**Writing an Effective Claim**

**\*NOTE: This assignment is based on the excellent work of Timm Frietas.**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Overview**

In this assignment, you will read a brief passage from Shakespeare’s *Richard III*. Although AP Lang will primarily focus on nonfiction, I want you to see that fiction – plays, poetry, television, film, and other media – are also acts of persuasion, and include within them characters who attempt to persuade others (or the audience). In this speech – as indeed, throughout the play – Richard will use language to persuade, to accomplish a particular goal.

**Your job consists of the following:**

1. Read and annotate the passage. Throughout, REACT to it. Ask questions, make judgements, talk back to him.
2. Second, ask, “What is he trying to get me to do, to think, to believe?”
3. Then ask, “What is he DOING in order to achieve that? What “moves” is he making here?”
4. Then LABEL those moves. Call them something. “The ‘X’ tactic.” “The ‘Y’ maneuver.”

NOTE: You do not have to use official terms or language. To know the word “polysyndeton” is useful, but not necessary. It is more important that you LABEL IT as something, even if it’s just “over-use of ‘and’.”

1. Then ask, “What other tactics did he use?” Try to find at least two.
2. Then ask, “Which one was more successful? Why would it work or persuade me?”
3. Write a claim sentence in the following template:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**CLAIM TEMPLATE**

In [TAG], [author’s last name] **presents** [summary of the two tactics you found] **in order to** [answer what you understand to be the speaker’s purpose] and also to [further discuss the speaker’s purpose.

**Words you MAY NOT USE after “in order to”**

* Show
* Display
* Tell

**Better choices**

* Explain \* Admit \* Bully \*Analyze \* Speculate about
* Argue \* Accuse \* Flatter \* Dissect \* Demonstrate
* Reveal \* Seduce \* Insult \* Trace the causes of

**Context – Speech from *Richard III/Henry VI***

One of the most divisive wars of English history, the War of the Roses was a drawn-out fight for the throne between the two warring houses of York and Lancaster. At the beginning of the play *Richard III*, Richard, a member of the victorious House of York, addresses the audience directly, celebrating the fact that his brother Edward has successfully gained the throne, but for Richard, the victory contains little value. As a hunchback, he is painfully aware of his physical differences and his lack of appeal as a romantic figure. Therefore, if he cannot have love, he will have power – one way or another.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Now is the winter of our discontent

Made glorious summer by this sun of York;

And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house

In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.

Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;

Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;

Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,

Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.

Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;

And now, instead of mounting barded steeds

To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,

He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber

To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,

Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;

I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty

To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;

I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,

Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,

Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time

Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,

And that so lamely and unfashionable

That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;

Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,

Have no delight to pass away the time,

Unless to spy my shadow in the sun

And descant on mine own deformity:

And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,

To entertain these fair well-spoken days,

I am determined to prove a villain

And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,

By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,

To set my brother Clarence and the king

In deadly hate the one against the other:

…Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,

And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart,

And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,

And frame my face to all occasions.

…I can add colours to the chameleon,

Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,

And set the murderous Machiavel to school.

Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?

Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down.

**Self-Check**

1. Did you find and NAME at least two different tactics Richard is using to persuade the audience?
2. What is Richard trying to get us to DO or THINK or BELIEVE here?
3. How or in what way will those tactics succeed (or not)?