

Student Name

Ms. Patrick

English 20803

14 October 2008

#### Author's Note for Editorial Arguments Portfolio

The rhetorical situation was the foundation on which my three assignments were designed. The letter to the editor, op-ed and humorous argument all required extensive planning and brainstorming around the rhetorical situation. In all three assignments, the same process was followed. First, the audience and venue was thought out. Before any writing began, I had to know who the audience was and what techniques would appeal to that audience. Next, the purpose of the argument was derived so a basic framework for the assignment could be constructed. Finally, the writing process began.

All three writing assignments required the use of pathos, ethos and logos. Together, the three form the core of any argument. Pathos – appealing to readers' emotions and feelings – was important in evoking sympathy or empathy from the audience. The idea in using pathos is to move people from feeling to action, or to persuade. In all three assignments, I attempted to persuade the audience by using humor, ridicule, or by making logical claims stronger through the use of pathos.

Ethos, like pathos, was an important aspect of my three assignments. In order to establish credibility and likability, I tried to present myself as an unbiased and well informed observer. To do so, I made it clear that I had researched both sides of the argument. By portraying myself as honest, wise, and trustworthy, I was able to effectively write towards my audience.

Finally, logos played a major role in my arguments. Hard evidence, above all else, can prove a point explicitly. By making a claim and using supporting evidence, I was able to support my ideas clearly and explicitly. In addition, by supporting my arguments with reliable evidence and good reason, I remained in context with the argument and maintained credibility, another aspect of logos.

In sum, all three assignments required the use of the rhetorical situation. After establishing a topic, deciding on an audience and venue, putting the topic in context, and determining the purpose of the argument, I was able to construct three separate but similar arguments.

The order of the items in this portfolio is: first draft of letter to the editor (pp. 2-3), first draft of op-ed (pp.4-5), first draft of humorous argument (p. 6), revised draft of letter to the editor (p. 8), revised draft of op-ed (p. 9), revised draft of humorous argument (p. 10).

To Jonah Goldberg:

Your September 11<sup>th</sup> editorial article on “Team Obama” severely exaggerated Ms. Palin’s influence on the Obama campaign.

**Comment:** Great clarity in the opening.

To denounce Ms. Palin’s accomplishments in her short tenure as a mayor and governor would, no doubt, be a fallacy. Her impact on policies in Alaska, such as the bridge to nowhere and an oil pipeline to the lower forty-eight states, has been commendable. The youth and energy she brings to the McCain ticket has clearly caught the attention of voters.

**Comment:** This might be rearranged to avoid splitting the verb phrase “would be.”

**Comment:** The way this section admits some of Palin’s qualifications strengthens your point about the fact that her influence is overstated.

Reality check: the election has supplied ups and downs to both campaigns from the start.

Unfortunately for Mr. McCain, Ms. Palin and the Republican Party, throwing Mr. Obama into a back-peddle will take more than a fast court break.

**Comment:** The voice and syntactical construction here are powerful.

**Comment:** I like the idea behind this sentence, but the wording/structure are a bit unclear. It took me a second or third reading to completely understand where this was going.

Besides, Mr. Obama is anything but a “Bambi” in comparison to Ms. Palin. Far from the ferocious politician the nickname Sarah “Barracuda” would imply, Ms. Palin neither burst on to the scene as an inspiring orator nor did she gain the approval of her party for Presidential nominee. Ms. Palin has simply flipped the momentum switch – albeit temporarily – in favor of Mr. McCain.

I can’t decide what baffles me more: referring to Ms. Palin as “Godzilla” in comparison to Mr. Obama or awarding her the MVP title. Assuming the acronym MVP stands for “Most Valuable Player”; Ms. Palin’s contributions have been meager at best. Need proof? Her addition to the McCain ticket has shifted the polls a handful of points, providing Mr. McCain with an advantage hardly worthy of citing. In fact, Real Clear Politics – who cites Mr. McCain’s lead at a meager 2.9 points – admits their margin of error is plus or minus 2 points, leaving Mr. McCain an insignificant – if not altogether invisible – lead.

**Comment:** Great use of statistics to create holes in the original argument, but the dashes make the sentence difficult to read.

Mr. Obama is far from the abandoned figure the “Team Obama” analogy depicts him to be. Joe Biden added an equally impressive boost to the Obama campaign after his selection as Vice Presidential running mate. Indeed, Mr. Obama’s lead – in the same *USA Today*-Gallup poll that cited Mr. McCain’s lead at an unlikely 10 points this week – was a solid 8 points after the Biden pick.

Mr. Obama is no more “on the run” due to Ms. Palin’s novice addition to the Republican ticket than Mr. McCain was after the Biden selection. Can day-to-day polls truly keep an accurate score before the game has started?

**Comment:** Great question!

Forget about the polls, the mainstream media in the post-Palin euphoria is the strongest propaganda holding the McCain-Palin ticket together. There is a reason Ms. Palin had, as of September 11<sup>th</sup>, yet to appear as an interviewee on national television: Mr. McCain wants all the attention on Palin. The media will heckle Ms. Palin, prompting interest from the independents. She will be praised, promoting more Republican support. The news will harp on her personal life, evoking sympathy from women. Mr. McCain looks to ride this second half comeback to the door of the white house – before Ms. Palin ever enters the game. Ms. Palin’s

"call up from the political minors" won't sustain the intensity or impact the polls and media have portrayed.

**Comment:** Don't forget to sign your letter.

**Comment:** I like the use of sports metaphors throughout. This final sentence, though, is a bit confusing. It seems to need a bit more elaboration or clarification.

## McCain Chooses Palin in Desperation, Distracts Voters

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### Obama is back to where he started before conventions

By [STUDENT NAME]  
[student email address]

Voting Americans are the quintessential depiction of an ever-growing group of adolescences diagnosed with attention deficit disorder. Instead of Ritalin as an antidote, the media has been used as an outlet for a continuously growing list of insignificant phenomenon. The latest dose of hoopla injected voters with the fallacious idea that Sarah Palin had changed – and would continue to influence – the Presidential election.

**Comment:** adolescents

Ms. Palin was able to offer the McCain ticket a quick face lift, but provided little more than a short vacation for the Republican Party as she took the spotlight. The media was quick to infiltrate voters with continuous coverage of the latest polls and statements that had allegedly catapulted McCain to the head of the polls. Ms. Palin has lost her glamour and the spotlight. In the wake of her arrival, evidence proves that her selection was a desperate attempt by Mr. McCain to sway voters in his favor. Now, with just over a month before the general election, voters must turn their attention towards the real issues that will affect them for the next four years.

**Comment:** This doesn't seem like the right word for what you're saying here.

As much as I respect Mr. McCain and his party, the Senator lost a morsel of dignity when desperation became his motive. The facts are clear evidence that Mr. McCain thought less about the American people and more about his chance to win this election when choosing Ms. Palin as his running mate.

**Comment:** What facts? How are they clear evidence?

Many right-wing advocates categorized the selection as strategic, giving the Republicans the benefit of the doubt. The facts have led me to lose the optimism I previously held towards Mr. McCain and his vision. In an interview in late February of this year, Mr. McCain was asked who his running mate would be. He responded, promising his choice would be the person he felt could most adequately run the country if he were to perish. He chose a forty-something year old governor from Alaska. Did Mr. McCain live up to his promise?

**Comment:** Again, this use of 'the facts' is unclear.

**Comment:** chose

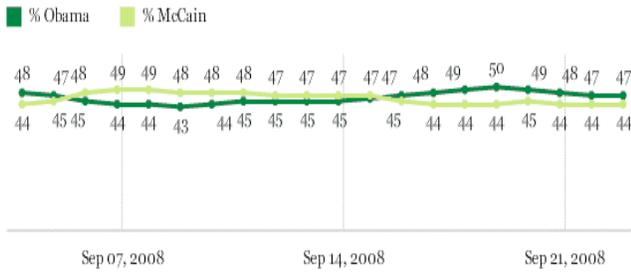
**Comment:** This sounds slightly awkward in the wording.

Before the Republican Convention, Mr. McCain was eight points behind Mr. Obama in the USA Today-Gallup poll with only two months left in the election. With little time remaining, Mr. McCain hoped the last minute addition of a young, energetic woman would propel his campaign. Mr. McCain's wish came true. For a short time, the McCain-Palin ticket boosted a lead – as much as ten points – over Mr. Obama in the Gallup poll. After a few weeks of prosperity, however, the euphoria Ms. Palin brought to the Republican ticket died away.

**Comment:** Do you mean boasted?

Gallup Daily Election Polling Results for the Presidential General Election, Obama vs. McCain, trend since Sept. 2-4, 2008

National registered voters



Based on three-day rolling averages.

GALLUP POLL

Table 1: The USA Today-Gallup poll since September 2-4, 2008

Today, the polls have retracted and promoted Mr. Obama back into the driver’s seat. Mr. Obama’s current three point lead in the Gallup poll proves Mr. McCain’s pick did little to advance his campaign in the long haul. Sarah Palin’s selection has, to date, helped Mr. McCain only among Republican base voters; with no significant evidence of increased support among female voters. Thus, Mr. McCain is losing the election based on his performance: his stance on key issues such as health care, the economy, and tax cuts were not winning him the votes necessary to win the election. It would follow, then, that the selection of Ms. Palin for Vice President was nothing more than a desperate, last second Hail Mary aimed to distract the voters from the real, performance based issues that had driven Mr. McCain to his deficit in the polls.

**Comment:** three-point

**Comment:** Seems like an unnecessary word in the sentence. Also, the semicolon in this sentence needs to be changed.

In the aftermath of Ms. Palin’s abrupt arrival onto the political scene, voters can again view the two candidates in their true light. This outlook must continue as the debates lead into November. Side shows and “strategic” decisions have proven to have little long term effect on public opinion. The American public has begun to realize the paramount importance of foreign policy, health care, and the economy in a country plagued with debt. To win the election, candidates must provide voters with answers they want to hear – not lottery picks with little time remaining.

While the fog settles on the election battlefield following the Vice Presidential picks and the Democratic and Republican conventions, one truth remains: this election will come down to two men. As important as the office of Vice President is, the ability for a running mate to effectively influence an election has seldom occurred. The distractions – as was observed over the course of the conventions – are generally short lived and do little to either gain the votes of independents or attract votes from the opposing party. Voters must wade through the sea of chaos surrounding this election and determine the next President based on the current political issues that America – both its people and its President – must confront in the years to come.

**Comment:** wade

**Venue:** Colbert Report

**Comment:** Great verbal presentation of this in class. Your inflection while reading made an already funny monologue even funnier.

**Audience:** Viewers of Colbert Report, generally a younger audience

**Comment:** I'm not sure that this is accurate, but the language still seems to appeal to the larger groups of voters. Would you possibly say Colbert appeals more of a democrat audience or an audience looking for humor in discussions of politics?

**Monologue:** Nation, tonight I want to focus on the most important issues in this election: Sarah Palin, Sarah Palin's children, Sarah Palin's first grade report card, and Sarah Palin's favorite pop singer.

Recent news reports have been calling Ms. Palin's importance "exaggerated." What election have they been watching? There are only so many ways to exaggerate a person's accomplishments, but Ms. Palin's accomplishments are so numerous, they would be virtually impossible to overstate.

Sarah Palin is the greatest thing that has happened to John McCain since his anti-American propaganda confession in the 60s.

Sarah Palin brings more to the table as Vice President than Mr. Obama could ever dream of as President. Ms. Palin would bring one spouse, five children, a soon to be son-in-law, three cats and two dogs into office with her. Can Mr. Obama say that?

Not to mention, in addition to being a politician, Ms. Palin is a sportscaster and a homemaker. That means she could broadcast for the Washington Nationals and keep the White House clean. Her arch nemesis Joe Biden would only be able to sign legislation and give legal advice if Mr. Obama wins the election.

Nation, in today's political arena, success does not come from law and foreign affairs. Mr. Obama was clearly looking into the past when he chose Mr. Biden.

Look at the present: Ms. Palin is the real success story. She has proven that if you stay under the radar long enough and look good into your 40s, you too can have a powerful man come and whisk you off to Washington.

Mr. McCain is smarter than he seems. He knew Ms. Palin's resume would influence an incalculable number of voters and increase the credentials of the Republican ticket. In fact, Palin's credentials have improved the McCain-Palin ticket so much that they are now four points behind the Obama-Biden ticket, boasting a two point increase since pre-Convention polls.

Folks, the importance of Sarah Palin can never be exaggerated. There is nothing more important in this election than the life of the Republican Vice Presidential nominee. No other issue can compare to Ms. Palin. The war in Iraq has drawn on too long and the domestic economic crisis is sure to pass.

Therefore, I do not stand alone when I argue that, glasses or no glasses, sportscaster or homemaker, Ms. Palin will determine the next President.

Thank you.

# McCain Chooses Palin in Desperation, Distracts Voters

Obama is back to where he started before conventions

By [Student Name]

[student email address]

Voting Americans are quite similar to adolescents diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, in that their attention span is remarkably undersized. Instead of Ritalin as an antidote, the media has been used as an outlet for a continuously growing list of insignificant phenomenon. The latest dose of hoopla injected voters with the fallacious idea that Sarah Palin had changed – and would continue to influence – the presidential election.

Ms. Palin was able to offer the McCain ticket a quick face lift, but provided little more than a short vacation for the Republican Party as she took the spotlight. The media was quick to overwhelm voters with continuous coverage of the latest polls and statements that had allegedly catapulted McCain to the head of the polls. However, after several weeks of success in the polls, Ms. Palin has lost her glamour and the spotlight. In the wake of her arrival, evidence proves that her selection was a desperate attempt by Mr. McCain to sway voters in his favor. Now, with just over a month before the general election, voters must turn their attention towards the real issues that will affect them for the next four years.

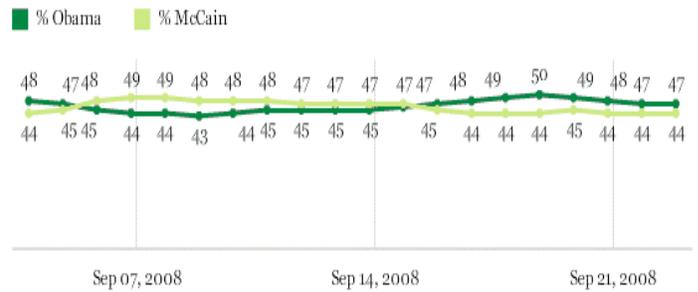
As much as I respect Mr. McCain and his party, the Senator lost a morsel of dignity when desperation became his motive. The facts are clear evidence that Mr. McCain thought less about the American people and more about his chance to win this election when choosing Ms. Palin as his running mate.

Many right-wing advocates categorized the selection as strategic, giving the Republicans the benefit of the doubt. The facts have led me to lose the optimism I previously held towards Mr. McCain and his vision. In an interview in late February of this year, Mr. McCain was asked who his running mate would be. He responded, promising his choice would be the person he felt could most adequately run the country if he were to perish. He chose a forty-something year old governor from Alaska. Did Mr. McCain live up to his promise?

After Joe Biden became Mr. Obama's running mate, Mr. McCain was eight points behind the Democratic presidential nominee in the *USA Today*-Gallup poll with only two months left in the election. With little time remaining, Mr. McCain hoped the last minute addition of a young, energetic woman would propel his campaign. Mr. McCain's wish came true. For a short time, the McCain-Palin ticket boasted a lead – as much as ten points – over Mr. Obama in the *USA Today*-Gallup poll. After a few weeks of prosperity, however, the euphoria Ms. Palin brought to the Republican ticket died away.

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Venue: *Colbert Report*

Audience: Viewers of *Colbert Report*, generally moderate or democratic voters

Monologue: Nation, tonight I want to focus on the most important issues in this election: Sarah Palin, Sarah Palin's children, Sarah Palin's first grade report card, and Sarah Palin's favorite pop singer.

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## EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR UNIT ONE PORTFOLIO

CATEGORY	CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION, QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE PORTFOLIO	COMMENTS
PORTFOLIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remains focused on same general topic within political election theme</li> <li>Is organized in the presentation of materials in the folder</li> <li>Includes all required items, and those items meet the basic criteria for length, formatting, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The connecting theme of the exaggeration of Sarah Palin's influence on the election is clear throughout the portfolio. The materials are all included and organized.</i></p>
RHETORICAL SITUATION & TOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds ethos through knowledge of the topic and through correct grammar and mechanics</li> <li>Develops logos through use of correct facts and logical reasoning throughout</li> <li>Identifies and effectively appeals to audience as is appropriate in chosen venue/location</li> <li>Incorporates creativity into process and demonstrates unique style as a writer</li> <li>Demonstrates an understanding of the rhetorical situation and methods for effective argument through the author's note/cover letter</li> </ul>	<p><i>In both the Letter to the Editor and the Op-Ed, there are a few mechanical errors and wording issues, which diminish your ethos just a bit. Otherwise, the rhetorical appeals generally work. Things like the sports analogies in the Letter to the Editor keep the piece connected but still a bit light though the topic is clearly serious. This demonstrates some great work in all three rhetorical appeals. Overall, you have a very clear writing style, which is engaging and demonstrates your deep understanding of the subject. The humorous piece is effective in its use of humor to make the point. You've captured Colbert's tone well and really made me laugh.</i></p>
REVISIONS & PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporates reader's comments and feedback into later drafts</li> <li>Demonstrates progress from early drafts to later drafts and effort in drafts at each stage of the process</li> <li>Responds constructively on peer work in workshop and on blog</li> <li>Discusses drafts and revision process in author's note/cover letter</li> <li>Completes required blogs for each assignment</li> </ul>	<p><i>Revisions are evident in both written pieces, though most appear to be surface corrections based on the feedback from workshops. I assume this is generally because the drafts workshoped were already fairly polished. In general, workshop comments are productive and helpful. There is, though, still room to work on providing even more constructive feedback on deeper issues. This is a difficult area to work on. Blogs are generally good.</i></p>

*Grade: A*