Three Levels of Analysis

Level One: Looking at the Rhetorical Triangle

1. **Author**
   - Who is the author?
   - Is the author knowledgeable about the subject?
   - Does the author seem fair and balanced by presenting both sides of an argument equally OR does the author seem biased and present only one side of an argument?
   - Do you trust the author? Why and why not?
2. Audience
   • Who is the audience for this text?
   • How much does the audience know about this topic?
   • Are they interested in the topic?
   • How does the audience feel about the topic?
   • Does the audience have any prejudices or preconceived ideas before even reading the text?

3. Purpose
   • Does the writer propose something?
   • What is the central thesis of the writer’s argument?
   • Does the writer want you to do something after reading his/her argument? If so, what?

4. Context
   • What are the historical surroundings of the writer?
   • What are the cultural expectations?
   • How does class play a role in the message?
   • How does the venue make a difference?

5. Message
   • Adding all of this together, what is the message?

**Level Two: Organization and Evidence**

**Organization**
   • How is the text organized to maximize its impact?
   • How does the writer start the piece? Is there something to get you on his or her side? To defuse you? To energize you?
   • How does the writer end the piece? With a call to action? With an observation? What is the power of the ending?
   • How does the writer organize the evidence within a piece?

**Evidence**
   • What types of evidence does the author rely on to persuade you?
     - Logos - Logical arguments and evidence (head)
     - Pathos - Emotional arguments and evidence (heart)
     - Ethos - Nature and character of the speaker (Do you trust him/her? Does he/she seem knowledgeable? What is the purpose?)

**Level Three: Style**
   • How does the **diction**, the author’s choice of words, influence the writing?
   • How does the **syntax**, the study of how the author’s sentence structure, connect to the purpose?
   • How does the **mood/tone** created contribute to the piece?
   • How do the elements of **figurative language** add meaning and emphasis?