

# Response Paper

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Part of an in-archives exercise at <http://www.teacharchives.org/exercises/gradual-manumission>

## Response Paper: A Rhetorical Analysis of Pre- and Post-1799 Slave Bills

According to Lloyd F. Bitzer, “rhetorical discourse comes into existence as a response to a situation, in the same sense that an answer comes into existence in response to a question, or a solution in response to a problem” (5). Using Bitzer’s idea of rhetoric as situational, analyze the slave bill(s) of sale and runaway slave ads you examined at Brooklyn Historical Society in light of the Declaration of Independence (1776) and the 1799 Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery. You may refer to Gellman’s “The Problem of Abolition” to explain the historical context for the 1799 Act.

Here are some questions to consider:

What situations give rise to the slave bills of sale? To what situations do the Declaration of Independence and the 1799 Act respond? What is the purpose of each of the documents, including the slave bills? Who are their authors? Audiences? How do the two political documents define freedom? How do the slave bills of sale complicate these definitions?

Be sure to cite all secondary and primary sources using MLA style documentation (see LIU Handbook and/or Purdue OWL).

A typed, 3-5-page draft is due Wednesday, Oct. 9. The revision is due Mon., Oct. 28.

Format: Double-space, one-inch margins, 12 pitch font. Be sure to title your essay, number the pages, and cite all secondary and primary sources using MLA style (see Hacker).

### Rubric

CRITERIA	ADVANCED	PROFICIENT	EMERGING	ATTEMPTED	NON-ASSESSABLE
Rhetorical Analysis					
Focus (purpose, thesis)					
Content (development/evidence)					
Use of primary and secondary sources					
Audience (tone, point of view)					
Style: Sentence Structure/Mechanics					
MLA Documentation					