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| Basic Questions for Rhetorical Analysis |  |

**What is the rhetorical situation?**

* What occasion gives rise to the need or opportunity for persuasion?
* What is the historical occasion that would give rise to the composition of this text?

**Who is the author/speaker?**

* How does he or she establish ethos (personal credibility)? Does the speaker's reputation convey a certain authority?
* Does he/she come across as knowledgeable? fair?

**What is his/her intention in speaking?**

* To attack or defend?
* To exhort or dissuade from certain action?
* To praise or blame?
* To teach, to delight, or to persuade?

**Who makes up the audience?**

* Who is the intended audience?
* What values does the audience hold that the author or speaker appeals to?
* Who have been or might be secondary audiences?
* If this is a work of fiction, what is the nature of the audience within the fiction?

**What is the content of the message?**

* Can you summarize the main idea? What topics of invention are employed?
* What are the principal lines of reasoning or kinds of arguments used?
* How does the author or speaker appeal to reason? to emotion?

**What is the form in which it is conveyed?**

* What is the structure of the communication; how is it arranged?
* What oral or literary genre is it following?
* What figures of speech (schemes and tropes) are used?
* What kind of style and tone is used and for what purpose?

**How do form and content correspond?**

* Does the form complement the content?
* What effect could the form have, and does this aid or hinder the author's intention?

**Does the message/speech/text succeed in fulfilling the author's or speaker's intentions?**

* For whom?
* Does the author/speaker effectively fit his/her message to the circumstances, times, and audience?
* Can you identify the responses of historical or contemporary audiences?