

Name _____



Understanding Context

Rhetoric is the art of speaking and writing effectively. A rhetorical analysis looks at texts (whether written, spoken, or drawn) and analyzes how they appeal to their audience and how successful they are in achieving their objectives. In a rhetorical analysis, a text is whatever piece of communication you are analyzing. Context is everything surrounding the text. A consideration of context is the starting point for any rhetorical analysis.

DIRECTIONS: In rhetorical analysis, there are three main aspects of context. Read each definition. Then identify each aspect of context for the assigned text.

Exigence is the issue, problem, or situation that motivates someone to write or speak. The term exigence comes from the Latin word for "demand."

The **audience** is those who receive the rhetorical text. An audience can be intended or unintended.

The **constraints** of a rhetorical text are anything that limits the way it is communicated. For example, a few hundred years ago, a speaker was limited to reaching whoever was able to be present at the speech. With today's technology, an inability to physically be in the same place with an audience is no longer a constraint.
