

Special Focus on AP English Language: Rhetoric

SOAPStone

- Subject:** What is the subject of the text (the general topic, content, or ideas contained in the text)? How do you know this? How does the author present the subject? Is it introduced immediately or delayed? Is the subject hidden? Or is there more than one subject?
- Occasion:** What is the rhetorical occasion (the time and place of the piece or the current situation)? Is it a memory, a description, an observation, a valedictory, an argument, a diatribe, an elegy, a declaration, a critique, a journal entry, or...?
- Audience:** Who is the audience (the group of readers to whom this piece is directed)? Does the speaker identify an audience? What assumptions exist about the intended audience?
- Purpose:** What is the purpose for the passage (the reason for its composition)? What is the speaker's purpose (the reason behind the text)? How is this message conveyed? What is the message? How does the speaker try to spark a reaction in the audience? What techniques are used to achieve a purpose? How does the text make the audience feel? What is its intended effect?
- Speaker:** Who is the speaker (the voice that tells the story)? Is someone identified as the speaker? What assumptions can be made about the speaker? What age, gender, class, emotional state, education, or...?
- Tone:** If the author were to read aloud the passage, describe the likely tone of voice. It is whatever clarifies the author's attitude toward the subject. What emotional sense pervades the piece? How does the diction point to tone? How does the author's diction, details, images, language, and sentence structure convey his or her feelings?

STEP 4: Making Meaning

Students can annotate by circling interesting or unfamiliar words, bracketing important ideas, connecting related concepts with lines, asterisking special ideas, indicating figurative language, questioning irony, and commenting in the margins. I model active reading by using a transparency. As I read, I mark the text. Sometimes I read the text to them, having them actively read along, using their pens to mark the passage. When they are finished we share samples of their own work; this is more realistic and less intimidating than a teacher modeling. Figure 1 is an example of an annotated reading of the Franklin passage.