Considerations for Completing a Rhetorical Analysis

**Context:** What is the context of the piece? When was it written? What was taking place at that time, with regard to the culture and society of the author? In other words, why did the author write about the topic, and at that particular moment in time?

**Audience:** What kind of audience was it written for? Do you think that you’re a part of the intended audience? Why or why not?

**Purpose:** What is its intended purpose? What purpose or agenda do you think that the writer had when creating this piece?

**Topic:** What is the main thesis? What key terms or ideas do you see? What did you know about the subject matter before reading it? What personal biases, opinions, or agendas may you have brought to the table about the topic?

**Organization:** How did the author organize his/her ideas? Why do you think he/she has chosen to organize it in that way?

**Title:** What does the title indicate? After reading the article, does it meet any expectations you may have had from reading the title?

**Genre and Medium:** What do you know about the selected medium (online, in print, etc.) and the genre of the piece?

**Design and Presentation:** How is the text presented? Does it include visuals? Why or why not? What about the imagery and/or font choices? Are the choices appropriate for the genre?

**Rhetorical Strategies:** Has the author used any specific rhetorical strategies (e.g., definition, compare/contrast, example or illustration, classification, analogy, etc.) to make his or her point?

**For all of the above, ask:** What clues in the piece lead you to those answers? Were they successful?

(For additional detail, see *St. Martin’s Handbook*, Chapter 7)