Nicholas Carr’s “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”

A Guide for Analysis

Describe the rhetorical situation:

* When and where was this text published?
* Who is Nicholas Carr?
* Who is Carr’s audience (think about, and research if necessary, where the piece was published, as well as textual clues)?

What is Carr’s argument?

What claims does Carr make to support his argument? Identify at least three.

1)

2)

3)

Using the descriptions and analytical questions for strategies provided below, write a paragraph in which you thoroughly analyze Carr’s use of a particular strategy that appeals to logos.

Using the descriptions and analytical questions for strategies provided below, write a paragraph in which you thoroughly analyze Carr’s use of a particular strategy that develops his ethos.

Using the descriptions and analytical questions for strategies provided below, write a paragraph in which you thoroughly analyze Carr’s use of a particular strategy that appeals to pathos.

**Strategies that Appeal to Logos**

**Cause and Effect Analysis**: This strategy analyzes why something happened and describes the consequences of a string of events. Where in the text does the author describe events through cause and effect? What is the cause? What is the effect? Why would the author want to demonstrate a causal relationship between two events? Why would the audience be concerned with the consequences the author describes? How does this strategy further the author’s claim?

**Comparison and Contrast**: This strategy discusses similarities and differences. Where in the text does the author discuss two related subjects? What are the similarities? What are the differences? Why would the author need to establish these distinctions? Why would these similarities and differences matter to the audience? How does this strategy further the author’s claim?

**Process Analysis**: This strategy explains how to do something or how something happens. Where in the text does the author explain how a series of steps achieve a specific outcome? What are these steps? What is the outcome? Why would the author need to explain these steps? Why would this process matter to the audience? How does this strategy further the author’s claim?

**Analogy**: This strategy compares between two things, typically on the basis of their structure and for the purpose of explanation or clarification. Where in the text does the author compare one thing in relation to another? What are the two things? How does the author demonstrate their similarity? Why would the author need to compare these two things? How would this comparison clarify the something for the audience? How does this strategy further the author’s claim?

**Example Topic Sentence**: Carr appeals to logos through the strategy of cause and effect analysis.

**Strategies that Appeal to Ethos**

**Authoritative Quotation**: This strategy is often a quotation from a famous person, well-known authority, specialized expert, or exemplary individual. Why would the author quote this person? What does it reveal about who the author is? What does it reveal about who the audience is? Why would quoting this person be effective for this audience? What in the actual quote would the audience find authoritative? How does this strategy further the author’s claim?

**Prolepsis**: This strategy is the anticipation and answering of possible objections. What is the possible objection? Why would the author need to address it? What is the answer that the author provides? How well does the author answer it? What does this answer reveal about the author’s character? Why might a skeptical audience be or not be persuaded by this answer? How does this strategy further the author’s claim?

**Example Topic Sentence**: Carr develops his ethos through the strategy of prolepsis.

**Strategies that Appeal to Pathos**

**Motive**: This strategy accuses someone or something of having a hidden agenda for doing something; it creates an “us” and “them.” The motive the author accuses this other party of having is usually negative and harmful (although it could be positive and altruistic). Where in the text does the author suggest that someone or something has a hidden or harmful motivation? What is this motive? Why is it harmful? Why would the audience be concerned about this motive? How does fear play a role in the audience’s acceptance of a claim provided by the author?

**Description and Narration**: This is a strategy that provides a detailed sensory description or recounting of a person, place, experience, or event. This strategy usually creates a feeling of connection between the audience and the thing described or recounted. What does the author vividly describe or recount? Why would the author use this strategy? What in the description or narration would the audience connect with? How would this connection help the author advance a claim?

**Metaphor and Simile**: This strategy is a short comparison between two things that relies on the audience to fill in the connection between the two things. (In an analogy, the author makes the connections more apparent.) This strategy usually reframes the relationship in order to provoke a response in the audience. Where in the text does the author use a metaphor or simile? What two things are being compared? What in this comparison provokes an emotion in the audience? How does this comparison frame the audience’s understanding of the argument? How does this metaphor or simile further a claim made by the author?

**Example Topic Sentence**: Carr appeals to pathos through the strategy of motive.

**Strategies that Appeal to both Ethos and Pathos**

**Commonplaces (values of the audience)**: This strategy is works on an assumption, an unsupported claim, based on the values, ideals, fears, or prejudices of the audience. These typically take the form of an evaluative claim with little supporting evidence that connects to the audience’s hidden beliefs and ideologies. Where in the text does the author make a claim about values and beliefs? What is the ideal or prejudice embedded in this claim? What does this value or belief reveal about the author? What does it reveal about the audience? Why would claims about beliefs need less supporting evidence?

**Identification**: This strategy associates and connects the author with the audience, in which the author attempts to demonstrate that he or she shares common values, experiences, beliefs, fears, or aspirations with the audience. It can also connect the audience with someone or thing else other than the author. Where in the text does the author build a connection with the audience? What values, experiences, or beliefs is this connection based on? Why would the audience have a connection to these beliefs or experiences? Does the author use any personal pronouns that would make the audience feel this connection? How does this connection help the author’s claim seem more persuasive?

**Metadiscourse**: This strategy signals the author’s role in relation to the argument and to the audience. As an appeal to ethos, metadiscourse can create the voice of the author and reveal who he or she is. In what ways is the author explicit about his or her purpose and position? What values does it reveal? How does help the audience understand and connect with specific claims? As a pathos appeal, metadiscourse can make the audience feel more or less connected to the author. Does the author create connections with the audience through the use of personal pronouns, or the description of common values and experiences? What emotions might this elicit from the audience. How would this further the author’s claim?