Write at least a paragraph using each rhetorical mode except for comparison-contrast, analysis, and persuasion.

• **Process**

Explaining a process is explaining how something is done or made. You could describe the process of changing a car’s oil or how to make brownies. The key is to break the steps down and make sure you don’t leave out any key elements.

• **Narration**

A narrative narrates a story\*a series of events, usually in chronological order\*that helps demonstrate the point you are arguing. The narrative should relate closely to your main point and help exemplify it.

• **Definition**

In arguing a point, it is often necessary to detail for readers exactly what the writer means by a certain term or word. Terms like “liberal” or “conservative” especially need to be defined, since people have wide-ranging interpretations of what those words mean. Consequently, readers will project their own perceptions on those words, undermining your argument.

• **Description**

What and how you describe something depends largely on your purpose. If you are trying to sell your boat, you’ll probably focus on its salable features and minimize its flaws. Conversely, when discussing your boat with a mechanic, you would probably focus on the flaws. It is best to present your description in clear order: from near to far, from left to right, from top to bottom, rather than skipping around.

**• Cause/Effect**

Causes and effects are an endless chain of actions and reactions. For example, an essay arguing for the abolition of a certain pesticide might use cause and effect to demonstrate the chemical’s adverse effects. Exposure to the chemical (cause) results in dizziness, shortness of breath and cancer (effects). Remember that the effect can become a cause for something else. Dizziness and shortness of breath could also become a cause for another effect\*the significant increase in workers’ compensation claims. Be careful to avoid the fallacy of False Cause\*because an event precedes another does not mean it caused the event: “I walked under a ladder and I had bad luck all day.”

• **Classification and Division**

Classification is categorizing things in large, general groups that share common characteristics and showing the relationships between them. Science, for example, classifies animals according to body characteristics. The most general category is called a phylum. Every phylum is divided into classes which are subdivided into orders and the orders are subdivided into families. Families are subdivided into genera, and genera are subdivided into species.

Classification can be informal. For example, we often classify drivers into basic types:

• Aggressive Tailgater

• Dangerously Slow Driver

• Erratic Lane Changer

• Looky-Lou

• Speed Demon (And the Variable Speed Demon)

Under the category of “dangerously slow,” I might have examples including old VW vans going uphill and old Plymouths whose drivers are barely visible above their seats. This kind of classification can be amusing, but it is advisable to be cautious when classifying arbitrarily\*always be conscious of stereotyping. Note, however, that stereotypes sometimes have an element of truth to them.

• **Analysis**

Analysis is a kind of division that breaks an idea into its constituent parts and relates the parts to the whole. If a writer were to analyze the workings of the state legislature, the writer would first determine the divisions of the legislature such as the Assembly and the Senate. After detailing how each of these groups work individually, the writer then could explain how they work together.

• **Persuasion**

Persuasion is trying to convince others to act or change their attitudes in some way. In terms of the college essay, persuasion involves having a point and backing that point up with evidence. In persuasive writing it is okay to argue an opinion, but to support your opinion you need to rely on facts.

**• Comparison/Contrast**

A comparison focuses on similarities. A contrast emphasizes differences. A comparison/contrast paragraph can be organized in two ways. If you are comparing and contrasting two twins, you can either:

1) focus on one twin, then compare and contrast the other

--or--

2) alternate, point by point, between each twin