

Rhetoric
Ch 1
The Writer's Handbook

English 1
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Rhetoric

- The Purposeful use of language.
- Pervades our daily life
- Examples include e-mail, texting, journalism, fiction, poetry, screen-writing, advertising, essays, political speeches, legislation, editorials, television programs, movies, etc...
- When you try to convince your parent, your spouse, your child, your friend to do or not to do something you use rhetoric.
- When you explain your own feelings or motivations or ideas, you use rhetoric.
- Not every use of rhetoric is equally effective.

Rhetoric

- Our goal in this class is to enable you to become an effective communicator who can skillfully use written rhetoric.... Or to be an effective writer.
- This involves an clear understanding of the writing process and the material of writing... that is, language.

Four elements of the rhetorical situation.

- 1) exigence
- 2) purpose
- 3) audience
- 4) context

The rhetorical situation

- The situation in which visual and verbal language purposefully.
- The exigence of a rhetorical situation is the reason you write or speak....
- When purposeful language can resolve the exigence, the situation can be called rhetorical.
- The **writer** prepare a **message** to deliver to an intended **audience**.

The rhetorical situation, cont.

- The audience hears or reads the message in a context that includes **constraints** (*obstacles*) and **resources** (*positive influences*) in the environment of the rhetorical situation.
- These constraints and resources include what has already been said on the subject; where, when, and through what media the message is delivered (oral, written, visual); the writer's relationship with the audience; the writer's credibility; the appropriateness of the message; and the means of delivering it.

Reading and Writing Rhetorically

- By reading & writing rhetorically you can evaluate the thesis statement, the key points, and the amount of support each point merits.
- When you write rhetorically you generate new ideas and communicate them clearly and concisely to your audience.

Writing to an exigence

- Once you determine the exigence for your writing – the reason that impels you to write – you will be better able to gauge all the elements of your writing (from word choice to organizational pattern) in terms of your overall purpose.

Patterns for intentional writing

- Expressive writing emphasizes the writer's feelings and reactions to people, objects, events, or ideas.
- Expository writing focuses more on objects, events, or ideas than on the writer's feelings about them.
- Argumentative writing is intended to influence the reader's attitudes and actions.
- In most cases, writers have more than one purpose and employ multiple patterns, although one usually emerges as predominant.

Exercise 1, page 9

- Select one of the following subjects; write two paragraphs that begin to develop an expressive, expository, or argumentative essay on that subject:
 1. Your finances
 2. Your generation
 3. Your career goals
 4. Your computer expertise
 5. Your favorite musical group
 6. Volunteer work
 7. Academic pressures
 8. Music or dance performances
 9. Student housing
 10. Your closest relative

Considering Audience

- Specialized audience – predisposed to the message.
- You will want to consider the members of your specialized audience
- What do they know that you don't know?
- What sorts of information might you provide them.
- Establish common ground by mentioning areas of agreement and acknowledging their expertise.
- Provide your audience with new information

Writing for a specialized audience

- Writing for a specialized audience does not mean that you have to know more than the members of that audience, nor does it mean that you have to impress them with your interpretation. Since no one knows everything about a subject, members of a specialized audience will usually appreciate thinking about the subject in a new way, even if they are not learning new information.

Writing for a Diverse Audience

- Readers of differing levels of experience and interest in your topic.
- There may be times when you simply will not know much about your audience.
- When this is the case, it may help you to imagine a thoughtful audience of educated adults, with whom you may share some common ground.
- Such an audience is likely to contain people with different backgrounds and cultural values, so be careful to avoid jargon or technical terms that would be understood only by a specialized audience. If you must use a specialized term be sure to explain it.

Sending and receiving a message within a context

- Context includes time and place, writer and audience, and the medium of delivery
- Social, political, religious, and other cultural factors influence context.
- Therefore, what you are able to produce in writing is always influenced (positively or negatively) by the context.

Context, cont.

- Your background and beliefs often shape your stance (or attitude) when writing.
- The medium in which you are writing is also part of the context.
- When you read the works of other writers, you will sometimes find that the context is explicitly stated, while other times it must be inferred.
- Whether the context is announced or not, it is important that writers and readers identify and consider it.