Understanding Commentary: Guided Notes and Practice Activities

Analogy
How is moving homes like commentary in a paragraph?

Different Ways to Explain Commentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commentary in ARGUMENTS</th>
<th>Commentary in RHETORICAL ANALYSIS</th>
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</table>
| You are _________________ about the evidence for the reader. | You are explaining how the evidence _________________.
| You are __________________|
| Between the claim of the paragraph (your thesis) and the evidence you use to support it. | You are explaining the impact of the choice on the ________________.
| You are _________________ the evidence matters. | |

What Does Commentary Sound Like in an Argument?
Annotate the paragraph to label each sentence according to the colors in the presentation.

“One of the functions of education in the U.S. today is to prepare students for college and later a career. According to thebalance.com, 70% of high school students attend college, and around 66% of college students will graduate with a degree (“The Cost of Being a College Dropout”). This means that the goal of the school system is being met because well over a majority of students are attending college. Schools also offer tests to students for college placement such as the SAT and ACT. These tests not only help students get recognition from colleges, but they also help the student gauge where they are in the learning process, as well as show where they could improve their abilities in order to get into a certain college. Taking AP courses in high school is another way that the students become more prepared. These courses serve the purpose of preparing the student for what college material may look like, as well as save the student up to thousands of dollars in tuition money. The college attendance rates, placement tests, and AP courses all show that high schools are heavily geared toward assisting students in choosing and attending college.”
What Does Commentary Sound Like in a Rhetorical Analysis?
Annotate the paragraph to label each sentence according to the colors in the presentation.

There are several instances in King’s letter where he establishes a sense of camaraderie between him and his audience. In the greeting he opens with “My Dear Fellow Clergymen” and closes with “Yours for the cause of peace and brotherhood” (par. 10). Even though his audience is mostly white, he utilizes these phrases to suggest that even though they are not equal in the eyes of society, they are brothers in the eyes of God. King further tries to unify the opposing sides by stating “...when you see your twenty million negro brothers smothering…” (par. 3). This makes the audience think about how if they really are brothers, then why are they standing by as their “family” is being mistreated. The audience could possibly think about how they would feel if their real families were treated like this and how they would want to help them in times of need, much like how their African American brothers and sisters are in dire need. The unifying diction King develops makes his audience seriously consider what they stand for and believe in.

Practice: Identifying Commentary
By underlining or using highlighters, identify a topic sentence, evidence, and commentary in each paragraph below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument Paragraph</th>
<th>Rhetorical Analysis Paragraph</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One of the main functions of education is to prepare students for civic engagement as adults. For example, most states require all students to pass exams on both their state and federal Constitutions as a graduation requirement. This is to ensure that all young people understand their rights and how the government works by the time they are old enough to vote. Most schools also have some sort of democratically-elected student government system where the students vote for their class representatives. This not only serves as practice for later real elections, but also gives young people a chance to run for offices so that they can better engage in their school community. Schools are a great training ground for a civic-minded population.</td>
<td>Dr. King alludes to many historical figures in order to relate their movements to his own. He refers to the start of Christianity, calling Jesus an “extremist for love” and an extremist for “truth and goodness” after reacting to the public calling him an extremist (par. 9). This was an effective appeal to his audience because, as clergymen, they are all somehow affiliated with the church. By comparing himself as being an “extremist for love” as well, he relates himself not to Jesus, but his cause to the morality and righteousness of Christ’s movement.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
One of the most valuable aspects of education in the United States is our emphasis on preparing students for life after high school. Students are encouraged to take a wide variety of elective courses in addition to core math, language, science, and social studies classes in order to experience different subjects that might interest them. These courses might be more interesting to a student than the core classes. Additionally, many schools hold regular events in and out of class such as career fairs, college visit days, or military recruitment events. These are fun activities for students. Whereas some countries may only have the means to focus on a basic education of literacy and math, the United States education system works hard to prepare students for a life full of opportunities and options.

Another function of education is to promote the welfare of all children in the United States. For example, public schools are provided with federal money to give impoverished children free meals, and many school districts in impoverished areas connect families with important resources for housing, food, and medical care. Additionally, all school districts are required to have counselors, social workers, and nurses among their support staff, and all of these individuals are even trained to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect.

The resources of our public school system can help all children better meet their basic needs.