

1.1 Components of the rhetorical situation

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 17 marks**

KEY WORDS message 讯息 • audience 受众 • purpose 目的 • exigence 触发事件 • writer 作者

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on the **rhetorical situation** 修辞情境.

You must be able to:

- name the components: **exigence** 触发事件, **audience** 受众, **purpose** 目的, **writer** 作者, **context** 语境, **message** 讯息
- identify each component from a short passage or headnote
- explain how a change in one component changes the others
- avoid describing a device without linking it to purpose

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.



■ The six components

Exigence is the situation that makes writing necessary now. **Purpose** is what the writer wants to happen. **Audience** is who is addressed. **Writer** is the persona and standing being projected. **Context** is the surrounding circumstances the reader shares. **Message** is what is actually claimed.

■ Reading a headnote

An AP headnote is not decoration. “Delivered to the graduating class of a medical school in 1974” gives you audience, occasion and probable purpose before you read a word of the passage.

■ Why the components interact

Change the audience and the evidence that will persuade changes with it. A claim addressed to specialists may be stated technically; the same claim for a general audience needs a comparison. So a device is always a choice **for** somebody.

2 Practice

2.1 Name four components of the rhetorical situation. [2]

2.2 Explain the difference between exigence and purpose. [2]

2.3 A letter is written by a hospital director to local residents after a service closure is announced.

(a) State the exigence. [1]

(b) State one way the audience shapes the likely evidence. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A headnote reading “published in a national newspaper the week after a factory fire” supplies mainly [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A** the writer’s syntax
B exigence and context
C the thesis
D the line of reasoning

3.2 A device analysis earns credit only when it is linked to [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A** the length of the sentence
B the writer’s purpose and audience
C the number of examples
D the date of publication

3.3 A speech is rewritten for a specialist conference instead of a public meeting.

- State one change you would expect in the evidence. [1]
- Explain why the change follows from the rhetorical situation. [2]

3.4 Full free-response task. In 1963, the mayor of a mid-sized city wrote an open letter to residents defending a proposal to close two neighbourhood libraries and open one larger central library. The letter appeared on the front page of the local newspaper and opened: *“I know what these buildings mean to you. I grew up in one of them.”*

Read the situation carefully. Then write an essay that analyses the rhetorical choices the mayor makes to advance the argument.

Marked on the AP 6-point rubric: **Row A** — Thesis (1), **Row B** — Evidence and Commentary (4), **Row C** — Sophistication (1).

[6]