

1 Who is speaking, to whom, and why

– Part 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary

Write each word three times.

English	Write it 3 times (English)
rhetorical situation	_____
exigence	_____
subject	_____
purpose	_____

Recall

- You write differently to a teacher than to a friend.
- You have noticed an advertisement trying to make you feel something.
- You know a text written for one group can annoy another.

New ideas

Read these first. Each idea has a short worked example. Then do the Practice below.

■ 1 The rhetorical situation

Every text has a writer, an audience, a purpose, a subject and a context. Together these are the **rhetorical situation**, and changing any one of them changes what the writer can say.

Worked example. A speech for supporters can assume agreement; the same argument for opponents must first establish common ground.

■ 2 Exigence

The **exigence** is the thing that made the text necessary now. Identifying it explains the writer's urgency and often the whole shape of the argument.

Worked example. A letter written the day after a factory closes has an exigence the same letter written a year later does not.

■ 3 Purpose is not subject

The **subject** is what a text is about; the **purpose** is what the writer wants it to accomplish. Two texts on one subject can have opposite purposes.

Worked example. Two articles about a new road: one persuades readers to support it, the other to object.

Watch out: “To inform the reader” is almost never a useful statement of purpose. Ask what the writer wants the reader to *do or believe* that they did not before.

Practice

2.1 Name the five elements of the rhetorical situation. [2]

2.2 Define exigence. [1]

2.3 Explain how identifying the exigence helps a reader. [2]

2.4 Distinguish subject from purpose. [2]

2.5 State why “to inform the reader” is a weak statement of purpose. [2]

2.6 A speech is delivered to opponents rather than supporters. State one thing that must change. [1]
