

4.1 Components of the rhetorical situation

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 11 marks

Objective

Build the skills to use the **rhetorical situation** to explain a writer's **structural** choices.

You must be able to:

- explain how audience shapes where an argument begins
- explain how purpose shapes what is emphasised at the end
- link a structural choice to a component of the situation
- avoid explaining structure by the subject alone

1 Worked examples

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

■ Where an argument begins

A hostile audience is met on common ground; a sympathetic one can be addressed directly. Opening choice is therefore evidence about audience, and can be cited as such.

■ What the ending emphasises

Purpose decides the last thing a reader is left with. An argument for action ends on what to do; one for a change of view ends on the view.

■ Linking structure to situation

“He opens with the objection because his audience holds it” is analysis. “He opens with the objection because objections are important” is not: the second explains nothing about this text.

2 Practice

2.1 State what an opening on common ground suggests about the audience. [2]

2.2 State what the ending of an argument is shaped by. [2]

2.3 A speech ends with a specific instruction rather than a reflection.

(a) State what this suggests about purpose. [1]

(b) State how you would cite it as evidence. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A writer who opens by stating the opposing view most likely faces [1]

A	B
C	D

A a sympathetic audience

B an audience that holds that view

C no audience

D a specialist audience

3.2 Which is analysis rather than description? [1]

A	B
C	D

A He ends with a call to action.

B Endings are important in speeches.

C He ends with a call to action because his purpose is to produce a decision, not a change of mind.

D The final paragraph is short.

3.3 A letter to a professional body begins with technical detail; a letter to the public on the same issue begins with a case.

(a) State the component of the situation that explains the difference. [1]

(b) Explain the reasoning. [2]
