AP Language and Composition
Required Summer Reading Assignment

Advanced Placement Language and Composition is an intensive study of rhetoric and how language works. Through close reading of non-fiction prose, students develop their ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate language and text with greater awareness of purpose and strategy, while strengthening their own composition abilities. The course is intended for motivated students who wish to increase their abilities in analytical reading and writing, especially of the argument.

There are ***three parts*** to your summer reading assignment. It is suggested that you complete Part I as the info will assist you in completing the rest of the assignment.

Part 1 - The Language of Composition: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric – Chapter One

1. Print, read, and outline Chapter 1 of the textbook: "An Introduction to Rhetoric." Your outline should be handwritten! ***Bring them with you to class on the first day.***
   NOTE: The chapter is included in this packet for printing.

Part 2 - *On Keeping a Notebook* by Joan Didion

1. Closely read and annotate Didion's essay On Keeping a Notebook (see tips below)
2. Create and print a Google Doc that does the following:
   - Identifies Didion's claim/thesis about keeping a notebook.
   - Provides four examples of how Didion supports her claim with embedded textual evidence.
3. A copy of the essay is in this packet. ***Print it and bring your annotations to class on the first day.***

Working Through the Text

CHUNK the text! Think: ***BEGINNING*** (how does the author open); ***MIDDLE*** (what key details does the author provide to support the main idea?); and ***END*** (how does the author end the text?).

- **Beginning**: How does she open the essay and what does she provide as evidence to support her claim about the importance of keeping a notebook. Provide an example from the beginning of the text.
- **Middle:** Where does the text shift from intro to support? How does she present information to the reader in the middle of her essay that supports her claim/thesis. Try to divide the middle into two parts and provide two examples from the text.
- **End:** What does she say at the end that supports her thesis. Find evidence to support this and provide an example from the end.

Part 3: Persuasive Speech

1. Write ***two*** short speeches (between 350 and 500 words each) that address each of the following scenarios:
   - **Speech 1: Convince your parents that transferring to a different school for your senior year makes sense.**
   - **Speech 2: Convince your current high school friend(s) that transferring to a different school for your senior year makes sense.**
2. Review your notes from Chapter 1. Focus on the following elements of rhetoric and be sure to consider them when you craft your speeches.
   - Audience, context, occasion, purpose.
   - Ethos, pathos, logos

Important Note

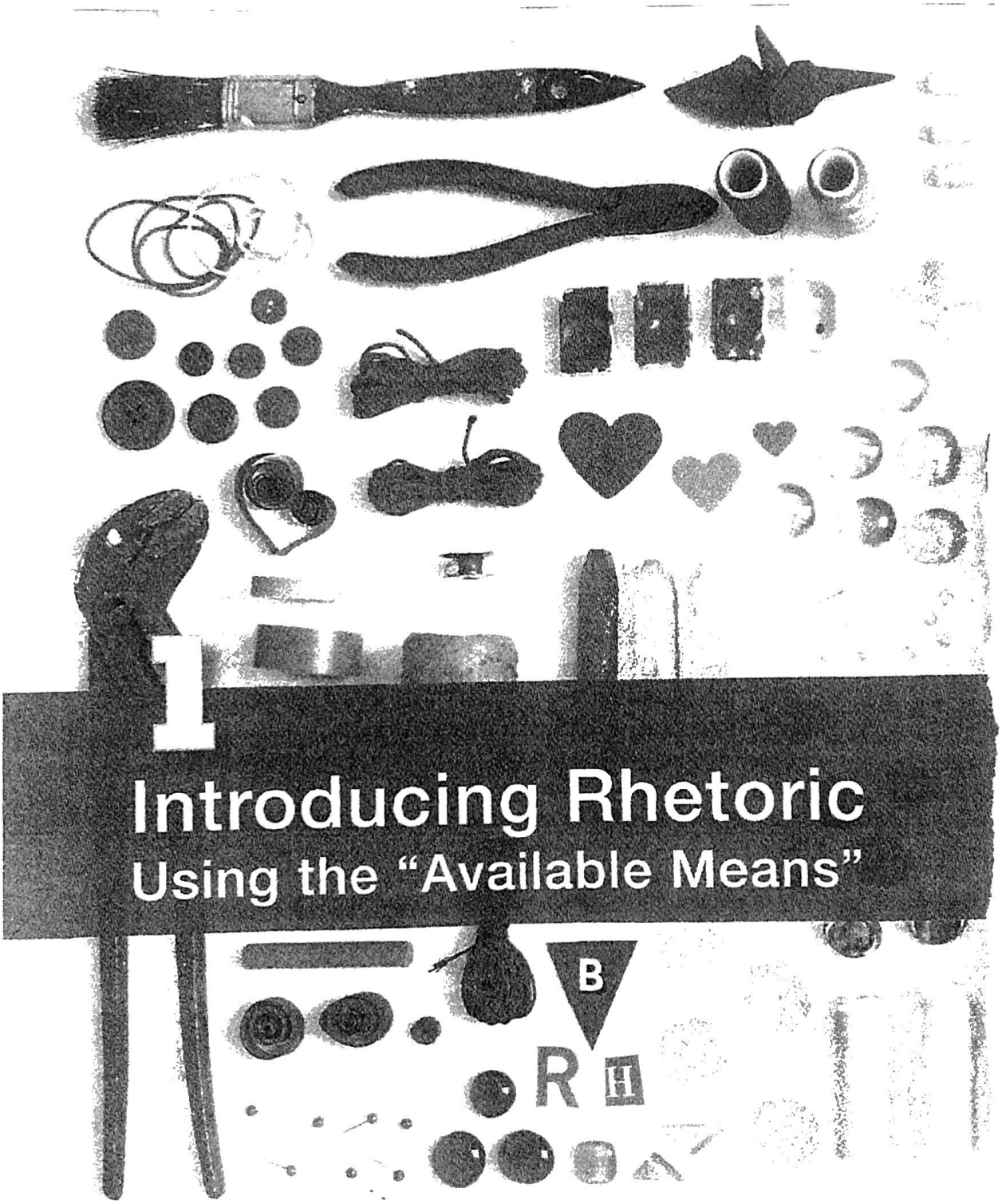
On the first day of class you should have a printed copy of:

1. On Keeping a Notebook analysis (typed)
2. Speech 1 and Speech 2 (typed)
3. Chapter 1 Outline (handwritten)

The Language of Composition

Reading * Writing * Rhetoric

Chapter One



1 Introducing Rhetoric
Using the "Available Means"

To many people, the word *rhetoric* signals that trickery or deception is afoot. They assume that an advertiser is trying to manipulate a consumer, a politician wants to obscure a point, or a spin doctor is spinning. "Empty rhetoric!" is a common criticism — and at times, an indictment. Yet the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) defined **rhetoric** as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."

At its best, rhetoric is a thoughtful, reflective activity leading to effective communication, including the rational exchange of differing viewpoints. In our day, as in the time of Aristotle, those who understand and can use the available means to appeal to an **audience** of one or many find themselves in a position of strength. They have the tools to resolve conflicts without confrontation, to persuade readers or listeners to support their position, or to move others to take action.

Rhetoric is not just for Roman senators in togas. You might use rhetoric to convince a friend that Prince was the greatest musician of his generation, explain to readers of your blog why *Night of the Living Dead* is the most influential horror movie of all time, or persuade your parents that they should buy you the latest model of smartphone. Rhetoric is also not just about speeches. Every essay, political cartoon, photograph, and advertisement is designed to convince you of something. To simplify, we will call all of these things **texts** because they are cultural products that can be "read," meaning not just consumed and comprehended, but investigated. We need to be able to "read between the lines," regardless of whether we're reading a political ad, a political cartoon, or a political speech. The writer, speaker, or artist makes strategic decisions to appeal to an audience of a text. Even in documentary films, every decision — such as what lighting to use for an interview, what music to play, what to show and what to leave out — constitutes a rhetorical choice based on what the filmmaker thinks will be most persuasive.

And rhetoric is not just for English class. By approaching texts rhetorically in your other courses — whether you're analyzing an environmental issue, proposing a strategy to address an economic problem, or arguing the causes of a historical event — you can apply the critical literacy skills that you develop. But there's even a bigger picture: informed citizenship. That concept might sound distant and lofty, but democracy should not be taken for granted. Our nation's founders may have given us the basic tools for creating a democratic society, but a government by consent of the people will always need its people to be well-informed and to engage with others in civil discourse. Otherwise, how can we hope to elect a fair government and create a just society? As informed citizens and consumers who understand how rhetoric works, we can be wary of manipulation or deceit while still appreciating effective and civil communication.

Learning rhetoric will teach you to spot the tricks an advertiser is trying to play on you, to identify sources of misinformation and propaganda (including "fake news"), and to think critically. It's also important to go beyond critique to produce effective arguments of your own as you develop a public identity in various communities — whether you're at school, on social media, or out in the "real world." So, let's get started.

Identify an article, a speech, a video, or an advertisement that you think is manipulative or deceptive and one that is civil and effective. Use these two examples to explain what you see as the difference.

The Rhetorical Situation

Let's begin by looking at a speech that nearly everyone has read or heard: the farewell speech that baseball player Lou Gehrig gave at an Appreciation Day held in his honor on July 4, 1939. Gehrig had recently learned that he was suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), an incurable neurological disorder that has come to be known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Although Gehrig was a reluctant speaker, the fans' chant of "We want Lou!" brought him to the podium to deliver one of the most powerful and heartfelt speeches of all time.

Farewell Speech

LOU GEHRIG

Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about a bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth. I have been in ballparks for seventeen years and have never received anything but kindness and encouragement from you fans.

Look at these grand men. Which of you wouldn't consider it the highlight of his career just to associate with them for even one day? Sure, I'm lucky. Who wouldn't consider it an honor to have known Jacob Ruppert? Also, the builder of baseball's greatest empire, Ed Barrow? To have spent six years with that wonderful little fellow, Miller Huggins? Then to have spent the next nine years with that outstanding leader, that smart student of psychology — the best manager in baseball today, Joe McCarthy? Sure, I'm lucky.

When the New York Giants, a team you would give your right arm to beat, and vice versa, sends you a gift — that's something! When everybody down to the groundskeepers and those boys in white coats remember you with trophies — that's something! When you have a wonderful mother-in-law who takes sides with you in squabbles against her own daughter — that's something! When you have a father and mother who work all their lives so that you can have an education and build your body — it's a blessing! When you have a wife who has been a tower of strength and shown more courage than you dreamed existed — that's the finest I know!

So I close in saying that I might have been given a bad break, but I have an awful lot to live for!

While in our time the word *rhetoric* may suggest deception, this speech reminds us that rhetoric can serve sincerity as well. No wonder one commentator wrote, "Lou Gehrig's speech almost rocked Yankee Stadium off its feet."

Occasion, Context, and Purpose

Why is this an effective speech? First of all, rhetoric is always situational. Every text is influenced by the historical, cultural, and social movements of its time. We call these broad influences **context**. Within that context, a text is also directly informed by the **occasion** — the specific circumstances, atmosphere, attitudes, and events surrounding the creation of the text. The occasion involves an opportune moment for decision or action — which gives rise to the text. Sometimes, the occasion is immediately apparent, such as in the case of an attack, an election, or a natural disaster. In other instances, the speaker must clarify, and even argue for, the occasion, to convince people of its urgency.

In the case of Gehrig's speech, the occasion is Lou Gehrig Appreciation Day. More specifically, his moment comes at home plate between games of a doubleheader. The context is first and foremost Gehrig's recent announcement of his illness and his subsequent retirement, but as is often the case, the context goes well beyond that. Gehrig, known as the "Iron Horse," held the record for consecutive games played (2,130) and was one of the greatest sluggers of all time. For such a durable and powerful athlete to fall victim to a disease that strips away strength and coordination seemed an especially cruel fate. Just a couple of weeks earlier, Gehrig was still playing ball; by the time he gave this speech, he was so weak that his manager had to help him walk out to the mound for the ceremony.

Purpose is the goal the speaker wants to achieve. One of Gehrig's chief purposes in delivering this speech is to thank his fans and teammates, but he also wants to demonstrate that he remains positive: he emphasizes his past luck and present optimism and downplays his illness. He makes a single reference to the diagnosis and does so in the strong, straightforward language of an athlete: he got a "bad break." There is no blame, no self-pity, no plea for sympathy. Throughout, he maintains his focus: to thank his fans and teammates for their support and get on with watching the ballgame. Gehrig responds as a true Yankee, not just the team but the can-do Yankee spirit of America, by acknowledging his illness and accepting his fate with dignity, honor, humility, and even a touch of humor.

[redacted]

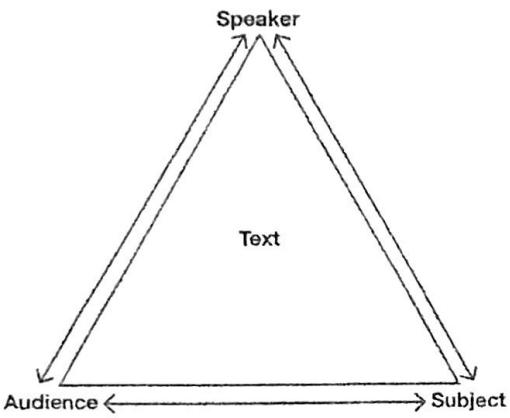
~~Construct and analyze a rhetorical situation for writing a review of a particular movie, a new app, or a local restaurant. Be very specific in your analysis. What is your subject and its context? What is your purpose? Who is your audience? What is your relationship to the audience? Remember, you need not write a full review, just analyze the rhetorical situation.~~

The Rhetorical Triangle

Another important aspect of the rhetorical situation is the relationship among the speaker, audience, and subject. One way to conceptualize the relationship among these elements is through the **rhetorical triangle**. Some refer to it as the **Aristotelian**

triangle because Aristotle used a triangle to illustrate how these three elements are interrelated. How a speaker perceives the relationships among these elements will go a long way toward determining what he or she says and how he or she says it.

Let's use the rhetorical triangle to analyze Gehrig's speech.



Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle

The **speaker** is the person or group who creates a text. This might be a politician who delivers a speech, a commentator who writes an article, an artist who draws a political cartoon, or even a company that commissions an advertisement. Don't think of the speaker solely as a name, but consider a description of who the speaker is in the context of the text. The speaker of the speech we just read is not just Lou Gehrig, but baseball hero and ALS victim. Sometimes, there is a difference between who the speaker is in real life and the role the speaker plays when delivering the speech. This is called a **persona**. Persona comes from the Greek word for "mask"; it means the face or character that a speaker shows to his or her audience. Lou Gehrig is a famous baseball hero, but in his speech he presents himself as a common man who is modest and thankful for the opportunities he's had.

The **audience** is the listener, viewer, or reader of a text or performance, but it is important to note that there may be multiple audiences. Most of the time, there is a primary or intended audience, but there may also be secondary or even unintended audiences. Think, for instance, of someone giving a speech to a particular audience gathered in an auditorium — the primary and intended audience; if the speech, or part of it, ends up on social media, there is another larger audience that the speaker may or may not have anticipated. When making rhetorical decisions, speakers start by asking what values their intended audience holds, particularly whether the audience is hostile, friendly, or neutral, and how informed it is on the topic at hand. Sure, Gehrig's audience was his teammates and the fans in the stadium that day, but it was also the teams he played against, the fans listening on the radio, and posterity — us.

The **subject** is the topic. And the subject should not be confused with the purpose, which is the goal the speaker wants to achieve. Gehrig's subject is not only his illness, but also all the lucky breaks that preceded his diagnosis.

ACTIVITY

This essay is from the *Columbus Dispatch*, an Ohio newspaper with a weekly "First Person" forum that features articles by readers. At the time, the author was a high-school senior. Analyze the rhetorical situation, paying close attention to the persona of the speaker, the context, the subject, the intended audience, and the purpose.

For Teenager, Hijab a Sign of Freedom, Not Stricture

MINA SHAHINFAR

Why would you wear that? Aren't you hot under it? Are you bald?

Such questions are among those I field most every day.

Other people see my headscarf but cannot see why I make such a religious commitment.

As a Muslim-American, I frequently have to explain my hijab. I don't mind; I love that some people are curious about why I stand out.

But nothing could have left me more fascinated, or utterly shocked, than this recent question: *Why does your religion denigrate women?* 5

I felt offended, disappointed, and heartbroken.

I'd met the girl in the lunch line during a summer program I was attending. She asked the question with the deepest sincerity. Evidently, to many other people, my religion cruelly symbolizes the oppression of women.

Eventually overcoming my bewilderment, I smiled, and responded: "Good question. But you've got it all wrong."

When outsiders look at the politics and culture of the Middle East, they inevitably see overwhelming male dominance. But culture and religion are not one and the same.

Yes, in some parts of the Islamic world, unfortunately, women are victims — victims of compulsory hijab, domestic violence, rape, stoning and honor killings. These are remnants of a medieval world, of patriarchy and of misguided interpretation of the Quran. 10

Moreover, in the world today, excellent women are often defined by their relation to men. Many people can't comprehend the process of hijab as an expression of mutual respect, equality, and social harmony for both women and men. Hijab isn't merely a cloth around the head; it is an observance, a way of life, an expression of oneself.

Hijab for men primarily exists in dignified actions and manners. In the same way, women express hijab, but they also can choose to adopt a visible symbol.

My decision to observe hijab, the greatest gift I've ever given myself, confirms my status as a Muslim without altering my commitment to feminism.

For most of my life, I was the image of the typical American girl: long hair flowing, eyes sparkling, skirt perfectly fitting.

More recently, since I started high school, I have made room for an addition to my morning routine: As I get dressed, I might go for my favorite Abercrombie skinny jeans and long-sleeve T-shirt. But then I secure my hair with an elastic tie, carefully wrap my scarf along the rim of my face, drape it over my bun, and adjust any wrinkles along the edge. 15

What I reveal by the covering has a meaning entirely emblematic of my feminism. And I walk out the door consciously aware that I stand out.

By choosing hijab, I display who I am. But I choose to emphasize other aspects of myself that form my identity: my character, intellect, quirky personality, and illusory hopes and dreams — my inner existence. By choosing hijab, I liberate myself from the shackles of the status quo, the same way a feminist counters social conformity. When others interact with me, they

see and listen to my thoughts and ideas, rather than focus on my physical appearance.

My hijab reflects more of me than a million strands of hair ever could. I am anything but oppressed.

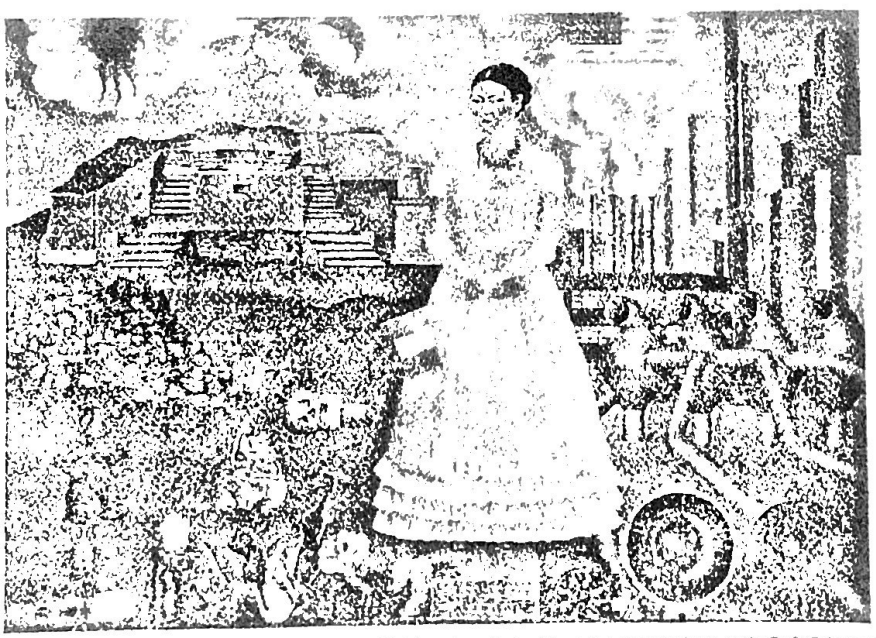
People shouldn't conceal their thoughts beneath their clothes to please society. Hijab was my solution. With it, I set myself free, all the while unapologetically defying gender norms.

What could possibly be more feminist? 20

ANALYZING VISUAL TEXTS

Recognizing Rhetoric

Understanding the rhetorical situation underlying a written text helps us read between the lines to fully grasp its message — and this is also true of all kinds of visual texts. Even artists create work within a specific context and use specific strategies to portray their subject matter in a particular light. As an example, let's look at the painting by the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (1907–1954) entitled *Self-Portrait on the Borderline between Mexico and the United States*.



More than a self-portrait, this painting, completed in 1932, is a commentary on two societies — traditional Mexico and a heavily industrialized United States. In this case, the speaker is the artist, who stands at the center of the painting. The occasion is that Kahlo was traveling in the United States with her husband Diego Rivera, who was commissioned

to paint murals for the Detroit Institute of the Arts. The subject is Kahlo's yearning for her homeland during her stay in what she referred to "Gringolandia."

If we examine the contrast Kahlo draws between Mexico and the United States, we begin to understand her purpose. Frida stands between a pre-Columbian temple that reminds us of Mexico's ancient, indigenous heritage, and a U.S. factory, which is depicted through smoke-belching chimney stacks labeled "Ford." In fact, the sun, moon, and lightning bolt on the Mexican side suggest the power of nature, while the smoke on the U.S. side portrays industrial waste and pollution. Along the bottom of the painting, there are native plants in bloom in Mexico, while in the United States, three alien-looking machines with black electric cords appear to be growing from the ground. The rich earth tones of plant life contrast sharply with the gray tones used to depict the mechanical environment of the factories.

So if Kahlo's purpose is to contrast a culture more attuned to natural forces with an industrialized and dehumanized one, who is her audience? This is not an easy question, but we might speculate that the central figure holding a Mexican flag is reminding her North American neighbors — and hosts — that theirs is not the only, nor necessarily the superior, society. We might even say that, to achieve her purpose, Kahlo idealizes her own more traditional, agrarian culture while she exaggerates the factories that dominate the U.S. landscape.

Appeals to Ethos, Logos, and Pathos

Now that we've practiced analyzing the rhetorical situation, the next step is to use the tools of rhetoric to persuade an audience. Let's start with what Aristotle called **rhetorical appeals**. He identified three main appeals: ethos, logos, and pathos. These are important in that they provide a structure and a reminder that effective rhetoric takes into account all three, though rarely in equal measure.

Ethos

A speaker's **ethos** (Greek for "character") — expertise, knowledge, experience, sincerity, or a combination of these factors — gives the audience a reason for listening to this person on this subject. By effective ethos, we mean ways that the speaker demonstrates that he or she is trustworthy and credible. Think, for example, of a speech discouraging teenagers from drinking. Speakers might appeal to ethos by stressing that they are concerned parents, psychologists specializing in alcoholism or adolescent behavior, or recovering alcoholics themselves. Appeals to ethos often emphasize shared values between the speaker and the audience: when a parent speaks to other parents in the same community, there is a shared concern for their children's education or well-being. Lou Gehrig brings the ethos of being a legendary athlete to his speech, yet in it he establishes a different kind of ethos — that of a regular guy and a good sport who shares the audience's love of baseball and family. And like them, he has known good luck and bad breaks.

Automatic Ethos

In some instances, a speaker's reputation immediately establishes ethos. For example, the speaker may be a scholar in Russian history and economics as well as the nation's secretary of state. Or the speaker may be "the dog whisperer," a well-known animal behaviorist. In these instances, the speaker brings ethos to the text; but in other cases, a speaker establishes ethos through what he or she says in the text by sounding reasonable, acknowledging other opinions, or being thoughtful and well-informed.

Let's look at an example of how a speaker's title or status automatically brings ethos to the rhetorical situation. On September 3, 1939, King George VI gave a radio address to the British people declaring that the country was at war with Germany. The very fact that he is king gives him a certain degree of automatic ethos to speak on the subject of war, yet King George also emphasizes the shared values that unite everyone.

The King's Speech (September 3, 1939)

KING GEORGE VI

In this grave hour, perhaps the most fateful in history, I send to every household of my peoples, both at home and overseas, this message, spoken with the same depth of feeling for each one of you as if I were able to cross your threshold and speak to you myself.

For the second time in the lives of most of us, we are at war. Over and over again, we have

tried to find a peaceful way out of the differences between ourselves and those who are now our enemies, but it has been in vain. We have been forced into a conflict, for we are called, with our allies, to meet the challenge of a principle which, if it were to prevail, would be fatal to any civilized order in the world.

It is a principle which permits a state in the selfish pursuit of power to disregard its treaties and its solemn pledges, which sanctions the use of force or threat of force against the sovereignty and independence of other states. Such a principle, stripped of all disguise, is surely the mere primitive doctrine that might is right, and if this principle were established throughout the world, the freedom of our own country and of the whole British Commonwealth of nations would be in danger. But far more than this, the peoples of the world would be kept in bondage of fear, and all hopes of settled peace and of the security of justice and liberty among nations, would be ended.

This is the ultimate issue which confronts us. For the sake of all we ourselves hold dear, and of the world order and peace, it is unthinkable that we should refuse to meet the challenge.

It is to this high purpose that I now call my 5
people at home and my people across the seas who will make our cause their own. I ask them to stand calm and firm and united in this time of trial. The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead, and war can no longer be confined to the battlefield, but we can only do the right as we see the right, and reverently commit our cause to God. If one and all we keep resolutely faithful to it, ready for whatever service or sacrifice it may demand, then with God's help, we shall prevail.

May He bless and keep us all.

At the outset, King George expresses his commitment to his people, his subjects, knowing that he is asking them to make their own commitment and sacrifice. As their king, he is not expected to present himself as a common man, yet he establishes the ethos of a common experience. He tells them he speaks "with the same depth of feeling . . . as if I were able to cross your threshold and speak to you myself."

King George uses "we" in order to speak as one of the people. He acknowledges that "we are at war" for "the second time in the lives of most of us." He also uses the inclusive first person plural possessive as he identifies "our enemies," not Britain's enemies. This personalization and emphasis on the people themselves is followed by several sentences that are much more abstract in discussion of a "principle." At the end of that discussion, King George reinforces the nation's shared values: "For the sake of all we ourselves hold dear, and of the world order and peace, it is unthinkable that we should refuse to meet the challenge."

He then calls the citizenry to "this high purpose" and refers to them not as citizens or subjects but as "my people," a description that suggests a closeness rather than emphasizing the distance between a ruler and his subjects. The penultimate paragraph's references to "God" are another reminder of their shared beliefs: they worship the same god and "commit [their] cause" to him. King George brings ethos to his speech by virtue of his position, but when he assures his audience that "we shall prevail," rather than saying that England or Britain shall prevail, he is building ethos based on their common plight and common goals. They are all in this together, from king to commoner.

Building Ethos

So, what do you do if you're not a king? Writers and speakers often have to build their ethos by explaining their credentials or background to their readers, or by emphasizing shared values. You're more likely to listen to someone who is qualified to speak on a subject or who shares your interests and concerns. Following is the opening from *Hillbilly Elegy*, a 2016 memoir by J. D. Vance about the white working class in Appalachia. Note how Vance builds his ethos by acknowledging that he has no automatic ethos and anticipating concerns that his audience might have.

from Hillbilly Elegy

J. D. VANCE

My name is J. D. Vance, and I think I should start with a confession: I find the existence of the book you hold in your hands somewhat absurd. It says right there on the cover that it's a memoir, but I'm thirty-one years old, and I'll be the first to admit that I've accomplished nothing great in my life, certainly nothing that would justify a complete stranger paying money to read about it. The coolest thing I've done, at least on paper, is graduate from Yale Law School, something thirteen-year-old J. D. Vance would have considered ludicrous. But about two hundred people do the same thing every year, and trust me, you don't want to read about most of their lives. I am not a senator, a governor, or a former cabinet secretary. I haven't started a billion-dollar company or a world-changing nonprofit. I have a nice job, a happy marriage, a comfortable home, and two lively dogs.

So I didn't write this book because I've accomplished something extraordinary. I wrote this book because I've achieved something quite ordinary, which doesn't happen to most kids who grow up like me. You see, I grew up poor, in the Rust Belt, in an Ohio steel town that has been hemorrhaging jobs and hope for as long as I can remember. I have, to put it mildly, a complex relationship with my parents, one of whom has struggled with addiction for nearly my entire life. My grandparents, neither of whom graduated from high school, raised me, and few members of even my extended family attended college. The statistics tell you that kids like me face a grim future — that if they're lucky, they'll manage to avoid welfare; and if they're unlucky, they'll die of a heroin overdose, as happened to dozens in my small hometown just last year.

I was one of those kids with a grim future. I almost failed out of high school. I nearly gave in to the deep anger and resentment harbored by everyone around me. Today people look at me, at my job and my Ivy League credentials, and assume that I'm some sort of genius, that only a truly extraordinary person could have made it to where I am today. With all due respect to those people, I think that theory is a load of bullshit. Whatever talents I have, I almost squandered until a handful of loving people rescued me.

That is the real story of my life, and that is why I wrote this book.

Vance starts off by acknowledging that a memoir by someone who is just over 30 years old might seem presumptuous or downright ridiculous. He also freely admits that he hasn't done anything "extraordinary"; although graduating from Yale Law School is no small feat, he claims that this accomplishment should not compel people to spend money

on his book or take time to read it. Vance further builds his ethos as a self-effacing, humble person when he thanks "a handful of loving people" who enabled his modest achievements. However, he also points out that what seems "ordinary" to most of his readers is hardly so to the community he's writing about — the community he was raised in and thus has credibility to speak of. When he describes a place "hemorrhaging jobs and hope," it is clearly a place he knows well, and his honesty about himself and his environment encourages readers to trust him. His attitude is likely to appeal to readers who believe in hard work and education, both qualities his life story reflects, though not at the expense of humility.

[redacted]

~~Imagine you must present your view on the same subject to two different audiences. For instance, you might be presenting your ideas on how to stop bullying to (1) the school board or a group of parents, and (2) a group of middle schoolers. Discuss how you would establish your ethos in each situation.~~

Logos

Speakers appeal to **logos**, or reason, by offering clear, rational ideas. Appealing to logos (Greek for "embodied thought") means thinking logically — having a clear main idea and using specific details, examples, facts, statistics, or expert testimony to back it up. Creating a logical argument often involves defining the terms of the argument and identifying connections such as causality. It can also require considerable research. Evidence from expert sources and authorities, facts, and quantitative data can be very persuasive if selected carefully and presented accurately. Sometimes, writers and speakers add charts and graphs as a way to present such information, but often they weave this information into their argument.

Although on first reading or hearing, Lou Gehrig's speech may seem largely emotional, it is actually based on irrefutable logic. He starts with the thesis that he is "the luckiest man on the face of the earth" and supports it with two points: (1) the love and kindness he's received in his seventeen years of playing baseball, and (2) a list of great people who have been his friends, family, and teammates in that time.

Conceding and Refuting

One way to appeal to logos is to acknowledge a **counterargument** — that is, to anticipate objections or opposing views. While you might worry that raising an opposing view could poke a hole in your argument, you'll be vulnerable if you ignore ideas that run counter to your own. In acknowledging a counterargument, you agree (concede) that an opposing argument may be true or reasonable, but then you deny (refute) the validity

of all or part of the argument. This combination of **concession** and **refutation** actually strengthens your own argument; it appeals to logos by demonstrating that you understand a viewpoint other than your own, you've thought through other evidence, and you stand by your view.

In longer, more complex texts, the writer may address the counterargument in greater depth, but Lou Gehrig simply concedes what some of his listeners may think — that his bad break is a cause for discouragement or despair. Gehrig refutes this by saying that he has "an awful lot to live for!" Granted, he implies his concession rather than stating it outright; but in addressing it at all, he acknowledges a contrasting way of viewing his situation — that is, a counterargument.

Here is another example by Alice Waters, a famous chef, food activist, and author. Writing in the *Nation* magazine, she argues for acknowledgment of the full consequences of what she calls "our national diet."

from Slow Food Nation

ALICE WATERS

It's no wonder our national attention span is so short: We get hammered with the message that everything in our lives should be fast, cheap, and easy — especially food. So conditioned are we to believe that food should be almost free that even the rich, who pay a tinier fraction of their incomes for food than has ever been paid in human history, grumble at the price of an organic peach — a peach grown for flavor and picked, perfectly ripe, by a local farmer who is taking care of the land and paying his workers a fair wage. And yet, as the writer and farmer David Mas Masumoto recently pointed out, pound for pound, peaches that good still cost less than Twinkies. When we claim that eating well is an elitist preoccupation, we create a smokescreen that obscures the fundamental role our food decisions have in shaping the world. The reason that eating well in this country costs more than eating poorly is that we have a set of agricultural policies that subsidize fast food and make fresh, wholesome foods, which receive no government support, seem expensive. Organic foods seem elitist only because industrial food is artificially cheap, with its real costs being charged to the public purse, the public health, and the environment.

To develop a logical argument for better, healthier food for everyone, Waters refutes the counterargument that any food that is not "fast, cheap and easy" is "elitist." She does that by redefining terms such as "cheap," "[eating] well," "expensive," and "cost." She explains in a step-by-step fashion the "smokescreen" of price that many people use to argue that mass-produced fast food is the best alternative for all but the very wealthy. She points out that "[o]rganic foods *seem* elitist only because industrial food is *artificially* cheap" (emphasis added). Waters asks her readers to think more deeply about the relationships among availability, production, and distribution of food: she appeals to reason.

In the following excerpt from a 2016 *New York Times* editorial, "Mother Nature Is Brought to You by . . . ," Tim Wu, a professor at Columbia Law School, makes a case for the dangers inherent in allowing advertising in national parks. [redacted]s how Wu appeals to logos to make his case.

Notice

from Mother Nature Is Brought to You By . . .

TIM WU

This year, parks in several states including Idaho and Washington, and the National Park Service, will be blazing a new trail, figuratively at least, as they begin offering opportunities to advertisers within their borders.

King County in Washington, which manages 28,000 acres of parkland surrounding Seattle, offers a full branding menu: Naming rights or sponsorships may be had for park trails, benches and even trees. "Make our five million visitors your next customers," the county urges potential advertisers.

King County already partnered with Chipotle to hide 30 giant replica burritos on parkland bearing the logo of the agency and the restaurant chain. People who found the burritos won prizes from Chipotle.

In May, the National Park Service proposed allowing corporate branding as a matter of "donor recognition." As *The Washington Post* reported, under new rules set to go into effect at the end of the year, "an auditorium at Yosemite National Park named after Coke will now be permitted" and "visitors could tour Bryce Canyon in a bus wrapped in the Michelin Man."

The logic behind these efforts is, in its own way, unimpeachable. Many millions of people — that is, "green consumers" — visit parks every day, representing an unrealized marketing opportunity of great value. Yes, parks are meant to be natural, not commercial, but times are tough, or so say the backers of the new schemes.

The spread of advertising to natural settings is just a taste of what's coming. Over the next decade, prepare for a new wave of efforts to reach some of the last remaining bastions of peace, quiet, and individual focus — like schools, libraries, churches, and even our homes.

Some of this reflects technological change, but the real reason is the business model of what I call the "attention merchants." Unlike ordinary businesses, which sell a product, attention merchants sell people to advertisers. They do so either by finding captive audiences (like at a park or school) or by giving stuff away to gather up consumer data for resale.

Once upon a time, this was a business model largely restricted to television and newspapers, where it remained within certain limits. Over the last decade, though, it has spread to nearly every new technology, and started penetrating spaces long thought inviolate.

In school districts in Minnesota and California, student lockers are sometimes covered by large, banner-style advertisements, so that the school hallways are what marketers call a fully immersive experience. Other schools have allowed advertising inside gymnasiums and on report cards and permission slips. The Associated Press reported this year that a high school near South Bend, Ind., "sold the naming rights to its football field to a bank for $400,000, its baseball field to an auto dealership, its softball field to a law firm, its tennis court to a philanthropic couple and its concession stands to a tire and auto-care company and a restaurant."

Even megachurches, with their large and loyal congregations, have come to see the upside of

"relevant" marketing, yielding the bizarre spectacle of product placements in sermons. In one of the first such efforts, pastors in 2005 were offered a chance to win $1,000 and a trip to London if they mentioned "The Chronicles of Narnia" during services. For the 2013 release of "Superman: Man of Steel," pastors were supplied with notes for a sermon titled "Jesus: The Original Superhero."

Pathos

Pathos is an appeal to emotions, values, desires, and hopes, on the one hand, or fears and prejudices, on the other. Although an argument that appeals exclusively to the emotions is by definition weak — it's generally **propagandistic** in purpose and more **polemical** than persuasive — an effective speaker or writer understands the power of evoking an audience's emotions by using such tools as figurative language, personal anecdotes, and vivid images.

Lou Gehrig uses the informal first person (*I*) quite naturally, which reinforces the friendly sense that he is a guy who is speaking on no one's behalf but his own. He also chooses words with strong positive **connotations**: *grand, greatest, wonderful, honored, blessing.* He uses one image — *tower of strength* — that may not seem very original but strikes the right note. It is a well-known description that his audience understands — in fact, they probably have used it themselves. But, of course, the most striking appeal to pathos is the poignant contrast between Gehrig's horrible diagnosis and his public display of courage.

Let's explore a more direct example of pathos. As a vice-presidential candidate, Richard Nixon gave a speech in 1952 defending himself against allegations of inappropriate use of campaign funds. In it, he related this anecdote, which is the reason that the speech will forever be known as "the Checkers speech":

from The Checkers Speech

RICHARD NIXON

One other thing I probably should tell you, because if I don't they'll probably be saying this about me, too. We did get something, a gift, after the election. A man down in Texas heard Pat [his wife] on the radio mention the fact that our two youngsters would like to have a dog. And believe it or not, the day before we left on this campaign trip we got a message from Union Station in Baltimore, saying they had a package for us. We went down to get it. You know what it was? It was a little cocker spaniel dog in a crate that he'd sent all the way from Texas, black and white, spotted. And our little girl Tricia, the six-year-old, named it "Checkers." And you know, the kids, like all kids, love the dog, and I just want to say this, right now, that regardless of what they say about it, we're gonna keep it.

This example of pathos tugs at every possible heartstring: puppies, children, warm paternal feelings, the excitement of getting a surprise package. All of these images fill us with empathetic feelings toward Nixon: our emotions are engaged far more than our reason. Despite never truly addressing the campaign funds issue, Nixon's speech was a profound success with voters, who sent enough dog food to feed Checkers for a year! And yet, history has come to view this part of the speech as baldly manipulative.

[redacted]

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe, distributed the following Order of the Day to the military troops right before the 1944 D-Day invasion of Normandy. [redacted] how General Eisenhower appeals to pathos.

Notice

Order of the Day

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped, and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940–41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty, and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Combining Ethos, Logos, and Pathos

Most authors don't rely on just a single type of appeal to persuade their audience; they combine these appeals to create an effective argument. And the appeals themselves are inextricably bound together: if you lay out your argument logically, that will help to build your ethos. It is only logical to listen to an expert on a subject, so having ethos can help build a foundation for an appeal to logos. It's also possible to build your ethos based on pathos — for example, who better to speak about the pain of losing a loved one than someone who has gone through it? The best political satirists can say things that are both perfectly logical and completely hilarious, thus appealing to both logos and pathos at the same time.

Let's go back to over two centuries ago to consider a masterful example of rhetoric. In 1791, Benjamin Banneker wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson, one of the authors of the Declaration of Independence and, at the time, secretary of state to President George

Washington. Largely self-educated, Banneker, the son of former slaves, was an accomplished and respected astronomer, mathematician, and writer. Following is an excerpt from the letter.

from Letter to Thomas Jefferson

BENJAMIN BANNEKER

MARYLAND, BALTIMORE CO., August 19, 1791.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, *Secretary of State:*

SIR: I am fully sensible of the greatness of that freedom which I take with you on the present occasion — a liberty which seemed to me scarcely allowable when I reflected on that distinguished and dignified station in which you stand and the almost general prejudice and prepossession which are so prevalent in the world against those of my complexion. I suppose it is a truth too well attested to you to need a proof here that we are a race of beings who have long labored under the abuse and censure of the world, that we have long been considered rather as brutish than human, and scarcely capable of mental endowment.

Sir, I hope I may safely admit, in consequence of that report which hath reached me, that you are a man far less inflexible in sentiments of this nature than many others, that you are measurably friendly and well-disposed towards us, and that you are ready and willing to lend your aid and assistance to our relief from those many distressed and numerous calamities to which we are reduced.

Now, sir, if this is found in truth I apprehend you will readily embrace every opportunity to eradicate that train of absurd and false ideas and opinions which so generally prevails with respect to us, and that your sentiments are concurrent with mine, which are that an universal Father hath given being to us all of one flesh, but that he hath also without partiality afforded us all the same sensations and endowed us all with the same faculties, and that however variable we may be in society or religion, however diversified in situation or color, we are all of the same family and stand in the same relation to him.

Sir, if these are sentiments of which you are fully persuaded, I hope you cannot but acknowledge that it is the indispensable duty of those who maintain for themselves the rights of human nature, and who profess the obligations of Christianity, to extend their power and influence to the relief of every part of the human race from whatever burden or oppression they may unjustly labor under; and this, I apprehend, a full conviction of the truth and obligation of these principles should lead all to. . . .

Sir, I freely and cheerfully acknowledge that I am of the African race, and in that color which is natural to them, of the deepest dye, and it is under a sense of the most profound gratitude to the supreme Ruler of the universe that I now confess to you that I am not under that state of tyrannical thraldom and inhuman captivity to which too many of my brethren are doomed, but that I have abundantly tasted of the fruition of those blessings which proceed from that free and unequalled liberty with which you are favored, and which I hope you will willingly allow you have received from the immediate hand of that Being from whom proceedeth every good and prefect gift.

Sir, suffer me to recall to your mind that time in which the arms and tyranny of the British crown were exerted with every powerful

effort in order to reduce you to a state of servitude. Look back, I entreat you, on the variety of dangers to which you were exposed, reflect on that time in which every human aid appeared unavailable, and in which even hope and fortitude wore the aspect of inability to the conflict; and you cannot but be led to a serious and grateful sense of your miraculous and providential preservation; you cannot but acknowledge that the present freedom and tranquillity which you enjoy you have mercifully received, and that it is the peculiar blessing of Heaven.

This, sir, was a time in which you clearly saw into the injustice of a stage of slavery, and in which you had just apprehension of the horrors of its condition.

It was now, sir, that your abhorrence thereof was so excited that you publicly held forth this true and invaluable doctrine, which is worthy to be recorded and remembered in all succeeding ages; "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Here, sir, was a time in which your tender feelings for yourself had engaged you thus to declare you were then impressed with proper ideas of the great valuation of liberty and the free possession of those blessings to which you were entitled by nature.

But, sir, how pitiable is it to reflect that 10
although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of these rights and privileges which he had conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren under groaning captivity and cruel oppression; that you should at the same time be found guilty of that most criminal act which you professedly detested in others with respect to yourselves!

Sir, I suppose that your knowledge of the situation of my brethren is too extensive to need a recital here; neither shall I presume to prescribe methods by which they may be relieved, otherwise than by recommending to you and all others to wean yourselves from those narrow prejudices which you have imbibed with respect to them, and, as Job proposed to his friends, "put your souls in their souls' stead." Thus shall your hearts be enlarged with kindness and benevolence towards them, and thus shall you need neither the direction of myself nor others in what manner to proceed herein.

And now, sir, although my sympathy and affection for my brethren hath caused my enlargement thus far, I ardently hope that your candor and generosity will plead with you in my behalf when I make known to you that it was not originally my design, but that, having taken up my pen in order to direct to you as a present a copy of an almanac which I have calculated for the succeeding year. I was unexpectedly and unavoidably led thereto.

This calculation, sir, is the production of my arduous study in this my advanced stage of life; for, having long had unbounded desires to become acquainted with the secrets of nature, I have had to gratify my curiosity herein through my own assiduous application to astronomical study, in which I need not to recount to you the many difficulties and disadvantages which I have had to encounter. And although I had almost declined to make my calculation for the ensuing year, in consequence of that time which I had allotted therefore being taken up at the Federal Territory by the request of Mr. Andrew Ellicott, yet, finding myself under several engagements to printers of this State to whom I communicated my design, on my return to my place of residence I industriously

applied myself thereto, which, I hope, I have accomplished with correctness and accuracy. A copy of which I have taken the liberty to direct to you, and which I humbly request you will favorably receive. And although you may have the opportunity of perusing it after its publication, yet I chose to send it to you in manuscript previous thereto, that thereby you might not only have an earlier inspection, but that you might also view it in my own handwriting.

And now, sir, I shall conclude and subscribe myself with the most profound respect.

Your most obedient, humble servant, [15]

B. Banneker.

This brilliantly crafted letter reminds us why Aristotle claimed that of the three appeals, ethos is the most important. No matter how elegant the logical reasoning is or how eloquent the language of an argument might be, if the speaker lacks credibility with his or her audience, the rhetoric is unlikely to be persuasive. In 1791, an African American by definition lacked equal status with a white man in a position of political power. Banneker thus begins by acknowledging Jefferson's "distinguished and dignified station." He indulges in some flattery as he suggests Jefferson is more tolerant and open-minded than many of his colleagues: "less inflexible in sentiments . . . than many others." However, Banneker does not patronize Jefferson, nor does he pursue flattery at the expense of self-respect. Addressing Jefferson as "Sir" repeatedly throughout the letter, Banneker maintains a courteous but resolute tone, asserting his right to make his case to a man of enormous public stature.

Banneker also appeals to pathos as he characterizes the state of slavery — though he is careful to point out that he is a free man. At the outset, he characterizes his race as having "long labored under the abuse and censure of the world" because they "have long been considered rather as brutish than human." His strong language carries emotional weight. Banneker reminds Jefferson that he does not suffer under "that state of tyrannical thraldom, and inhuman captivity" of slavery, images that provoke a strong emotional response, yet he refers to the "groaning captivity and cruel oppression" of his brethren. That description is especially powerful in light of the fact that Jefferson himself owned slaves, though Banneker does not point that out directly.

Banneker dramatically appeals to reason when he draws a comparison between the fight for independence from "the arms and tyranny of the British crown" and slaves' fight for emancipation and civil rights. As evidence that Jefferson must recognize the similarities between the two situations, he cites Jefferson's own words from the Declaration of Independence: "'all men are created equal.'" This evidence also addresses the counterargument — that is, that black people are somehow inherently inferior to white people — when Banneker points out that "the Father of mankind" has bestowed "equal and impartial distribution of these rights and privileges." Ever conscious of his audience, Banneker softens his tone by refraining from telling Jefferson which course of action to take. Instead, he gently recommends that Jefferson "and all others . . . wean yourselves from those narrow prejudices."

Nowhere in the letter are the three appeals more intricately entwined than in Banneker's frequent allusions to Christianity. Early on, Banneker refers to one "universal Father" who guides both men. Later he calls upon those "who profess the obligations of Christianity, to extend their power and influence to the relief of every part of the human race." By invoking their shared Christian faith, Banneker establishes that they live by shared values, and he makes a strong emotional appeal by pointing out that they belong to the same religious community. These religious principles appeal to head as well as heart. Banneker rather boldly points out in paragraph 11 that it is "pitiable" for Jefferson to believe in the "benevolence of the Father of mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of the rights of mankind" at the same time his tolerance of slavery "counteract[s]" God's "mercies."

Did Banneker set out to methodically use one appeal after another in his letter? Likely not. But clearly he knew that starting with shared values often makes a case that is both logically sound and emotionally engaging.

Joan Didion

On Keeping a Notebook

The author of novels, short stories, screenplays, and essays, Joan Didion (b. 1934) began her career in 1956 as a staff writer at Vogue magazine *in New York. In 1963 she published her first novel,* Run River, *and the following year returned to her native California. Didion's essays have appeared in periodicals ranging from* Mademoiselle *to the* National Review. *Her essay "On Keeping a Notebook" can be found in her collection of essays,* Slouching Towards Bethlehem *(1968). Didion's other nonfiction publications include* The White Album *(1979),* Salvador *(1983),* Miami *(1987),* After Henry *(1992),* Political Fictions *(2001),* Fixed Ideas: America since 9.11 *(2003), and* Where I Was From *(2003).*

Didion has defined a writer as "a person whose most absorbed and passionate hours are spent arranging words on pieces of paper. I write entirely to find out what's on my mind, what I'm thinking, what I'm looking at, what I'm seeing and what it means, what I want and what I'm afraid of." She has also said that "all writing is an attempt to find out what matters, to find the pattern in disorder, to find the grammar in the shimmer. Actually I don't know whether you find the grammar in the shimmer or you impose a grammar on the shimmer, but I am quite specific about the grammar—I mean it literally. The scene that you see in your mind finds its own structure; the structure dictates the arrangement of the words. . . . All the writer has to do really is to find the words." However, she warns, "You have to be alone to do this."

"'That woman Estelle,'" the note reads, "'is partly the reason why George Sharp and I are separated today.' *Dirty crepe-de-Chine wrapper, hotel bar, Wilmington RR, 9:45 a.m. August Monday morning.*"

Since the note is in my notebook, it presumably has some meaning to me. I study it for a long while. At first I have only the most general notion of what I was doing on an August Monday morning in the bar of the hotel across from the Pennsylvania Railroad station in Wilmington, Delaware (waiting for a train? missing one? 1960? 1961? why Wilmington?), but I do remember being there. The woman in the dirty crepe-de-Chine wrapper had come down from her room for a beer, and the bartender had heard before the reason why George Sharp and she were separated today. "Sure," he said, and went on mopping the floor. "You told me." At the other end of the bar is a girl. She is talking, pointedly, not to the man beside her but to a cat lying in the triangle of sunlight cast through the open door. She is wearing a plaid silk dress from Peck & Peck, and the hem is coming down.

Here is what it is: The girl has been on the Eastern Shore, and now she is going back to the city, leaving the man beside her, and all she can

see ahead are the viscous summer sidewalks and the 3 A.M. long-distance calls that will make her lie awake and then sleep drugged through all the steaming mornings left in August (1960? 1961?). Because she must go directly from the train to lunch in New York, she wishes that she had a safety pin for the hem of the plaid silk dress, and she also wishes that she could forget about the hem and the lunch and stay in the cool bar that smells of disinfectant and malt and make friends with the woman in the crepe-de-Chine wrapper. She is afflicted by a little self-pity, and she wants to compare Estelles. That is what that was all about.

Why did I write it down? In order to remember, of course, but exactly what was it I wanted to remember? How much of it actually happened? Did any of it? Why do I keep a notebook at all? It is easy to deceive oneself on all those scores. The impulse to write things down is a peculiarly compulsive one, inexplicable to those who do not share it, useful only accidentally, only secondarily, in the way that any compulsion tries to justify itself. I suppose that it begins or does not begin in the cradle. Although I have felt compelled to write things down since I was five years old, I doubt that my daughter ever will, for she is a singularly blessed and accepting child, delighted with life exactly as life presents itself to her, unafraid to go to sleep and unafraid to wake up. Keepers of private notebooks are a different breed altogether, lonely and resistant rearrangers of things, anxious malcontents, children afflicted apparently at birth with some presentiment of loss.

My first notebook was a Big Five tablet, given to me by my mother with the sensible suggestion that I stop whining and learn to amuse myself by writing down my thoughts. She returned the tablet to me a few years ago; the first entry is an account of a woman who believed herself to be freezing to death in the Arctic night, only to find, when day broke, that she had stumbled onto the Sahara Desert, where she would die of the heat before lunch. I have no idea what turn of a five-year-old's mind could have prompted so insistently "ironic" and exotic a story, but it does reveal a certain predilection for the extreme which has dogged me into adult life; perhaps if I were analytically inclined I would find it a truer story than any I might have told about Donald Johnson's birthday party or the day my cousin Brenda put Kitty Litter in the aquarium. 5

So the point of my keeping a notebook has never been, nor is it now, to have an accurate factual record of what I have been doing or thinking. That would be a different impulse entirely, an instinct for reality which I sometimes envy but do not possess. At no point have I ever been able successfully to keep a diary; my approach to daily life ranges from the grossly negligent to the merely absent, and on those few occasions when I have tried dutifully to record a day's events, boredom has so overcome

me that the results are mysterious at best. What is this business about "shopping, typing piece, dinner with E, depressed"? Shopping for what? Typing what piece? Who is E? Was this "E" depressed, or was I depressed? Who cares?

In fact I have abandoned altogether that kind of pointless entry; instead I tell what some would call lies. "That's simply not true," the members of my family frequently tell me when they come up against my memory of a shared event. "The party was *not* for you, the spider was *not* a black widow, *it wasn't that way at all.*" Very likely they are right, for not only have I always had trouble distinguishing between what happened and what merely might have happened, but I remain unconvinced that the distinction, for my purposes, matters. The cracked crab that I recall having for lunch the day my father came home from Detroit in 1945 must certainly be embroidery, worked into the day's pattern to lend verisimilitude; I was ten years old and would not now remember the cracked crab. The day's events did not turn on cracked crab. And yet it is precisely that fictitious crab that makes me see the afternoon all over again, a home movie run all too often, the father bearing gifts, the child weeping, an exercise in family love and guilt. Or that is what it was to me. Similarly, perhaps it never did snow that August in Vermont; perhaps there never were flurries in the night wind, and maybe no one else felt the ground hardening and summer already dead even as we pretended to bask in it, but that was how it felt to me, and it might as well have snowed, could have snowed, did snow.

How it felt to me: that is getting closer to the truth about a notebook. I sometimes delude myself about why I keep a notebook, imagine that some thrifty virtue derives from preserving everything observed. See enough and write it down, I tell myself, and then some morning when the world seems drained of wonder, some day when I am only going through the motions of doing what I am supposed to do, which is write—on that bankrupt morning I will simply open my notebook and there it will all be, a forgotten account with accumulated interest, paid passage back to the world out there: dialogue overheard in hotels and elevators and at the hatcheck counter in Pavillon (one middle-aged man shows his hat check to another and says, "That's my old football number"); impressions of Bettina Aptheker and Benjamin Sonnenberg and Teddy ("Mr. Acapulco") Stauffer; careful *aperçus*[1] about tennis bums and failed fashion models and Greek shipping heiresses, one of whom taught me a significant lesson (a lesson I could have learned from F. Scott Fitzgerald, but perhaps we all must meet the very rich for ourselves) by asking, when I arrived to interview her in her orchid-filled sitting room on the second day of a paralyzing New York blizzard, whether it was snowing outside.

[1] *aperçus:* Summarizing glimpse or insight (French).—EDS.

I imagine, in other words, that the notebook is about other people. But of course it is not. I have no real business with what one stranger said to another at the hatcheck counter in Pavillon; in fact I suspect that the line "That's my old football number" touched not my own imagination at all, but merely some memory of something once read, probably "The Eighty-Yard Run."[2] Nor is my concern with a woman in a dirty crepe-de-Chine wrapper in a Wilmington bar. My stake is always, of course, in the unmentioned girl in the plaid silk dress. *Remember what it was to be me:* that is always the point.

It is a difficult point to admit. We are brought up in the ethic that others, any others, all others, are by definition more interesting than ourselves; taught to be diffident, just this side of self-effacing. ("You're the least important person in the room and don't forget it," Jessica Mitford's[3] governess would hiss in her ear on the advent of any social occasion; I copied that into my notebook because it is only recently that I have been able to enter a room without hearing some such phrase in my inner ear.) Only the very young and the very old may recount their dreams at breakfast, dwell upon self, interrupt with memories of beach picnics and favorite Liberty lawn dresses and the rainbow trout in a creek near Colorado Springs. The rest of us are expected, rightly, to affect absorption in other people's favorite dresses, other people's trout. 10

And so we do. But our notebooks give us away, for however dutifully we record what we see around us, the common denominator of all we see is always, transparently, shamelessly, the implacable "I." We are not talking here about the kind of notebook that is patently for public consumption, a structural conceit for binding together a series of graceful *pensées*;[4] we are talking about something private, about bits of the mind's string too short to use, an indiscriminate and erratic assemblage with meaning only for its maker.

And sometimes even the maker has difficulty with the meaning. There does not seem to be, for example, any point in my knowing for the rest of my life that, during 1964, 720 tons of soot fell on every square mile of New York City, yet there it is in my notebook, labeled "FACT." Nor do I really need to remember that Ambrose Bierce liked to spell Leland Stanford's[5] name "£eland $tanford" or that "smart women almost always wear black in Cuba," a fashion hint without much potential for practical application. And does not the relevance of these notes seem marginal at best?:

[2]*"The Eighty-Yard Run":* Popular short story by Irwin Shaw.—EDS.

[3]*Jessica Mitford* (1917–1996): British satirical writer.—EDS.

[4]*pensées:* Thoughts or reflections (French).—EDS.

[5]*Bierce . . . Stanford's:* Ambrose Bierce (1842–1914?), American journalist and short story writer known for his savage wit; Leland Stanford (1824–1893), wealthy railroad builder who was a governor of California and the founder of Stanford University.—EDS.

In the basement museum of the Inyo County Courthouse in Independence, California, sign pinned to a mandarin coat: "This MANDARIN COAT was often worn by Mrs. Minnie S. Brooks when giving lectures on her TEAPOT COLLECTION."

Redhead getting out of car in front of Beverly Wilshire Hotel, chinchilla stole, Vuitton bags with tags reading:

MRS. LOU FOX
HOTEL SAHARA
VEGAS

Well, perhaps not entirely marginal. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Minnie S. Brooks and her MANDARIN COAT pull me back into my own childhood, for although I never knew Mrs. Brooks and did not visit Inyo County until I was thirty, I grew up in just such a world, in houses cluttered with Indian relics and bits of gold ore and ambergris and the souvenirs my Aunt Mercy Farnsworth brought back from the Orient. It is a long way from that world to Mrs. Lou Fox's world, where we all live now, and is it not just as well to remember that? Might not Mrs. Minnie S. Brooks help me to remember what I am? Might not Mrs. Lou Fox help me to remember what I am not?

But sometimes the point is harder to discern. What exactly did I have in mind when I noted down that it cost the father of someone I know $650 a month to light the place on the Hudson in which he lived before the Crash? What use was I planning to make of this line by Jimmy Hoffa:[6] "I may have my faults, but being wrong ain't one of them"? And although I think it interesting to know where the girls who travel with the Syndicate have their hair done when they find themselves on the West Coast, will I ever make suitable use of it? Might I not be better off just passing it on to John O'Hara?[7] What is a recipe for sauerkraut doing in my notebook? What kind of magpie keeps this notebook? "*He was born the night the* Titanic *went down.*" That seems a nice enough line, and I even recall who said it, but is it not really a better line in life than it could ever be in fiction?

But of course that is exactly it: not that I should ever use the line, but 15
that I should remember the woman who said it and the afternoon I heard it. We were on her terrace by the sea, and we were finishing the wine left from lunch, trying to get what sun there was, a California winter sun. The woman whose husband was born the night the *Titanic* went down wanted to rent her house, wanted to go back to her children in Paris. I remember wishing that I could afford the house, which cost $1,000 a

[6]*Jimmy Hoffa* (1913–1975?): Controversial leader of the Teamsters Union who disappeared in the mid-seventies.—EDS.

[7]*John O'Hara* (1905–1970): American novelist who wrote several books about gangsters.—EDS.

month. "Someday you will," she said lazily. "Someday it all comes." There in the sun on her terrace it seemed easy to believe in someday, but later I had a low-grade afternoon hangover and ran over a black snake on the way to the supermarket and was flooded with inexplicable fear when I heard the checkout clerk explaining to the man ahead of me why she was finally divorcing her husband. "He left me no choice," she said over and over as she punched the register. "He has a little seven-month-old baby by her, he left me no choice." I would like to believe that my dread then was for the human condition, but of course it was for me, because I wanted a baby and did not then have one and because I wanted to own the house that cost $1,000 a month to rent and because I had a hangover.

It all comes back. Perhaps it is difficult to see the value in having one's self back in that kind of mood, but I do see it; I think we are well advised to keep on nodding terms with the people we used to be whether we find them attractive company or not. Otherwise they turn up unannounced and surprise us, come hammering on the mind's door at 4 A.M. of a bad night and demand to know who deserted them, who betrayed them, who is going to make amends. We forget all too soon the things we thought we could never forget. We forget the loves and the betrayals alike, forget what we whispered and what we screamed, forget who we were. I have already lost touch with a couple of people I used to be; one of them, a seventeen-year-old, presents little threat, although it would be of some interest to me to know again what it feels like to sit on a river levee drinking vodka-and-orange-juice and listening to Les Paul and Mary Ford[8] and their echoes sing "How High the Moon" on the car radio. (You see I still have the scenes, but I no longer perceive myself among those present, no longer could even improvise the dialogue.) The other one, a twenty-three-year-old, bothers me more. She was always a good deal of trouble, and I suspect she will reappear when I least want to see her, skirts too long, shy to the point of aggravation, always the injured party, full of recriminations and little hurts and stories I do not want to hear again, at once saddening me and angering me with her vulnerability and ignorance, an apparition all the more insistent for being so long banished.

It is a good idea, then, to keep in touch, and I suppose that keeping in touch is what notebooks are all about. And we are all on our own when it comes to keeping those lines open to ourselves: your notebook will never help me, nor mine you. "*So what's new in the whiskey business?*" What could that possibly mean to you? To me it means a blonde in a Pucci bathing suit sitting with a couple of fat men by the pool at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Another man approaches, and they all regard one another in silence for a while. "So what's new in the whiskey business?" one of the fat men finally says by way of welcome, and the blonde stands up, arches one foot

[8]*Les Paul and Mary Ford:* Husband-and-wife musical team of the forties and fifties who had many hit records.—EDS.

and dips it in the pool, looking all the while at the cabaña where Baby Pignatari is talking on the telephone. That is all there is to that, except that several years later I saw the blonde coming out of Saks Fifth Avenue in New York with her California complexion and a voluminous mink coat. In the harsh wind that day she looked old and irrevocably tired to me, and even the skins in the mink coat were not worked the way they were doing them that year, not the way she would have wanted them done, and there is the point of the story. For a while after that I did not like to look in the mirror, and my eyes would skim the newspapers and pick out only the deaths, the cancer victims, the premature coronaries, the suicides, and I stopped riding the Lexington Avenue IRT because I noticed for the first time that all the strangers I had seen for years—the man with the seeing-eye dog, the spinster who read the classified pages every day, the fat girl who always got off with me at Grand Central—looked older than they once had.

It all comes back. Even that recipe for sauerkraut: even that brings it back. I was on Fire Island when I first made that sauerkraut, and it was raining, and we drank a lot of bourbon and ate the sauerkraut and went to bed at ten, and I listened to the rain and the Atlantic and felt safe. I made the sauerkraut again last night and it did not make me feel any safer, but that is, as they say, another story.