

Rhetorical analysis on kennedy steel speech essay



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In John F. Kennedy's speech calling for stable steel prices, many methods are used to persuade. Kennedy uses logos, diction, and rhetorical modes as means to provoke action in his audience. Throughout JFK's speech logos is poured into it. There is an obvious logical connection that strengthens the argument. In the third paragraph Kennedy gives a chain reaction from the high costs. He does this in a very logical way not making leaps and assumptions therefore avoiding a slippery slope fallacy. The way he presents the information is very clear and allows the audience to see the connection between the each part of the reaction. For example, he says that the cost of steel would produce high costs of homes, autos, appliances, machinery, and tools. He then says that these effects will "handicap our efforts to prevent an inflationary spiral of eating up the pensions of our older citizens..." The audience can very logically see how the high price of steel will produce this result. Another way Kennedy introduces logos in the speech is by fact and statistics.

In the first sentence he mentions the increase in steel by "6 dollars a ton." He also states in paragraph four according to the secretary of defense that the increase would add "one billion dollars to the cost of our defenses..." These statistics support Kennedy's position which helps the reader buy into the argument with hard facts. The use of statistics also provides the audience with evidence as to why they should support Kennedy's cause. JFK's use of logos creates an extremely logical argument that is impossible for the audience not to believe.

John F. Kennedy's diction contributes to the persuasiveness by making it stand out in a sophisticated, knowledgeable way. Kennedy's choice in words

such as “rescinded” and “defiance” help the argument sound refined.

Instead of using simple words, Kennedy chose to incorporate strong, powerful words which stir up emotion. The word “defiance” can easily relate to most if not all members of the audience. The audience can associate this term with a time in the past when they were defiant towards something they did not support, bringing an emotional connection to the speech. Kennedy also uses phrases like “handicap our efforts” and “ruthless disregard” to make his speech unique.

The level of vocabulary and the wording of phrases establishes a witty sense to the speech which is an effective method to persuade. The phrases also contain urgency persuading the listeners to take action. Kennedy does not just say disregard but “ruthless disregard”. The connotation of the word ruthless is harsh and cruel. This persuades the audience to act quickly before the situation becomes worse.

Kennedy incorporates many rhetorical modes in his speech. Cause and effect is a mode that is frequently used in the work. In paragraphs three and four Kennedy utilizes this mode to show what the effect of the rising prices will have on all of America. He says it will “increase the cost of homes, autos, appliances...” and it will be “more difficult to withstand competition.” This mode makes the argument more relatable to the general public because they have a visual of how they will be affected by the rising prices of steel.

Kennedy shows that unless the audience does something to stop the increase, that it will impact everyone negatively. Kennedy also uses exemplification to establish a stronger argument. For instance he says “

steel output per man is rising so fast that labor costs per ton of steel can be expected to decline in the next twelve months." Examples such as these prove to the audience that this topic has been thoroughly thought about and that there are cases to back up Kennedy's position. It is an extremely persuasive mode because it brings real life scenarios into the argument. The audience can see that Kennedy has established an argument worth supporting.

John F. Kennedy does many things to assist in persuading the audience. His use of logos, diction, and rhetorical modes helps make the argument stronger.