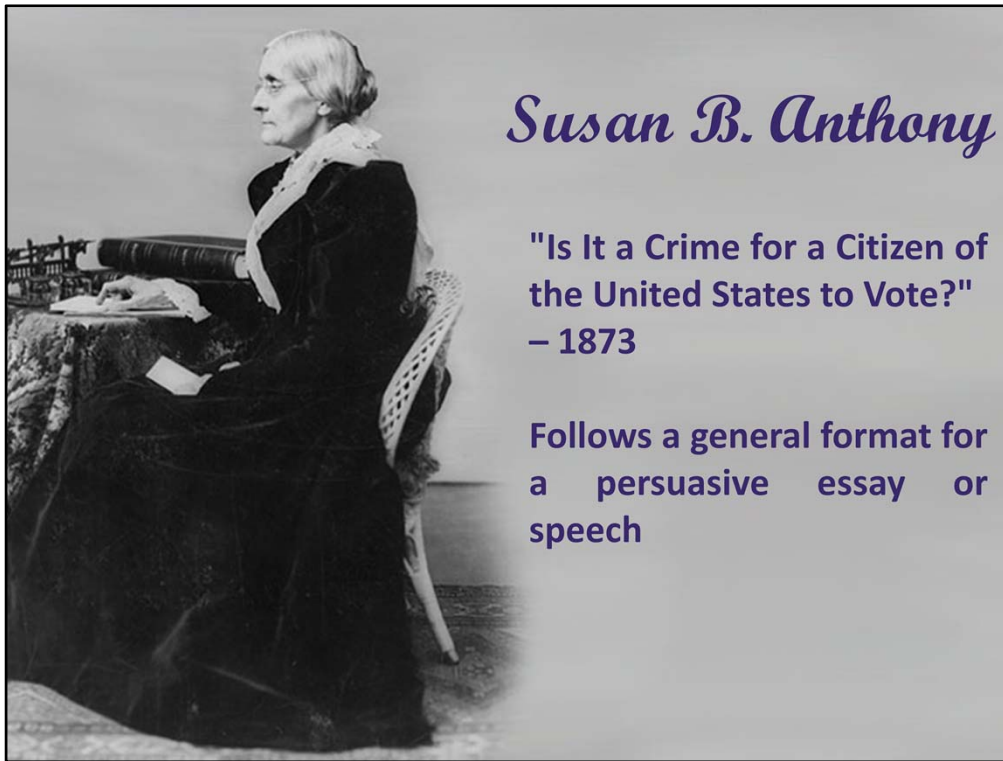


Module 9: Your Voice and the American Dream
Topic 2 Content: Susan B. Anthony Speech Analysis



Susan B. Anthony Speech Analysis

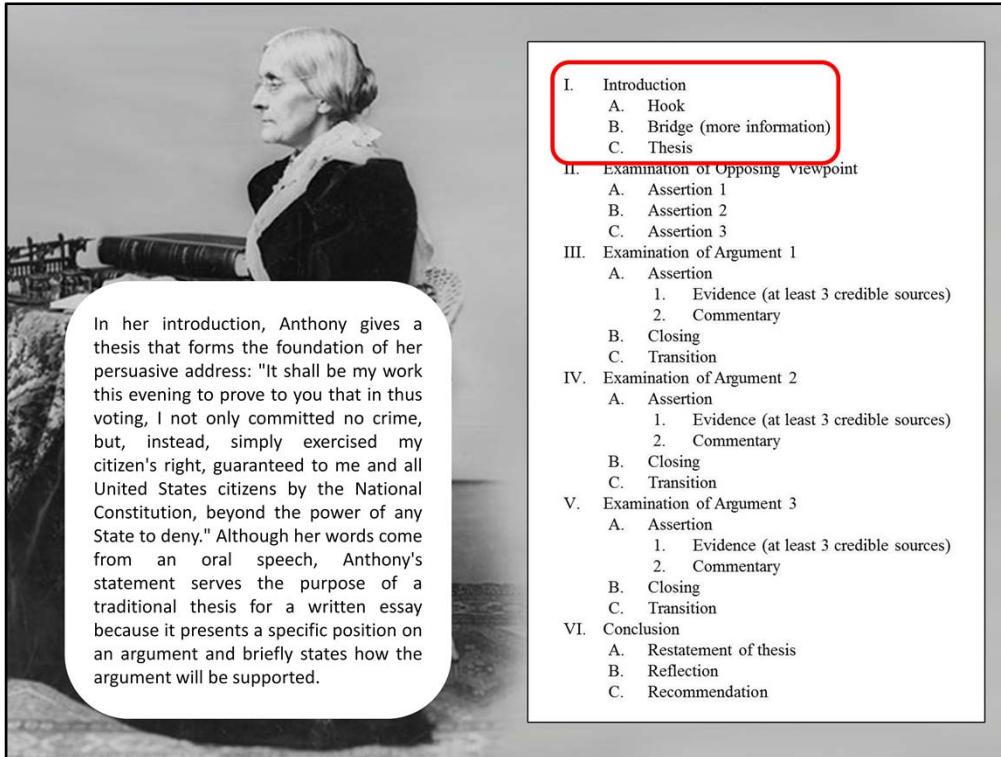
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Is it a crime for a citizen of the United States to vote? Susan B. Anthony asked this poignant question in a series of speeches she made prior to her trial in which she was accused of illegally voting in the 1872 presidential election, a time during which women were not allowed to vote. Take a moment now to analyze Anthony's speech and understand how it follows a general format for a persuasive essay or speech.

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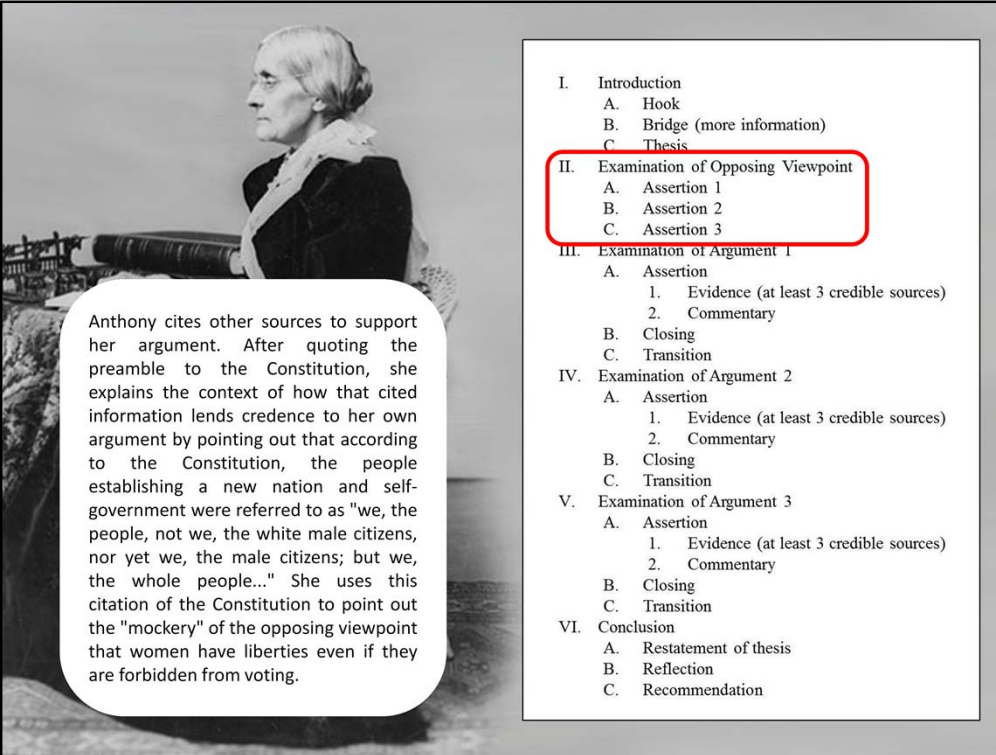
In her introduction, Anthony gives a thesis that forms the foundation of her persuasive address: "It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's right, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any State to deny." Although her words come from an oral speech, Anthony's statement serves the purpose of a traditional thesis for a written essay because it presents a specific position on an argument and briefly states how the argument will be supported.

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 - A. Hook
 - B. Bridge (more information)
 - C. Thesis
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 - B. Assertion 2
 - C. Assertion 3
- III. Examination of Argument 1
 - A. Assertion
 - 1. Evidence (at least 3 credible sources)
 - 2. Commentary
 - B. Closing
 - C. Transition
- IV. Examination of Argument 2
 - A. Assertion
 - 1. Evidence (at least 3 credible sources)
 - 2. Commentary
 - B. Closing
 - C. Transition
- V. Examination of Argument 3
 - A. Assertion
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- VI. Conclusion
 - A. Restatement of thesis
 - B. Reflection
 - C. Recommendation

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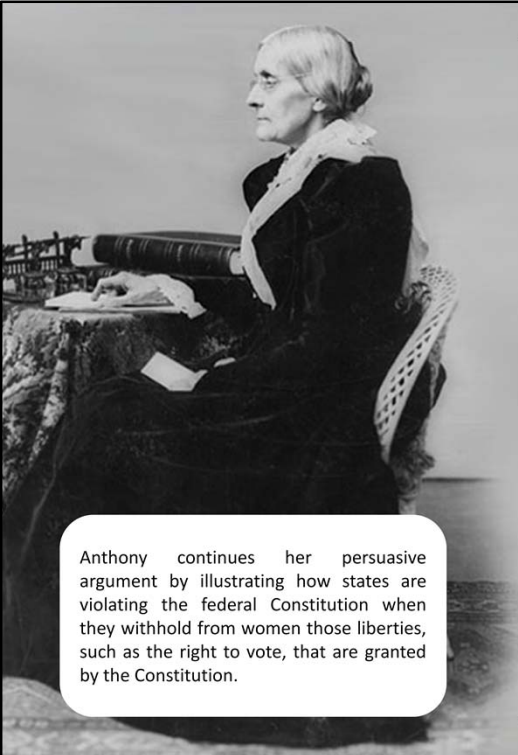
Anthony cites other sources to support her argument. After quoting the preamble to the Constitution, she explains the context of how that cited information lends credence to her own argument by pointing out that according to the Constitution, the people establishing a new nation and self-government were referred to as "we, the people, not we, the white male citizens, nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people..." She uses this citation of the Constitution to point out the "mockery" of the opposing viewpoint that women have liberties even if they are forbidden from voting.

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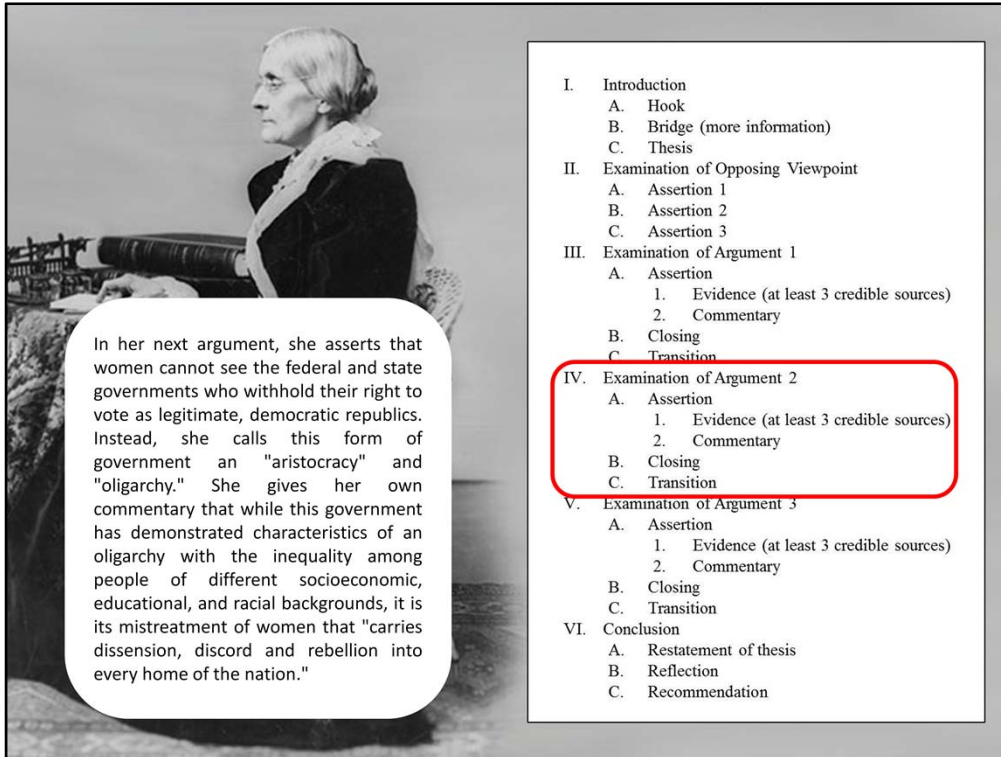
Anthony continues her persuasive argument by illustrating how states are violating the federal Constitution when they withhold from women those liberties, such as the right to vote, that are granted by the Constitution.

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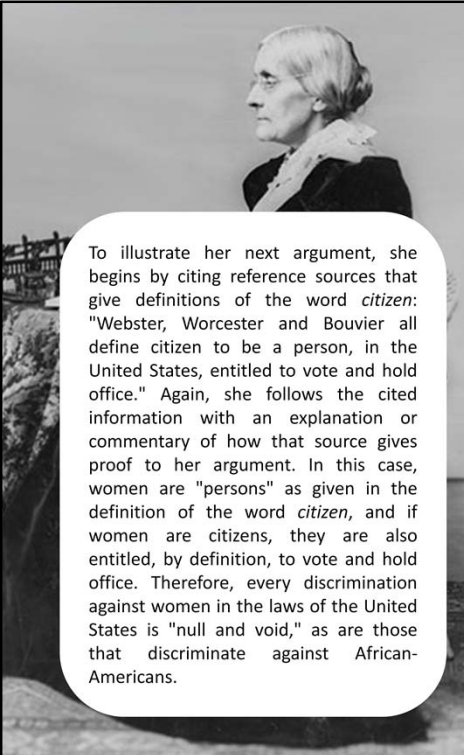
In her next argument, she asserts that women cannot see the federal and state governments who withhold their right to vote as legitimate, democratic republics. Instead, she calls this form of government an "aristocracy" and "oligarchy." She gives her own commentary that while this government has demonstrated characteristics of an oligarchy with the inequality among people of different socioeconomic, educational, and racial backgrounds, it is its mistreatment of women that "carries dissension, discord and rebellion into every home of the nation."

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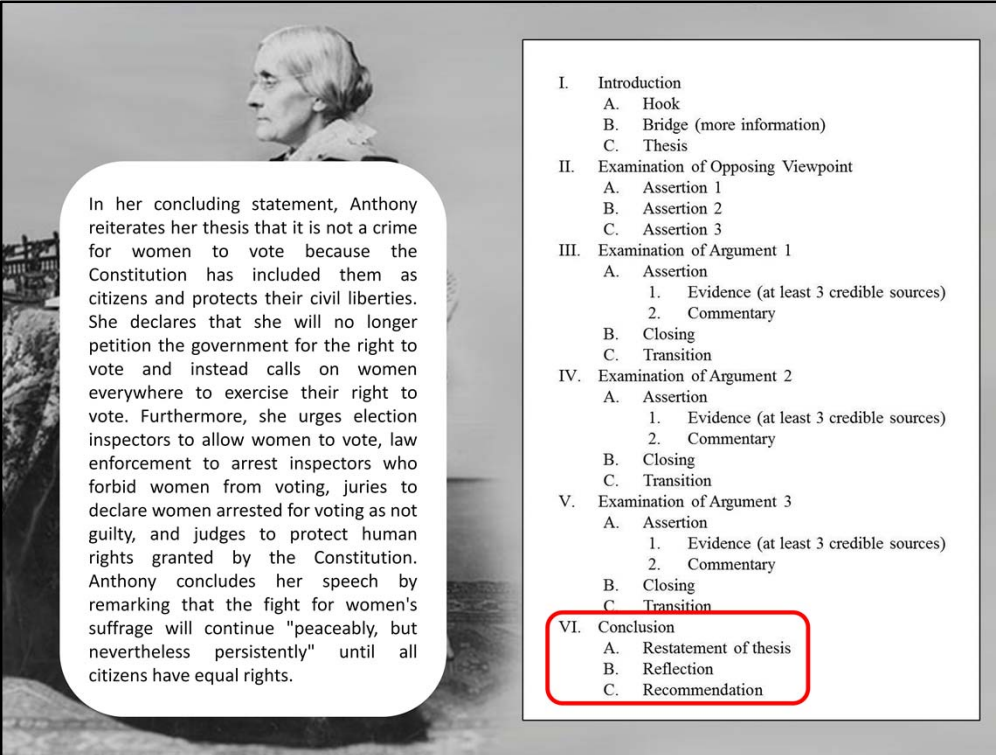
To illustrate her next argument, she begins by citing reference sources that give definitions of the word *citizen*: "Webster, Worcester and Bouvier all define citizen to be a person, in the United States, entitled to vote and hold office." Again, she follows the cited information with an explanation or commentary of how that source gives proof to her argument. In this case, women are "persons" as given in the definition of the word *citizen*, and if women are citizens, they are also entitled, by definition, to vote and hold office. Therefore, every discrimination against women in the laws of the United States is "null and void," as are those that discriminate against African-Americans.

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In her concluding statement, Anthony reiterates her thesis that it is not a crime for women to vote because the Constitution has included them as citizens and protects their civil liberties. She declares that she will no longer petition the government for the right to vote and instead calls on women everywhere to exercise their right to vote. Furthermore, she urges election inspectors to allow women to vote, law enforcement to arrest inspectors who forbid women from voting, juries to declare women arrested for voting as not guilty, and judges to protect human rights granted by the Constitution. Anthony concludes her speech by remarking that the fight for women's suffrage will continue "peaceably, but nevertheless persistently" until all citizens have equal rights.

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