

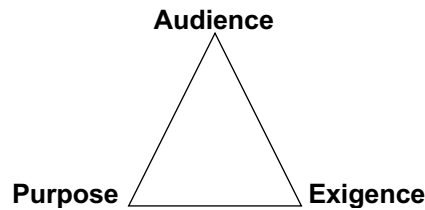


COM 3: The Rhetorical Situation and Rhetorical Appeals

For every text you compose throughout your career as a student and beyond, you must consider the **rhetorical situation** of that text. The rhetorical situation is how your project is positioned in relation to yourself, your audience, and the world around you, and it determines how effective your text will be at accomplishing your purpose for writing.

Rhetorical Triangle

The rhetorical triangle is a model that can help you better visualize the rhetorical situation of your project. Before you begin to write, you should consider the rhetorical triangle elements.



Your **audience** is the individual or group that you are trying to reach with your writing; this might be a broad demographic such as “engineering students” or a smaller group or individual, such as your professor. Think about what your audience needs to know from you in order for your writing to be most effective. In the box below, write down not only who your audience is but also how their needs might influence your writing choices.

Your **purpose** is what you are trying to accomplish with your paper, such as to entertain your audience, to inform them about a particular topic, or to persuade them of a position. Remember, you can have multiple purposes for writing. In the box below, write down your purpose(s).

Finally, the **exigence** (sometimes called the catalyst) is the need which prompted the paper’s creation, such as a recent event or another text to which you are responding. Write your exigence in the box below.

Use these boxes to sketch out the elements of your rhetorical triangle and use the section “other considerations” to write down any other factors in this particular **rhetorical situation** that might influence how you communicate with your audience:

Audience

Purpose

Exigence

Other Considerations:



Rhetorical Appeals

Once you have determined your overall rhetorical situation, you should consider how well your text appeals to the intended audience. **Rhetorical appeals** are the elements of your text which help you relate to your audience and communicate effectively.

The first rhetorical appeal is **ethos**, which determines how credible and trustworthy you appear to your audience. You can build ethos by demonstrating expertise in your topic, showing yourself to hold the same values as your audience, and discussing why your purpose is important. Write out some ways you can build ethos for your project:

The second rhetorical appeal is **pathos**, which determines how well you relate to your audience on an emotional level. You can build pathos through moving anecdotes, humorous asides, effective visual design, and other techniques meant to appeal to emotion. Write out some ways to build pathos in your project:

The third rhetorical appeal is **logos**, which determines how well you use logic and facts to back up your purpose and persuade your audience. You can build logos by including statistics, expert opinion, and sound argument. Write out some ways that you can use logos in your project:

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