

Summary Heuristic

For this assignment, you will summarize sources rhetorically. This is meant to give you a record to return to and a clearer sense of the rhetorical dimensions of the source, deepening your engagement. Each summary should include the following sections, which you may integrate together or separate with section headings. This should be about 400-500 words, but I am not focused on a particular length requirement. It may involve some searching around the source, like with the context or author.

Author: Who wrote and/or delivered the piece? How much representation do they have (a name, a bio, a photograph, etc.)? What are their credentials and how qualified are they to make the claims they are making?

Audience: Who might be the expected audience? How do you know? Is this more technical or more accessible? How do you know? What limitations to audience access or usability exist in the piece?

Exigency/Kairos: What larger conversation or topic is this piece addressing? Is it responding to a particular person, event, and/or social issue?

Medium and modality: How does this source convey content—visually, textually, through audience interaction, through audio, through video, etc.?

Genre: What genre or genres may categorize the piece and how do you know? How is it perpetuating or modifying genre? Why might it be using this particular genre or mix of genres? How does the genre affect who may read the piece or how they might read it?

Argument and purpose: What is the main argument of the piece? How is it making this argument—what strategies, information, appeals, steps, etc., is it using? What is the piece trying to get its audience to do?

Key Quotes: Pull out some quotes that feel significant from the piece.

Research: How is research informing the argument? How is it being represented or cited (quotes, paraphrases, hyperlinks, formal citations, etc.)? How in-depth is it presenting research? Is it presenting original (primary) research, commenting on other research (secondary), or both?