

Video Essay Assessment & Reflection

Video Essay Assessment

1. To demonstrate your understanding of persuasion, you must evaluate the video essay of another group. **Write the names of the group you are evaluating, and the topic of the video essay here:**

Names: [REDACTED]

Topic: Thanking Beyonce

2. Provide 2-3 sentence evaluation of how well the video essay you are evaluating satisfies *each* of the items below. Please be fair and honest; your grade on this assessment depends largely on your ability to demonstrate that you know how these strategies are supposed to work.

Intentional framing with audience in mind
Assessment:

The speaker mentioned the “thanking Beyonce” trend on social media, which has had a massive impact on apps like TikTok relatively recently. This is familiar to many social media users, including many students in our class. Most students are also already familiar with Beyonce and her fame, and religious students will likely react less than favorably to Beyonce if they believe she’s being possessed by the devil.

A clearly articulated premise or proposition
Assessment:

The premise is that celebrities thank Beyonce because she holds power over the music industry and could lead to their deaths if not glorified. This proposition is clear and straightforward. All of the evidence used supports this claim.

An argument that develops as the video essay progresses (optional: two sides)
Assessment:

Beyonce is evil and the music industry fears her. The current conspiracy theory about her, or that not thanking Beyonce will result in death or a career-ending event, is based in reality.

An identifiable value, belief, or attitude
Assessment:

Completely anti-Beyonce. The stance is clearly that the conspiracy theory is true and Beyonce is evil. Nothing is brought up to suggest otherwise.

Clearly drawn, receiver-centric conclusion (or set of conclusions)

Assessment:

Ends with a re-statement of the thesis, followed by the speakers thanking Beyonce to save the viewers and themselves from her wrath. Definitely clearly drawn and receiver-centric.

Evidence of credibility and legitimacy (ethos)

Assessment:

The video lists the celebrities who died after not thanking Beyonce and highlights just how powerful Beyonce is because of her fame. The way the speakers play off the claim that Beyonce is possessed by the devil was ridiculous and probably my favorite. Did legitimate evidence support it? No... but the video essay was definitely attempting to be silly at times. This wasn't a dead serious topic, so despite the lack of credibility, I think a sillier claim works in this context.

Supporting evidence of facts and reasoning (logos)

Assessment:

Beyonce has an overabundance of fame, awards, and power. Musicians conveniently disappear when they don't thank Beyonce, while those that do stay alive and active. Very odd that so many of them thank Beyonce after receiving an award.

Creative and intentional use of language to elicit an emotional response (pathos)

Assessment:

The claim against Beyonce is, apparently, "undeniably true" if someone does the research to support it. Her power is underlined several times throughout the video essay—she has hundreds of millions of followers on social media, hundreds of awards, and uses her fame to advance her own political stance. She has "admitted to being overtaken by the devil," according to the speaker. The clips don't entirely support this (she's talking about adopting an alter ego on stage), but the use of language makes it seem like Beyonce really is possessed when she's performing onstage.

Peripheral cues (e.g., music, vocalics)

Assessment:

Included "She Knows" by J. Cole, which was used repeatedly on TikTok in videos about Beyonce. Added an eerie and suspicious tone to the video and built off familiarity.

Central cues (e.g., messaging that relates closely to sense of self, identity, or things that should be important)

Assessment:

Beyonce is labeled “dangerous” by the speaker, who also claims she’s being “overtaken” by the devil. The viewer probably doesn’t want to support someone who’s dangerous or affiliated with the devil, especially if the viewer is religious.

Use of at least one intensifying strategy
Assessment:

In the video essay, the speakers associate Beyonce with danger and the devil. The speakers repeat that she is a powerful threat in the music industry several times.

Use of at least one strategy to make your messages “stick”
Assessment:

By mentioning artists who have passed away after not thanking Beyonce, the speakers appeal to the viewer’s emotions related to those deceased artists. The unexpectedness of the claim that a popular music artist like Beyonce is also an evil mastermind behind the deaths of many beloved musicians also adds “stickiness” to the message.

3. What letter grade would you give this video essay, and why? Explain below.

I would give this video essay an A. I think it fulfills the purpose of the assignment, even though the topic is sillier and based more in conspiracy than fact. I would deduct a few points for the lack of solid evidence, but because the topic was conspiratorial and not a claim based in fact to begin with, the approach is fine. Obviously, nobody in this course is a world-class editor, so the editing and chosen images/videos work well enough. I think this deserves a middle to low A at most or a high B at least.