

Sedaris Rhetorical Analysis Final Draft



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Award winning essayist, David Sedaris, recounts in his short memoir, "Me Talk Pretty One Day," the challenges he faced when learning a new language in an unfamiliar country, and how it shaped his perception of learning. Sedaris' purpose is to shed light on the childhood fears which remain with us long into adulthood, and the hard but rewarding work it takes to overcome them. He uses an anxious tone, simplistic syntax, and childish diction to liken his experience to a child starting school and show that those fears sometimes never fully fade and continue to define our lives well into adulthood.

The tones found throughout the essay aren't ones typically associated with school. Fear, anxiety, stress. While Sedaris is hyperbolizing, the defeated, almost depressed tone of his comment conveys the fear and anxiety he had due to the unfamiliar nature of the school. These are the same emotions which children often experience when experiencing something new and unfamiliar and are forced outside their comfort zones. This connection to childhood experiences helps to reinforce Sedaris' explanation of childhood fears following into adulthood and how they shape our lives.

The syntax of the various conversations also plays a key role in presenting the emotions Sedaris wishes to convey. The structure is very choppy with very improper grammar. Take for example, this conversation between two of Sedaris' classmates, "Sometimes me cry alone at night." "That is common for me also, but be more strong you." This choppy syntax is reminiscent of a child still learning to speak, which serves to help equate Sedaris and his classmates to

children learning something new. By equating himself and his classmates to children, Sedaris can compare childhood fears to the same fears he struggled with as an adult in France.

Throughout the essay, even in the title itself, Sedaris makes use of childish diction to further the portrayal of him and his classmates as children experiencing something new. One example from the text is Sedaris' reaction to the teacher's insults, "I know the thing what you speak exact now." This lack of sophisticated diction helps to separate Sedaris from his teacher, and once again liken him and his experience to that of a child. This diction isn't just reserved to Sedaris but is also present in his classmates' speech as well, which allows him to draw a more universal comparison and not simply an anecdotal one. The comparisons drawn from the childish diction, allow Sedaris to portray the nature of the emotions he felt while abroad through a lens many understand.

In "Me Talk Pretty One Day" David Sedaris uses simplistic diction and choppy syntax, paired with a worried tone, to convey his experience of learning a new language abroad through a lens many readers can understand. That being the lens of a child experiencing something new and dramatic, and through that lens Sedaris can show the readers how the fears which plague us as children, can remain with us long into adulthood.

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GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

84/100

Instructor



This is an excellent first rhetorical analysis. You are doing a great job finding quotes to support you and to connect those quotes to your overall purpose. Remember this for the future! I want you to work on developing your analysis of those quotes in more detail. See if you can discuss more about how the language you are looking at specifically creates feelings and emotions that then tie in to your purpose.

PAGE 1



Comment 1

Clear thesis.



Comment 2

See if you can add more depth to your analysis here.



Comment 3

When looking at syntax you do not need to always have a direct quote you can talk generally about the essay as a whole.

PAGE 2



Comment 4

What do you think the point of childish diction is here? How does this connect to his overall purpose?

THESIS

1 / 1

0 POINTS
(0)

For any of the following: • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.

1 POINT
(1)

Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyzes the writer's rhetorical choices.

2 POINTS
(0)

3 POINTS
(0)

4 POINTS
(0)

EVID + COM

1 / 4

0 POINTS
(0)

Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.

1 POINT
(1)

EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student's argument.

2 POINTS
(2)

EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student's argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.

3 POINTS
(3)

EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how at least one rhetorical choice in the passage contributes to the writer's argument, purpose, or message.

4 POINTS
(4)

EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how multiple rhetorical choices in the passage contribute to the writer's argument, purpose, or message.

SOPH

0 / 1

0 POINTS
(0)

Attempt to contextualize the text, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations. • Only hint at or suggest other arguments. • Examine individual rhetorical choices but do not examine the relationships among different choices throughout the passage. • Oversimplify complexities in the passage. • Use

complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the analysis.

1 POINT
(1)

1. Explaining the significance or relevance of the writer's rhetorical choices (given the rhetorical situation). 2. Explaining a purpose or function of the passage's complexities or tensions. 3. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.

2 POINTS
(0)

3 POINTS
(0)

4 POINTS
(0)