

Telling a Story about Research: Positioning Yourself as a Scholar

Assignment

We have discussed a number of rhetorical concepts such as:

- the types of appeals writers make in each argument—**logos**, **pathos** and **ethos** (that is, what they want you to think/feel/do)
- notions of space and time—**kairos** and **chronos** (the correct place and time for a discussion, and the long history of an ongoing discussion);
- **discourse communities** (a group that forms around a particular set of conversations and that have their own ways of speaking related to certain locations like school, the workplace, etc.)
- **content** (what a text has to say, or the information it provides)
- **rhetoricity** (how a text's style encourages readers to think about a topic, feel about the message, and take some kind of action; in other words, the “work” it is doing in the world)

We also discussed **story** as the central theme of this semester's course. The term “story” is popularly associated with simple or fictional tales, but stories are more than that. They are a vital rhetorical technology that human beings have long used to make sense of the world and how they make their way in it.

To do this, we must consider another term: **positionality**. Positionality refers to a person's position in relation to other people, nonhuman life, and even the elements. Socially, politically, and ontologically, we all have identities that are based on the privileges, responsibilities, and deficits we experience in relation to others. Positionality has to do with power—who has it, who needs it, how to attain it—in a particular context, and we use rhetoric to navigate these situations. For example, if a scholar wishes to demonstrate their expertise, they must write about their work but must also ensure that their essay fits the conventions of the discourse community to which they aim to belong.

In this essay, we are going to practice composing an academic essay, and we are using story as a way to establish our positionality in relation to the chosen topic. That means that in addition to “telling the story” about your selected topic, you are also going to include certain cues that allow your audience to contextualize your knowledge. In other words, you are being clear about your interest in and background on the topic.

To complete the essay, you must compose an introduction that provides a thesis statement, backing claims, and a road map of what follows. Be sure to use subheaders to distinguish the different parts of the essay. Use details to ensure your audience(s) are moved as intended. Follow all this with a conclusion (no longer than two paragraphs) that summarizes the lessons of the essay and possible future directions for readers. Be sure to use sources throughout your essay as supporting evidence. Finish by making sure to list the sources used in your References section, using correct APA style.

Remember, you can select the topic of your essay so be sure to watch the video about the prompt, and to follow the instructions provided in the video on academic writing! We will go

over APA citations next week, so if you are familiar with APA, feel free to cite your sources now; otherwise, mark where you use sources for now and add them next week.

Format and Required Documents

Your essay should

- be in 12-point font, using APA format;
- have an introduction with evident thesis statement;
- provide a roadmap;
- present a solid argument that summarizes the main takeaways of sources;
- connect sections in a logical way;
- use techniques intended to evoke targeted emotions in the audience;
- explicitly call for a certain course of action;
- end on a forward-looking note.
- make use of five sources, popular (no more than two) and academic.

 **Completed rough draft** due: