Essay #1 asks you to compare rhetorical strategies in two or three readings and to com-pare the effects and concerns shaping the strategies. To get started, you need to do two things: know what a rhetorical strategy is and locate as many as you can in the readings. Once you choose texts to write about, mark relevant passages and analyze them.

Rhetoric: the art of speaking or writing effectively, as in persuasion.

Rhetorical strategies are tactics a speaker or writer uses to appeal to an audience, e.g., by logic, emotion, establishing personal authority or integrity, invoking religious or other values. Ask yourself, what makes this text effective? Whom does it address and how does it want to affect the audience: to act, to think, to believe differently, to sympathize, or to respect the author’s opinion? On what basis (or bases) does it try to sway readers?

To identify rhetorical strategies, identify sections in the essays where you see particular tactics at work. Professor Walsh’s questions will help you identify some strategies. For topic one, identify the audience and describe its values and assumptions. For topic two, compare the two texts carefully, looking at similarities and differences. Which of these predominate? What differences appear? Why might Cady Stanton have departed from the original? Aim to state, as explicitly as you can, the probable effects of her choices.

In a thesis statement, identify kinds of strategies authors use instead of discussing just “strategies.” Points to consider as you analyze rhetorical strategies:

* Diction, or use of language: does the author use language that will impress the audience, seem familiar, inspire, scare, or other? Do certain words recur, creating a theme or emphasizing values? Identify and discuss these words.

* Syntax, or sentence structure: does the author use repetition, short strong sentences, complex and compound ones, questions with implied or explicit answers, parallel structure, or other? Refer to powerful syntax; name its probable effects.

* Figures of speech: does the author use comparisons that reflect well or badly on her or his targets? How do similes (introduced by “as” or “like”) or metaphors (discussion of one thing in terms of another: “my love is a red, red rose”) shape audience responses? Quote figures of speech and explain their significance.

* Tone: does the author use humor, irony, a declared refraining from criticism that nevertheless carries a barb? Does the use of a serious tone strengthen the points? Discuss the way tone might affect the audience (i.e., by deprecating opposition).

Caveat: we cannot know the exact effect an author produced (at least not without researching it), so avoid claiming that the strategies “made the audience do X, Y, or Z.” Instead, state that the authors or strategies “appeal to audiences by doing A, B, or C.”