2

RHETORIC AND THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

Writing a Persuasive Letter.

ZACH Okay, got my coffee. Got my table. Got my laptop. *Assignment. Write a one-page letter about a real-world issue that affects your life*. Great. I have to write a letter, even though nobody writes letters anymore.

BEEP BEEP

Low battery! Excuse me. Sorry. I'm looking for an outlet. Could I just ... Doesn't reach!

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Keep your audience in mind ...

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Why are there only two outlets in this coffee shop?
Consider the rhetorical situation ...

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

Zach pleading with his computer. You're dying on me now? Wait, wait. What's a rhetorical situation??

What Is Rhetoric and Why Does It Matter?

There are many ways to convey a message. Effective writers weigh their options carefully. *What will I say? And how will I say it?* These are such important questions that an entire field has developed to study them. Rhetoric is the study of effective communication in speech and writing, and also in images, symbols, gestures—in every form of human interaction. Greet a friend, ask a question, provide directions, apply for a job: each of these interactions carries a purpose—whether that message is long and involved or just a quick ☺ to a friend. In every case, you have a **purpose**, you communicate to a real or imagined **audience**, and choose a **genre**, or form, to convey a message. Each of these elements interacts within a certain **context**—the circumstances, conditions and framework—for communication. Context can be personal—we talk at lunch—or geopolitical—world leaders meet to sign a treaty on climate change. We communicate in private and public ways, in intimate and socio-economic frameworks, and sometimes all of these frameworks at once. But no matter how we communicate, when taken together, purpose, audience, and genre comprise what rhetoricians call the **rhetorical situation**.

If people communicate all the time without thinking twice, why is it important to understand the rhetorical situation and its elements? First, rhetorical knowledge enables us to **read critically**, providing tools and vocabulary for evaluating texts and images. Second, rhetorical knowledge helps us to **write effectively**, as we consider the best way to convey a message to a particular audience. Let's look more closely at the key elements of the rhetorical situation.

PURPOSE

Purpose is your motivation, the desire, the need that drives you to communicate. Sometimes rhetorical purpose is straightforward. You ask the waiter for a spoon, because yours fell on the floor and you need a clean one. Sometimes purpose is complex. When Martin Luther King Jr. wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," he had at least two motives in mind—to argue directly with a group of ministers who advised against immediate protests against racial

injustice and to make a larger statement defining human freedom and dignity. In each case, purpose drives communication.

In college, your purpose depends on the assignment. Some assignments require you to inform. Reporting the results of a chemistry experiment, you inform your reader. Some assignments require you to persuade. You write a speech arguing for campaign finance reform. Still other assignments require a mix of information and persuasion. You set up an argument by informing your reader about previous research on campaign finance and the electoral system, and then you try to persuade your reader of your own viewpoint. There are those assignments which ask for a written analysis of a document or an image or an event or a data set. Alternatively, an instructor may ask you to entertain with storytelling, or to move your reader with poetry, or to spark debate with your reporting, or to provide a record of an event. The possibilities are endless, but in each case your purpose provides a reason or **motivation** for writing.

Sometimes students lose that motivation, or sense of purpose. Writing can seem artificial, compared to the quick flow of everyday communication. After all, you are writing in college to fulfill an assignment. It's possible to take that as your sole purpose. However, if you write *only* to fulfill an assignment, your work could become a mechanical exercise, tedious to write and to read. When you bring your own interests, concerns, and experience to the assignment, your writing comes alive. Instructors know this, and so you will find that many assignments provide an opening for you to think beyond the classroom. Zach's instructor asks for a letter about a real world issue that affects Zach personally. This language urges Zach to write about an issue or problem he cares about—to write with a real-life sense of purpose.

I wrote a one-page statement about my experience as a camp counselor. My purpose was to persuade the camp to accept me for a summer leadership program.

I wrote down a list of names and phone numbers for my babysitter. My purpose is to help her contact adults in an emergency.

I sent flowers to my grandmother. My purpose was to wish her a happy birthday, but also to apologize for not calling her all semester.

I told a bad joke to my roommate. My purpose was to cheer him up after he got his midterm back.

REFLECT on your day so far and consider two or three communications. Identify your purpose or purposes for each.

AUDIENCE

An audience receives your messages. Your audience can be big or small, familiar or anonymous, knowledgeable or uninformed,

I am supposed to write a letter to an actual human, but I am actually writing *for* my instructor.

I am posting on my class discussion forum. The other students are my audience—but I know the prof will be lurking there as well!

I am writing a movie review for my film class. My audience is my instructor, but in order to write a useful review, I have to think about what moviegoers want to know—like should they actually pay money to see this movie?

I am writing a lab report. My audience is the teaching assistant who already knows how the experiment is supposed to turn out—but I need to imagine a reader who does not know all the details and the outcome, so I can explain my experiment step by step.

REFLECT on a writing assignment. Do you need to imagine an audience in addition to your instructor? Who might that audience be? What choices will you make to communicate effectively with your imagined audience?

friendly, hostile, or undecided. You tailor messages to different audiences all the time. You ask a friend for directions. *Hey, where's the party?* But you ask a stranger for directions quite differently. *Excuse me. Do you know where I can find Hemmingway Gym?* Generally, you would not approach a stranger the way you would a close friend. By the same token, you would not speak in class the way you would to a small child. You give an oral presentation on famine. *Drought, economic decline, political chaos, and isolation are known contributors to famine in the developing world.* But you make different rhetorical choices when your audience is your eight-year-old nephew. *Sometimes when countries have terrible weather and don't get enough help, people don't have enough to eat.* Notice how quickly tone and content shift when you address a new audience. The very details you highlight in a public presentation are those you would avoid when speaking to a child.

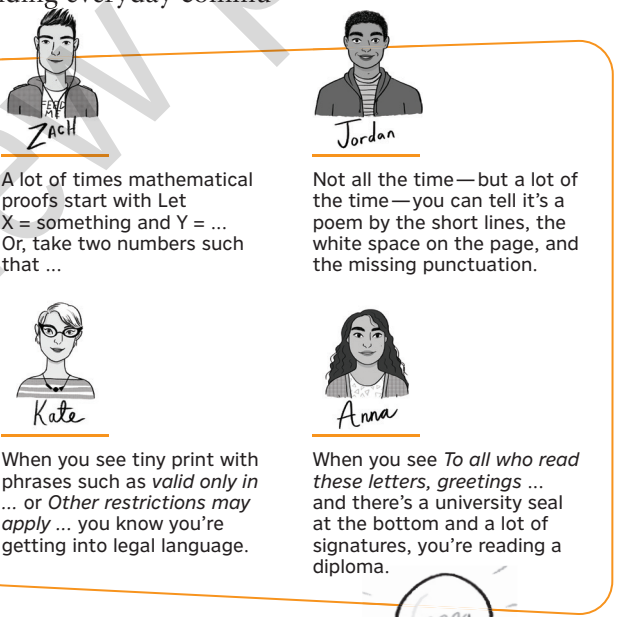
As a speaker you usually communicate directly. You speak up in class and see your classmates and your instructor sitting together in the room. When you whisper to a friend, you communicate immediately and directly as well. You are confiding in a particular person. However, when you write, your audience is usually not present physically. Nor can you see your audience respond in real time as you communicate your message. Often, as a writer, you need to visualize the audience you cannot see. Sometimes imagining that audience is easy. Send a text and you can imagine the expression on your friend's face. You may even anticipate your friend's response. At other times, imagining an audience is more complex. Who is your audience when you write an essay for class? You know your instructor will read and evaluate your work—so on one level your instructor is your audience. However, your instructor may ask you

to envision another audience as well—and even if your instructor doesn't ask, it helps to imagine a reader outside the classroom.

GENRE

With a specific purpose in mind, a writer chooses a form in order to communicate to an audience. This specific form of communication is called a genre. The term genre is often used to delineate categories of creative expression. Painting, photography, sculpture are all genres of visual art. A poem, novel, essay, play are genres of literature. Pop, Country, Rock, R&B, Folk, Funk, Jazz, Blues, Gospel, Classical—these are all genres of music with their own stations on the radio. One way to study art—and creativity—is to investigate the way artists work with and against the conventions of genre.

Genre is also a useful term for understanding everyday communication. A birth announcement, an obituary, a propaganda poster, a dictionary definition, a reality show, a crossword puzzle, a three-page essay, a yearbook picture, a newspaper article, a diary entry—each of these is a distinct genre. Genre is important because it signals the content of a message. The words *knock knock* prepare the listener for a joke. These set words invite the formulaic response *Who's there*? A list of ingredients beginning *one cup flour, one half cup sugar* signals a recipe and prepares the reader for baking instructions. Knowledge of genre helps a reader categorize and decode messages. You see the words *Dear Aunt Paula* and you think personal letter. You see the words *To Whom It May Concern* and you think this is an open letter to anyone who will listen. **LIMITED TIME OFFER!!!** in all caps, boldface print, with three exclamation points signals a sales pitch. *Once upon a time* signals a fairy tale.



REFLECT on the genres you read, see, and hear in your everyday life. How do you identify these genres? What signals tip you off?

ZACH Kate, could you look at this?

KATE Okay, let's see. *The Quest for Power, by Zachary Akino. Power is a necessity in modern times to get any work done. So there should obviously be more than two outlets in a coffee shop ...* Wait, I'm confused. What's this essay about?

ZACH It's not an essay.

KATE Oh! I thought it was, because it had the title and author on top.

ZACH No, the assignment is to write a persuasive letter.

KATE Who's it for?

ZACH Well—my instructor.

KATE So you're going to write *Dear Instructor*?

ZACH No, of course not!

Many of your assignments will require you to write in a certain genre and to understand its conventions. A lab report requires you to present information in specific ordered sections. In contrast, a genre such as a discussion forum might forbid offensive language but does not require a certain structure for written comments.

Some genres set strict limits on length—for example, a one-paragraph summary, or a three-to-five-page paper. Some dictate a specific format. A pie chart is round. A half-hour television show breaks for commercials at the ten-minute mark. A sestina is a poem that repeats certain words in a specific pattern. On the one hand, these conventions restrict expression. On the other hand, they can provide welcome guidance. If you have ever thought of writing as open-ended, or fuzzy, look to genre for rules and structure. But what if you are unsure which genre to use, and what its rules might be? It is crucial to study your assignments to learn what form your writing should take.

An essay is one genre, and a letter quite another. Each carries its own conventions. Zach's formal title *The Quest for Power* sounds like the title of a formal essay or book, not a personal appeal. If he is going to write a letter, he needs to begin differently. Most letters begin with some kind of greeting, or more formal heading.

Okay, a letter. I need to write to a human—preferably somebody who can do something about the lack of power outlets. *Dear Manager of the Atomic Bean*. Wait, that would be Lorraine. *Dear Lorraine* ...

New Genres, Unfamiliar Situations

In conversation, you can see a speaker's face and gestures. You can hear even the subtlest changes in tone and voice. In writing you cannot rely on these signals. You must communicate onscreen or on the page, adopting specific conventions to convey your ideas. Often the appropriate strategy seems obvious. You are inviting friends to dinner. You know your audience, you know what you want to say, you know how to say it, and you know the form your message will take—a quick text. *Dinner @ 8. Bring food!*

Sometimes, however, you will find yourself in a situation where you do not know quite what to say. For the first time, you need to send a message of condolence. How do you write with respect and sympathy? You need to draft a report for your boss. How long should it be? How much detail should you include? And how should you present your work? Email attachment? PDF? Hard copy? Slide show? What should it look like on the page or screen?

As you reflect on these questions, remember to consider the elements of the rhetorical situation. Ask yourself, what is my purpose here? Who is my audience? What's the best approach? These are not trivial questions. The stakes are high when we communicate. A carelessly worded condolence letter might hurt the recipient. A message sent to the wrong recipient could cost you your job. Information sent through unapproved channels could compromise company security. The opposite is also true. A heartfelt letter can comfort a reader. A well-directed message could earn you a fair hearing. Information sent through appropriate channels could enhance your company's productivity.

At times college classes present students with new rhetorical situations. Your instructor may ask you to write in a genre you have not tried, such as an annotated bibliography, an abstract, a specific

kind of lab report, a research paper, or a multi-modal presentation. Even when a genre seems familiar, you may find that instructors' expectations differ. An essay in this class may not look the same as an essay in the class you took last year. Often your assignment will provide guidance, explaining expectations. Even with these guidelines, it helps to break down an unfamiliar assignment by answering the rhetorician's key questions:

- What is my purpose?
- Who is my audience?
- What is the genre?

If you have not worked in a particular genre before, try asking for examples to study. Writing an annotated bibliography is much easier when you can look at an example in the format your instructor requires. Reading scientific abstracts will give you a better sense of the length and level of detail your instructor expects. Of course, looking at examples will only get you so far. Working in a new genre can be daunting. When in doubt, it makes sense to pause and consider how to address your audience. This is the fundamental question. How do you present a message your audience will understand, or believe, or enjoy, or answer?

So I am writing to Lorraine, the manager of the Atomic Bean, and I envision my letter as frustrated but rational, polite but also urgent, laser-focused without sounding too crazy ... How do I get all that in writing?

Rhetorical Appeals

How can I convey my message effectively? Rhetoricians have studied this question for thousands of years. The philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BCE) suggests that when we communicate we use three different rhetorical strategies, or **appeals**: ethos, pathos, logos. He adds a fourth term, kairos, to convey the dimension of time and timeliness.

ETHOS

Ethos is the Greek word for character. An appeal to ethos is an appeal to the character and credibility of the speaker or writer. A candidate for school board might say, *I have lived and worked in this community for 30 years. I have served as both a teacher and a school*

principal. Both my children attend our public schools. These are appeals to ethos. The speaker is saying Don't just vote for what I've done. Vote for who I am—your neighbor, your teacher, your fellow parent.

Advertisements often appeal to ethos. Consider the images of men and women dressed like scientists in white lab coats to sell cosmetics, and the phrases you've heard. *Dentist-recommended*. Or *Nine out of ten doctors ...*

Credibility can mean expertise, honesty, integrity, and authenticity. It can also mean audacity and edge. There is a reason companies pay so much for movie stars or sports heroes to wear certain shoes or carry a certain phone. We look up to these people when it comes to style. A celebrity spokesperson for a brand makes a huge impression—especially to a young audience. Indeed, advertisers consider audience carefully when they make appeals. They consider such factors as age, gender, ethnicity, income, and education. After all, what counts as expertise and authority for a middle-aged woman may look quite different to a 12-year-old girl.

Appeals to ethos can manipulate an audience. I want to run like her. I want to look like him. I admire them, and so I'll buy their products. However, appeals to ethos extend beyond advertising. In everyday conversation a friend appeals to ethos when he says, *Trust me. I've been commuting here for four years. I've tried both routes and this one is faster*. In academic debate, a scholar might declare, *I have not only read every source available on this topic, but I have edited the definitive edition of these texts*. In each case, the appeal to ethos tries to establish trust. A careful writer appeals to ethos with an argument well supported by reliable sources and sound reasoning. A student who proofreads and corrects errors appeals to ethos by submitting a clean draft. The reader's first impression is that this writer takes pride in her work.

PATHOS

Appeals to ethos often focus on the speaker, but appeals to **pathos** focus on the audience. Appealing to pathos, the speaker or writer attempts to influence emotions. You see a picture of a wide-eyed shelter kitten along with the words *Will you be my forever family?* You're looking at an appeal to pathos. Your friend asks, *Aren't you*

angry about the litter on campus? Don't you want to do something about it? That's an appeal to pathos. Activists declare, *Don't stand by and watch. Join us and we can change the world for the better.* Often, even when the speaker or writer highlights her own feelings,—she does so to reach out to the audience. *I am outraged, and you should be too!*

Advertisers appeal to pathos. Pictures of farms and country porches, golden light, and fields of wheat evoke feelings of nostalgia that help to sell—granola. Images of a starry sky, a swooping eagle, and a spaceship make us think of speed, flight, and cutting-edge technology, all of which advertise—a luxury car.

Politicians appeal to pathos when they campaign for election. Candidates speak to our love for our children and our hope for the future. *Don't you want a better tomorrow for your sons and daughters?* Internet trolls appeal to pathos when they try to inflame debate with angry rhetoric and racist or misogynistic language. Charities appeal to pathos when they ask potential donors to identify with those less fortunate—and to feel guilty if they don't. *Have you ever been hungry?* Military recruiters spark feelings of patriotism—*Sworn to defend American soil*—and appeal to ambition and pride—*Be all you can be*.

Appealing to pathos can be highly effective, not only in advertising but in the genres of poetry, sermons, stump speeches, flash mobs, personal letters, and viral videos. Such appeals might be less welcome in genres such as academic essays or factual reports. Think carefully about your assignment and your instructor's expectations before you make emotional appeals. An appeal to pathos could work well in a story for your creative writing class, but derail a lab report in organic chemistry.

LOGOS

Well suited to academic writing are appeals to **logos**, or reason. A scientist explains how experiments demonstrate that even the youngest infants recognize human speech. A debater points out holes in his opponent's argument: *You say now that you would support military action in certain cases, but in your opening statement you said no boots on the ground. Which do you believe?* A mathematician asks you to accept three axioms as the basis of a proof. These

are all appeals to logos. Appeals to logos are not all based on formal logic. An appeal to "common sense" and an argument from evidence in a court of law both serve as appeals to logos. As with ethos and pathos, an appeal to logos takes different forms, depending on the rhetorical situation.

Not all appeals to logos are created equal. You hear politicians quoting studies and statistics. You see commercials displaying graphs and charts touting the superiority of one product over another. Where did these numbers come from? What kind of study produced these results? Are these results as compelling as they seem? Advertisers compare their detergent to "a leading brand." What exactly is this leading brand—an arch-rival, or some random cut-rate soap? Like other rhetorical appeals, the appeal to logos can serve many purposes. A scientist appeals to logos, but a car salesman does too. *Let me run the numbers for you. With your trade-in and the cash back, and this low interest rate, your new car will cost less than the one you're driving now ...*

Some appeals to logos are designed to manipulate an audience, and they invite skepticism or even disdain. However, a fair-minded appeal to logos inspires trust and substantive debate. In college your instructors may ask you to develop a well-supported argument. Such assignments require appeals to logos as you make a claim and provide strong evidence for your assertions. By the same token, in class discussion, instructors hope that you will make a point and then explain your reasoning. Such appeals to logos are highly prized in the workplace, in the research community, and in conversation. This is why instructors want you to practice them.

KAIROS

Aristotle uses a fourth term, **kairos**, to refer to time. We include it here because timing is an important variable in the rhetorical situation. Effective communication conveys a sense of timeliness, even urgency, to the audience. Debates on taxation, capital punishment, gun control, and gender equality don't renew themselves year after year simply because these topics are controversial. Some specific event or cause provokes new discussion. *A Department of Labor study released today, shows that women earn only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. We need to take action now.*

Let's say you are protesting development on your street. You need to rally your neighbors *now*, before the developers receive approval for their plans. Or let's say you are tweeting news you've just received about storm warnings. You don't want to talk about storms in general, or limit yourself to phrases like "stay safe." You need to emphasize that storms are expected tonight. Without using the term, you invoke kairos, the urgency of the moment.

Salespeople use kairos to expert effect as they try to close a deal: *Don't delay. These prices won't last*. Politicians declare: *Now is the time. This is the moment to act*. Kairos figures strongly in songs and poetry. Robert Herrick (1591–1674) uses kairos in his poem "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time."

> Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
> Old Time is still a-flying:
> And this same flower that smiles to-day
> To-morrow will be dying.

Herrick, Robert. "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time." *Hesperides*, John Williams, 1648.

In a love song, kairos sounds intimate and intense. In academic writing, investigators appeal to kairos to demonstrate the timeliness of certain findings, the urgency of a problem, and the need for new solutions. A medical report states: *The mortality rate has not changed in 20 years, and more funding for clinical studies is urgently needed*. Charitable organizations assert: *Every three minutes a child goes missing. Join with us to prevent abduction today*. Environmentalists declare: *Without immediate action the golden-cheeked warbler will soon die out*. The dateline on a news story, the time and date of an instant message, the appeal to act now: kairos frames the rhetorical situation in time.

When my mom said, "Picture your grandma sitting alone in her tiny room waiting to hear from you," that was an appeal to pathos, for sure.

I saw a sign: HUGE DISCOUNTS, ONE DAY ONLY! That was an appeal to kairos.

I appealed to logos when I reasoned with my son. "Wait for the cookies to cool. They'll be just as yummy, and they won't burn your tongue."

The president of the university came to talk to us at orientation, and he started by saying, "I was a first-generation college student, just like you." I felt like wow. He gets it. That was an amazing appeal to ethos.

REFLECT on an exchange you've had recently in conversation or text. How would you describe the appeals used?

Using Rhetorical Appeals

Students of rhetoric learn to identify and use the three rhetorical appeals, along with kairos, in their own work. Zach begins his letter to the manager of the Atomic Bean with a strong appeal to pathos.

> Dear Lorraine,
> Has your computer ever shut down while you are struggling to make a deadline? Can you picture the total frustration and panic as your computer starts beeping and then ominously goes dark? Not to mention losing your train of thought—possibly forever?

Zach's instructor reads the draft and suggests that he might make some initial adjustments.

DR. B. Zach, this is a good start, but your letter sounds a little ... hysterical.

ZACH That's my appeal to pathos.

DR. B. You're coming on strong. Remember keeping your audience in mind?

ZACH Yeah, I've got that covered. *Dear Lorraine*.

DR. B. Hmmm.

ZACH You think using her first name is too personal?

DR. B. It's personal and it's also aggressive. Keeping Lorraine in mind means considering her point of view. How is she going to react to this attack?

Zach rewrites his letter. Keeping his audience in mind, he expands his repertoire of rhetorical appeals as he tries to address Lorraine's possible objections. Read his work below and see if you can identify appeals to ethos, pathos, logos, along with a reference to kairos.

Dear Ms. Malloy,

I have been a loyal Atomic Bean customer since classes began two weeks ago. In fact I show up almost every day for your amazing coffee. However, when it comes to power outlets, the Atomic Bean is seriously lacking.

Do you really expect a coffee shop with ten tables and a counter (total seating 26) to get by with just two power outlets? Students come to drink coffee and see each other, but also to work. Imagine finding the perfect seat, the most inspiring muffin (banana chip), and the perfect noise level. You are just reaching the crucial point where your whole paper is coming together and then your battery runs out. Both outlets are being used. Only two choices are left to you. Trudge a mile to the library, or give up and retreat to your room, where you see your bed and instantly fall asleep.

Adding new outlets would improve my life and that of countless other students. New outlets would also boost your business, attracting repeat customers at all hours of the day and night. It's true that some of us work at tables for hours at a time, but we fill the Bean during off hours, providing a constant source of revenue with our continuous coffee refills.

I know I speak for a lot of students when I say that I can't keep working at the Atomic Bean without more outlets available. Last weekend I tried Branwell's and counted at least ten convenient power outlets. You've got better music and much better coffee. Please don't make me leave. Bring in an electrician and add some outlets right away.

Sincerely Yours,
Zachary Akino

Zach begins his letter with an appeal to ethos. I am a loyal customer. Therefore, you should listen to me. He also reaches out to create common ground with his audience. He uses a bit of humor, suggesting that he not only likes but needs the café's banana chip muffins—the most inspiring kind—to work effectively. This kind of detail is disarming, as is Zach's admission that the Atomic Bean might have a problem with customers camping out all day with their laptops. This concession appeals to ethos, building respect between writer and reader, and sets up an appeal to logos, establishing a willingness to think through the problem with Lorraine—whom he now addresses respectfully as Ms. Malloy.

Zach also develops his appeal through logos—look, do the math. Two power outlets cannot serve 26 customers. If you add some outlets, you will not only provide better customer service but serve your own interests, boosting your business and making more money. However, he does not limit himself to rational appeals. He does not forget his appeal to pathos. Imagine what it's like to reach that moment of inspiration and then suddenly run out of power. Using vivid language, Zach asks his reader to picture the poor student who must "trudge" to the library. Finally, Zach concludes with an appeal to kairos, underlining the urgency of his request. His appeal, "Please don't make me leave," is actually a veiled threat. Act now, before I give up on the Atomic Bean and take my business elsewhere. Each appeal serves a central purpose—to argue for more outlets in the coffee shop.

You may have heard the expression "empty rhetoric." Sometimes people associate rhetoric with ineffective hand-waving and clichés. In fact, rhetoric is hugely powerful. Rhetoric can serve as a weapon, to cheat, to bully, to slander, to incite violence. Rhetoric can also serve as a tool. A brilliant sales pitch can launch a successful product. A well-crafted defense can convince a jury to acquit a murder suspect. On a global level, the language in a treaty and its accompanying maps can shape the world for generations to come. On a personal level, a serious, well-worded apology could save a friendship, or your job. In every case, rhetoric can change minds and lives.

Consider: What is the most effective way to address my audience? How might my audience respond?

Every communication involves:

- **Audience**
- **Purpose**
- **Genre**

Together, these comprise the rhetorical situation.

Rhetorical Appeals

- **Ethos** appeals to the credibility of speaker or writer
- **Pathos** appeals to emotions
- **Logos** appeals to reason
- **Kairos** frames a message in time

Use Rhetorical Knowledge While Writing

Break down assignments with these questions:

- What is my purpose?
- Who is my audience?
- What is the expected genre?
- What appeals would be effective in this situation?

Use Rhetorical Knowledge While Reading

These questions can help you think critically as you read:

- What is the author's purpose?
- What genre or genres does the author use?
- What appeals does the text make?
- Are these appeals effective?
- Why or why not?

ACTIVITIES

1 Try your hand at writing for different audiences. Write a few sentences for each prompt.

Tell your best friend what you did over the weekend.
Tell your parents.

Ask your instructor for help with an assignment.
Ask your roommate.

Describe your car's problems to your mechanic.
Describe mechanical problems to the person interested in buying your car.

Contemplate the future with your academic advisor.
Contemplate the future in your journal.

Choose one pair above and write a paragraph reflecting on the rhetorical adjustments you made to address a different audience.

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2 Have you ever mistakenly hit "reply all"? It's embarrassing to send a private message to a large group. Scrambling a rhetorical situation can lead to laughter. It can also lead to serious misunderstanding. Sometimes the trouble is what you say. Sometimes it's where—and to whom—you say it. Sometimes it's when you say it. Sometimes it's *how* you say it. Describe a rhetorical blunder—either one you have made or one you have witnessed. What went wrong?

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3 Read the following passages. See if you can identify the genre of each. What rhetorical cues tipped you off? If in doubt, consult the sources at the end for more clues. Once you identify the genre, what can you infer about the author's purpose and audience?

A. Preheat oven to 300° F.
In medium bowl combine flour, soda, and salt. Mix well with a whisk. Set aside.

B. I do not remember when I first realized that I was different from other people; but I knew it before my teacher came to me. I had noticed that my mother and my friends did not use signs as I did when they wanted anything done, but talked with their mouths. Sometimes I stood between two persons who were conversing

and touched their lips. I could not understand, and was vexed. I moved my lips and gesticulated frantically without result. This made me so angry at times that I kicked and screamed until I was exhausted.

C. Dearly beloved, we are gathered here ...

D. Don't let the name fool you: a black hole is anything but empty space. Rather, it is a great amount of matter packed into a very small area—think of a star ten times more massive than the Sun squeezed into a sphere approximately the diameter of New York City. The result is a gravitational field so strong that nothing, not even light, can escape. In recent years, NASA instruments have painted a new picture of these strange objects that are, to many, the most fascinating objects in space.

E. **QUANTIFIERS**
When all the variables in a propositional function are assigned values, the resulting statement has a truth value. However, there is another important way, called **quantification**, to create a proposition from a propositional function. Two types of quantification will be discussed here, namely, universal quantification and existential quantification.

F. Saturday, 21st. Winds Southerly, a Gentle breeze, and Clear weather, with which we coasted along shore to the Northward. In the P.M. we saw the smoke of fire in several places; a Certain sign that the Country is inhabited. At 6, being about 2 or 3 Leagues from the land, we shortned Sail, and Sounded and found 44 fathoms, a sandy bottom. Stood on under an easey sail until 12 o'Clock, at which time we brought too until 4 A.M., when we made sail, having then 90 fathoms, 5 Leagues from the land. At 6, we were abreast of a pretty high Mountain laying near the Shore, which, on account of its figure, I named Mount Dromedary (Latitude 36 degrees 18 minutes South, Longitude 209 degrees 55 minutes West).

G. Friends and Fellow-citizens: I stand before you to-night, under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last Presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. 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.

H. PICKERING [gently]. What is it you want, my girl?
THE FLOWER GIRL. I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can talk more

genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him—not asking any favor—and he treats me as if I was dirt.

I. The upper surface of the table, known as the playing surface, shall be rectangular, 2.74m long and 1.525m wide, and shall lie in a horizontal plane 76cm above the floor.

The playing surface shall not include the vertical sides of the tabletop.

The playing surface may be of any material and shall yield a uniform bounce of about 23cm when a standard ball is dropped onto it from a height of 30cm.

A. Fields, Debbie. "Blue-Ribbon Chocolate Chip Cookies." *Mrs. Fields Cookie Book: 100 Recipes from the Kitchen of Mrs. Fields*, Time-Life Books, 1992.

B. Keller, Helen. *The Story of My Life*. Doubleday, 1903, p. 10.

C. Episcopal Church. *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church: Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David According to the Use of the Episcopal Church*. Seabury Press, 1979, p. 423.

D. "Black Holes." *NASA Science*, www.science.nasa.gov/astrophysics/focus-areas/black-holes. Accessed 20 Sept. 2018.

E. Rosen, Kenneth H. *Discrete Mathematics and Its Applications*. 4th ed., McGraw-Hill, 2011, p. 23.

F. Cook, Captain James. "21 April 1770." *Captain Cook's Journal,* www.southseas.nla.gov.au/journals/cook/17700421.html. Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

G. Anthony, Susan B. "Is It a Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote?" National Woman Suffrage Association Meeting, Washington, DC, 16 Jan. 1873.

H. Shaw, George Bernard. *Pygmalion: A Romance in Five Acts*. Constable, 1920, p. 217.

I. The International Table Tennis Federation. "The Laws of Table Tennis." *Handbook 2018*, ITTF, 2018, p. 34, www.ittf.com/handbook/. Accessed 20 Sept. 2018.

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4 Each of the following authors has a strong sense of purpose. Choose one text and discuss the rhetorical situation. Identify the purpose of each message, the audience you think the author is trying to reach, and the genre he or she uses. What rhetorical appeals does each author make? How does the author use these appeals to communicate to his or her audience?

Raymond Anthony Lewis Jr. (b. 1975) was a defensive lineman for the Baltimore Ravens. He won numerous awards during his career, including Most Valuable Player for his performance in the 2001 Super Bowl. Here he speaks to the football team at his alma mater, the University of Miami.

NOTE: Text has been removed from Sample Chapter for copyright reasons.

5 Sometimes a writer will send a private letter to one person or organization with the knowledge that the letter could be read by others as well, now or in the future. Read the following letter in which one writer protests the banning of his books. How would you describe the audience here? What is Vonnegut's purpose? Does he have more than one? What rhetorical appeals can you identify? Are they effective?

Kurt Vonnegut (1922–2007) was an American writer best known for his novels* Slaughterhouse Five *(1969) and* Cat's Cradle *(1963).

NOTE: Text has been removed from Sample Chapter for copyright reasons.

6 Letters come in many shapes and sizes. Chats, blogs, letters to the editor, product reviews—to name just a few. In a form appropriate for your purpose and audience, write a letter about a problem that affects your life. Examples might include a complaint to the manufacturer of a defective product, an open letter lobbying for change, a response to a news story. The letter might address a small annoyance—bad service at a restaurant—or something more profound—hate speech on campus. After writing the letter, write a paragraph reflecting on any aspect of the rhetorical situation you found especially important.