

Driving to the funeral by anna quindlen. rhetorical analysis

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Anna Quindlen's "Driving to the Funeral" first appeared in the magazine Newsweek in 2007. In this essay Quindlen aims to convince her readers that we should lower the drinking age and raise the driving age. Depending on what state you live in the driving age begins at 16, 17 or 18. When teenagers turn one of these ages they expect to start driving that instant. Parents at the time feel relieved that their children can start shuttling themselves around, moms do not have to drop them off at school, pick them up, take them to the movies or sports practice any longer. After reading this essay, I was shocked by the amount of teenage car accidents that are not alcohol related but simply from speeding and having passengers in the car with them. After a close analysis of the No. 1 death rate among teenagers it reveals contradictions between the article's call for raising the driving age and lowering the drinking age. Descriptions, statistics and comparisons are methods that are used to create a powerful, persuasive essay.

In the essay, "Driving to the Funeral" the writer discusses how every teenager experiences the same things throughout high school. We all take the SAT's, study for exams, go to prom, and for some unfortunately attend funerals. Driving in high school appears to be both an advantage for the child and the parent. Teenagers feel more responsible being able to drive while parents are glad not leave work early to pick their kids up and shuttle them around town after a hard days of work. However, is losing a child at such a young age better then having to take off of work earlier to drop them off at practice? Quindlen's main point in this essay is to raise the driving age, she wants her readers to try and get together with the government to raise the legal driving age like some states already have.

In the introduction Quindlen begins her essay with a description of how every teenager goes through high school experiencing and dealing with the same exact things and how parents are just as relieved as the teenager to begin driving. This establishes the essay as a description and uses the pathos technique. It is simply a fantastic way to capture the reader's attention. "Driving to the Funeral" is an excellent example of pathos; the essay makes bold statements about, "the only ones who wouldn't make a fuss are those parents who have accepted diplomas because their children were no longer alive to do so themselves...they might think it was worth the wait" (Quindlen 432). Quindlen says these strong emotional statements to get you think, what if that were my child? Another description in the essay explains how parents are more than joyful to not have to shuttle their children around anymore and to finally have time for themselves, "a licensed son or daughter relieves parents of the relentless roundelay of driving to the soccer field, Mickey D's, mall and movies" (Quindlen 433). Descriptions such as these give the reader an opportunity to relate with their own personal experiences as a child or an adult and to have their emotions touched.

Not only does Quindlen use description but she also uses background information and statistics as well. In her first point we see her use this by her affirming, "Car crashes are the No. 1 cause of death among 15 to 20 year olds in the country" (Quindlen 432). She later goes onto how society thought the problem of teen deaths was cured by the government in 1984 by raising the drinking age from 18 to 21, yet there is no proof to show us that it actually made a difference. A teen driving is not about them going out and partying and deciding to drink and drive but in fact about how mature and

<https://assignbuster.com/driving-to-the-funeral-by-anna-quindlen-rhetorical-analysis/>

capable a teen driver really is. She believes that “ the use of seat belts and airbags may have as much to do with that as penalties for alcohol use” (Quindlen 435). That all the government has done by lower the drinking age is cause teenagers to “ pre-game” before going out. Quindlen later goes on to mention that, “ In a survey of young drivers, only half said that had seen a peer drive after drinking... nearly all however witnessed speeding, which is the leading factor in fatal crashes by teenagers today” (Quindlen 435). Quindlen appears to believe that adults are targeting the wrong D in drunk driving. “ In Massachusetts alone, one third of 16 year-old drivers have been involved in serious accidents” (Quindlen 436), the writer lists several more serious statistics about teen driving. By the writer providing its readers with these statistics it effects peoples mind by showing them information they may not have known before and it gets people to start to really question what is best for teenage drivers. We learn something new everything day and reading this essay can teach society something as well. However, through effective statistics Quindlen leaves her readers to logically infer that underage drinking is not the problem among teenagers but the fact that teens drive above the speed limit is.

Quindlen captures the reader’s interest first with the introductory descriptions and statistics, she then begins using comparison. She focuses on the idea that too young is too young. “ Any reasonable person would respond that a 13 year-old is too young... statistics suggest that that’s true for 16 year-olds as well” (Quindlen 434). Comparisons such as these lead Quindlen into one of her strongest points that - “... 17 year olds have about one third as many accidents as their counterparts only a year younger”

<https://assignbuster.com/driving-to-the-funeral-by-anna-quindlen-rhetorical-analysis/>

(Quindlen 434). Midway through the essay the writer adds contrast to some of her points. A significant comparison and contrast that Quindlen uses is by showing the difference of how some states have passed laws that a teen driver cannot drive without an adult until they are 18. Proving that in some states such as New

Jersey, this has made a significant impact but however in other states it has not made a difference.

Although Quindlen presents her proof in a fashionable order, we should believe her because she proves to her readers she is trustworthy. We see this as she provides the reader with descriptions and the large quantity of statistics to backup herself up. This allowed her to create a specifically designed essay that was beneficial in helping her present her ideas. She leaves her readers being able to connect to a real-life situations as I did. For instance, when I turned sixteen I was more then excited to start driving on my own, however that later changed when I lost my best friend. On September 23, 2010 Morgan Crofton was killed in a car accident she was only 19 years old. Unfortantly we only got to experience exactly one month of college together before she left me and all her other friends at Florida Gulf Coast University. There were five teens in the car and she was the only one to pass away. This experience was so tragic for everyone, her family, friends and people who could related. Having your own friend pass away from a car accident at such a young age makes you think about things differnetly and wonder if the government really should raise the driving age to prevent other families from dealing with such a tragedy. The writer herself seems to

be concerned about her own two kids as well, Christopher and Maria (biography), she does not want to be one of the mothers watching her child be buried as a teen.

Throughout this essay Quindlen's main point was to convince her readers that society should do something as a group and decide to raise the driving age and lower the drinking age. From the statistic she provides us with raising the driving age will cut down on the teen car accidents and deaths among 15 to 20 year olds. And by lowering the drinking age it will provide more ease on college campuses. The argument she presents us with appears to be extremely strong not only does she provide the statistics, but several million friends and families are able to agree with her based on their own personal experience of losing a teen. Meanwhile it may not appear to be as effective to those who have not lost a teenager, but facts are facts and that is what she provides us with.