Editorial Analysis

Objective: Students will analyze an editorial, citing examples of terminology learned in this lesson.
Directions: Go to a major online newspaper (NY Times, LA Times, Washington Post etc.) and find an editorial on a subject that interests you. Read the article once to get a general impression of the author’s stance. Read the article again looking for specific examples of argumentative rhetoric. Print the article and annotate.
1. Annotate instances/examples of the following:
   - Classical argument model (bracket or highlight and label):
     - Introduction
     - Narration
     - Confirmation
     - Refutation
     - Concession
     - Summation
   - Types of Appeals – Ethos, Pathos, Logos underline. Color-coded
   - Claim and Supporting Claims
   - Qualifiers (ex. typically, usually, for the most part, some, several, few, and sometimes)
2. Write a half-page critique of the editorial.
   Step 1: Read and analyze the text. Read the article one more times to analyze how the author has supported his or her ideas. What is the author’s main point and purpose? Who is the intended audience? Are there examples, facts, or opinions? What is the author’s bias?
   Step 2: Evaluate (critique) the text. Is the author credible? Is the argument logical? Is there sufficient evidence for the arguments? Are opposing arguments addressed competently? How do the author’s ideas correlate with the knowledge you already have? Are there any words or sentences that evoke a strong response from you? What are those words or sentences? What is your reaction? Are there aspects to the issue that are left unaddressed?
A well structured critique of an article will make a point, provide evidence from the work, and explain why that evidence supports the point you are making. For example,

The author uses many statistics to prove his point, but he fails to indicate his source. He notes that one out of two marijuana smokers go on to use more dangerous drugs; however, he never says how he acquired that information, nor does he include a reference at the end of the article. Should the reader trust that the statistics are accurate, or could they be the author’s invention because he is opposed to all legalization of drugs? If no sources are acknowledged for statistics, the author casts doubt on his entire argument.