mean “to please,” as when a product appeals to a customer, or a person appeals to a lover: product appeal or sex appeal. In ordinary language, to appeal means to plead or to please.

Consider the original meanings of the two key terms:

- To plead derives from the term is Latin for “that which is agreed upon, a decision, or decree,” and
- To please is derived from the Latin term for “pleasing” or “agreeable” and a related term meaning “to calm” or “to soothe.” The Indo-European root for all these words points to an interesting meaning: “to be calm (as of the flat sea).”

Etymologically, then, to appeal to an audience—whether to plead or to please—means to promote agreement or harmony, to smooth the waters between author and audience, or any two positions. A slight distinction is made between “author and audience” and “any two positions” is important.

An appeal is always directed to an audience in some sense, but one interesting thing about appeals is that they tend to proceed indirectly toward their goal. When the poet says that the very skies cry out a tan offense against the hero, we have an appeal to Nature that the ideal audience will find appealing. If an accused thief says, “As God is my witness, I did not do it,” the appeal to the higher power is meant to sway the audience of police or jury. In these cases, the appeal goes toward the audience by way of the third position, God or Nature. The author is trying to align the reader to persuasion using legal authority, character, and emotion. This is often able to be applied to thesis statements and overall writing. The power of persuasion goes beyond the

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general structure of writing. It encompasses emotion to take place. To hear, smell, taste, touch, and see are all necessary to not only creative writing, but in academic as well.

CONCLUSION

Words are much like winged energy that can transport us to high places. Words link us together as human beings, and paint pictures, bringing forth a smile or a tear. Words can expand our consciousness until there are no words left for the experience. It is through the power of writing, through the power of language that allows for the transient experience that allows for the writer to be able to do anything in life with authority, emotion, and character. It is what Aristotle looked to use on appeal, so to persuade those around him. Often, people are prone to be skeptical of what they hear and read. Understanding how to include thesis statements, identifying points of view, and credibility writers can share their stories that allow for the power of the written word to prevail in modern language.

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