



## **Navigating this Collection – Click the Links to Navigate to Activity**

**Activity 1:** Understanding Rhetorical Situation with Social Media

**Activity 2:** Understanding Synthesis and Presenting Findings

**Activity 3:** Understanding and Navigating Assignment Sheets

**Activity 4:** Identifying Rhetorical Situation and Appeals/Devices in Pop Culture

---

### **Activity 1:** Understanding Rhetorical Situation with Social Media

**Focus:** The focus of this activity is to get students understanding rhetorical situation through social media, a place where they are more literate than we are.

- *Time estimated:* 45-75 minutes, depending on how long you allow students to work and if you require them to complete all steps.
- *Materials needed:* (1) Images that would be posted to Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc., (2) textual posts that would be posted to Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc., and (3) student access to computers and (individually) shared Document with the professor.

#### **Steps:**

1. Give mini-lecture on rhetorical situation, introducing the terminology and give examples. Examples can include cultural artifacts (speeches, addresses, etc.) but also start introducing more relevant artifacts they see every day (Instagram or Snapchat story posts).
2. Introduce that they experience rhetorical artifacts everyday in social media (list social medias that would be relevant to your audience; if you have older students in your class, you might emphasize more focus on Facebook).
3. Then, show sample Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and/or Snapchat posts (both textual and visual) and prompt the students to identify the rhetorical situations of each. Here are some of the questions they receive the best:
  - Who is the speaker?
  - Okay, so who is the speaker posting to (audience)?
  - What does this speaker hope to achieve with this post (purpose)?
    - When looking at Instagram posts (sometimes known as *thirst traps*), students usually giggle and question why someone might want to post the photo. For this question, you can expect answers like: “To get likes,” “to show their friends they look good,” “to get attention,” etc.

- If you prefer to go beyond these four features of rhetorical situation, you can always form more prompting questions.
4. Now that they are able to identify the rhetorical situation of individual social media posts, show them sample photos or textual posts removed from their forums (crop out the distinguishing features of the social media website and have only the text or photo; you can also just copy and paste the text/images into a PowerPoint and put the side-by-side). Have 2-3 of these samples on the board/screen and then, ask them to identify which forum the posts came from based on their rhetorical features.
    - For instance, you might ask, what about the language of this post makes it seem like it is for an older audience? (Facebook)
    - Why would someone want to look cute for an Instagram post? (thinking of audience and purpose)
    - Why would someone want to look professional on LinkedIn? (purpose, audience) Why would they want to have good grammar, etc.? (purpose audience)
  5. Finally, end the activity by asking them to create a post (either textual or visual or both, if you have the time) for each of the platforms you covered earlier (I do Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn).
    - I ask them to create a post about getting their dream job for each platform so that we can discuss how this same “purpose” can be achieved in different ways based on audience and forum.
  6. Ask them to put these in a document they have shared with you individually. As they work and as student finish up, copy a couple of their “posts” and put them into a document or presentation without showing which social media they come from.
  7. After students are done working, pull up these samples and have the class guess, based on a discussion about rhetorical situation, which social media these would be posted to.
- 

## **Activity 2:** Understanding Synthesis (and Presenting Findings)

**Focus:** The focus of this activity is to get students understanding synthesis and getting them into the practice of presenting these findings.

- *Time estimated:* 45-75 minutes, depending on how long you allow students to work and if you require them to complete all steps.
- *Materials needed:* (1) Candy of different kinds and varieties, (2) students need access to Google Slides, and (3) pre-planned presentation or notes.

- *Note:* This activity is adapted from *Dynamic Activities*. See Works Cited to view original.

### Steps:

1. Give mini-lecture on what synthesis is.
2. Form groups of students (no more than 4) and give each group one piece of *each* candy so that they have around 6-10 different pieces of candy.
3. Then ask the students to categorize them based on similarities/connections they find among the candies.
  - For example, students might categorize candy based on flavor, texture, sweet vs. sour, chocolate vs. fruity etc.
4. After the students have their initial categories, you then ask the students to create new categories as they synthesize the different pieces of candy. I encourage students to swap up the order and push the boundaries of their initial realizations. Students often struggle with this, so I encourage them to choose two random piece of candy (from different categories) and then synthesize their characteristics together.
  - If students are especially struggling with this, I introduce the following options in a series of questions:
    - Packaging, audience (rhetorical situation), likability/popularity, seasonality
    - For instance, Nerds and Laffy Taffys often appeal more the children. Students will identify the jokes on Laffy Taffys as marking them for children and the colors and name of Nerds as distinguishing it for children as well. Then, you can get the students synthesizing the other candy based on the same criteria. How are the other candies marketed to adults? Lack of color?
5. After the students have recategorized and synthesized the similarities and differences between the candies, I ask the students to create a thesis based on their findings. Here are some examples:
  - “Candy wrapper design does not seem to influence whether a candy is a favorite or not.”
  - “Nougat as a texture is polarizing.”
  - “Favorite hard candies are fruit-flavored.”
  - “Favorite candies are associated with positive childhood memories of holidays while least favorite candies are associated with childhood memories of braces, cavities, retainers, and other teeth-related issues.”
6. Once they have their thesis, I then ask each group to stand at the front of the room and “present” their thesis and the findings that helped them come to that conclusion.
  - I ask each student in the group to participate in this presentation.

---

### Activity 3: Understanding and Navigating Assignment Sheets

**Focus:** The focus of this activity is to get students to actually look at the assignment sheet, understand the assignment better, and ask questions about the assignment.

- *Time estimated:* 15 minutes, depending on how many questions created and how long you give students to answer them.
- *Materials needed:* (1) the assignment sheet, (2) a pre-prepared presentation that follows a question/answer style to show the students, and optionally (3) a prize to offer the students who “win.”

#### **Steps:**

1. Prepare a PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Kahoot which asks questions about the assignment sheet. Have at least a question for each person in the class OR have a couple questions per group. This activity works best in the first week the assignment sheet was introduced. It would work better if the students were asked to look at the assignment sheet for homework.
  - *Note:* at the end of the PowerPoint you will likely need a “tie-breaker” question
2. Before beginning the activity, tell students the rules you have set for the game.
  - *Optional:* Put them into groups of no more than 3; this gets them to interact with the assignment sheet and check with each other before answering.
  - If a group/person does not answer the question within 30 seconds, it goes to the next group/person.
  - Students can look at the assignment sheet as they answer and are **encouraged** to scroll and navigate the sheet as they look at the questions.
3. Begin the game.
4. Award points to groups/students based on correct answers.
5. After the game has finished, reflect on the point of the activity.
  - Now, every student has seen and navigated the assignment sheet, knows specifics of the assignment, and cannot use it as an excuse if they miss something in their submission of the assignment.
6. Stress that now is the chance for them to ask any questions about anything of the assignment sheet that was unclear to them or about the assignment as a whole.
7. Also, I prefer giving a reflective prompt at the end of class, so these would be some good reflective questions to prompt after this assignment:
  - Did the activity today help you better understand the assignment? What questions do you still have about this assignment?

---

## Activity 4: Identifying Rhetorical Situations and Appeals in Pop Culture

**Focus:** The focus of this activity is to get students understanding rhetorical situation through social media, a place that they navigate every day. This activity helps the students realize the rhetorical nature of the things they encounter every day.

- *Time estimated:* 15 minutes – several class periods, depending on how many images and texts provided and how much discussion you'd like. This activity is very modifiable, and you could choose only one step per class if necessary.
- *Materials needed:* (1) Images and their accompanying captions posted to Instagram, Twitter (or X), TikTok, or Facebook which attempt to persuade the audience of something (2) recent or childhood movie trailers, and/or (3) Taylor Swift's letter to Apple, included [below](#).

### Steps:

1. Give mini-lecture on rhetorical appeals and devices.
2. Then, show students a couple of more obvious examples of rhetorical **social media posts**.
  - I recommend social media posts from famous people during the Black Lives Matter movement. You can either model how to identify the rhetorical situation with this or ask students to practice identifying it. Who is the speaker? Who is their audience? Who is the secondary audience? What is the purpose? What is the exigency? And so on.
  - Then, you might show a more difficult political post from Twitter or TikTok from a politician or a president. Again, ask students guiding questions to help them get into the practice of identifying rhetorical situation.
  - Also, younger students enjoy talking about drama in pop culture. For instance, I pulled an example from one of Kylie Jenner's stories "making fun" of Selena Gomez's eyebrows. This prompted a lively discussion on why Jenner's real purpose was in posting the story.
3. After looking through social media posts and identifying the rhetorical situations in them, then show a **movie trailer** or two and ask students to discuss and identify the rhetorical situation of them in groups. If you are open to it, you might ask the students to find their own movie trailers but be sure to set stipulations on ratings that you'd like to discuss (a rated R movie might make awkward conversation for traditional freshmen).
  - I recommend Al Gore's 2006 trailer for "An Inconvenient Truth" (view it [here](#)), though there are many other good options out there.

- Get the students into groups of 2-3 and ask them to identify the rhetorical situation of the piece. If they are at the stage where they can begin identifying rhetorical appeals and devices, Gore's trailer offers good examples of these to help them practice doing that as well.
- Then, ask the groups to share their finding with the class. I like to stress that students are still learning this content and that they are not naturally expected to know these things, so it is okay if they don't get things "right."
- Here is the slide I provide students while they discuss:

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

In your groups, consider the rhetorical situation, rhetorical appeals, and/or rhetorical devices that you saw in the video.

- Each group should focus on 2 specific examples they saw of a rhetorical appeal or device in the movie trailer (be ready to quote or reference it clearly).
- Explain why it was ethos, logos, pathos, or kairos and how it it works to persuade the audience.

To find the video, search "An Inconvenient Truth (2006) Official Trailer #1 - Al Gore Movie HD."

### The Rhetorical Situation

- Speaker (creator of message)
- Audience (who is being addressed)
- Medium (method of delivery; the genre)
- Purpose (what creator trying to achieve)
- Context (happenings surrounding the message)
- Exigency (what compelled the speaker to speak)

### Rhetorical Appeals

- Ethos
- Logos
- Pathos
- Kairos

### Rhetorical Devices

- Organizational Pattern
- Specific Tone
- Tropes
- Figures of Speech


### Example:

In the movie trailer, Al Gore says that "we have to come together to solve this global crisis. Our ability to live is what is at stake" (2:11-20). In this quote, he uses pathos and kairos to appeal to the audience's emotions. First, he makes readers feel a sense of fear because they must recognize that if they do not act, their lives are at stake. Then, he uses kairos to...

- In addition to the social media posts and movie trailers, you might ask students to look at **Taylor Swift's letter to Apple** (posed on Tumblr in 2015). This text allows them to get practice writing a paragraph for a rhetorical analysis paper.
  - After giving students time to read over the letter, I ask them to discuss it with a partner. With their partner, I ask them to identify the rhetorical situation and any obvious uses of rhetorical appeals or devices.
  - Then, I ask them to choose on rhetorical appeal, device, or strategy and highlight where they see it in the speech. Based on how this rhetorical appeal or device is used in the letter, I then ask them to create a topic sentence on the effect this rhetoric strategy has on the audience and the purpose it serves in the speech.
  - They then craft a body paragraph for this rhetorical appeal/device.

- Special note: before asking them to do this, I give a small mini-lecture on how to write body paragraphs for rhetorical analysis papers and show them several examples, all of which they are encouraged to review on their own as they write.
- Once they have written their paragraphs, I ask them to swap with their partner and read each other's so that they can see different approaches to similar topics. After reading each other's, I also ask them to discuss the strategies used to approach the rhetorical device/appeal.
- Then, I ask for a couple of example paragraphs to show the class on document cameras.
- Here is the PowerPoint slide I leave up for them while they work:

## Writing an Analysis Paragraph: Practice



1. Read Taylor Swift's letter to Apple, which was posted on Tumblr in 2015 (on back of worksheet – if you are more of a computer person, go to Canvas: "Week 7 Worksheet").
2. With your partner (but on your own worksheet), identify the rhetorical situation.
  - What is the purpose? Who is the audience?
  - *Before you begin, we are going to stop here and discuss how you answered this.*
3. Then, identify one rhetorical appeal, strategy, or device you see working to fulfill this purpose for this audience (ethos, pathos, logos) using highlighter or pencil.
4. Using this device you identified, start your paragraph (on your worksheet).
  - If you are struggling with getting started (and that's okay), look under 7.2 on Canvas or open "Week 7 Tutorial Lecture" and look at our earlier examples and strategies.
5. After identifying your rhetorical device (in your topic sentence),
  1. Explain why/how that specific evidence connects to the rhetorical situation: how would this affect the audience?
  2. Explain how and why creating this effect in the audience helps Taylor Swift achieve her purpose in a paragraph.
6. Once you have written your paragraph, swap with your partner and read each other's (they will/should be different because you are different people & writers). Discuss what is different. Did your partner skip any parts of a rhetorical analysis paragraph? Did they do anything particularly well?
7. As a class, we are going to look at some of your examples and identify if each aspect is included (this is your chance to get feedback and ask questions).

### Taylor Swift's letter to Apple:

Taylor Swift's Letter to Apple (posted on Tumblr in 2015)

To Apple, Love Taylor

\*I write this to explain why I'll be holding back my album, 1989, from the new streaming service, Apple Music. I feel this deserves an explanation because Apple has been and will continue to be one of my best partners in selling music and creating ways for me to connect with my fans. I respect the company and the truly ingenious minds that have created a legacy based on innovation and pushing the right boundaries.

I'm sure you are aware that Apple Music will be offering a free 3 month trial to anyone who signs up for the service. I'm not sure you know that Apple Music will not be paying writers, producers, or artists for those three months. I find it to be shocking, disappointing, and completely unlike this



historically progressive and generous company.

This is not about me. Thankfully I am on my fifth album and can support myself, my band, crew, and entire management team by playing live shows. This is about the new artist or band that has just released their first single and will not be paid for its success. This is about the young songwriter who just got his or her first cut and thought that the royalties from that would get them out of debt. This is about the producer who works tirelessly to innovate and create, just like the innovators and creators at Apple are pioneering in their field...but will not get paid for a quarter of a year's worth of plays on his or her songs.

These are not the complaints of a spoiled, petulant child. These are the echoed sentiments of every artist, writer and producer in my social circles who are afraid to speak up publicly because we admire and respect Apple so much. We simply do not respect this particular call.

I realize that Apple is working towards a goal of paid streaming. I think that is beautiful progress. We know how astronomically successful Apple has been and we know that this incredible company has the money to pay artists, writers and producers for the 3 month trial period... even if it is free for the fans trying it out.

Three months is a long time to go unpaid, and it is unfair to ask anyone to work for nothing. I say this with love, reverence, and admiration for everything else Apple has done. I hope that soon I can join them in the progression towards a streaming model that seems fair to those who create this music. I think this could be the platform that gets it right.

But I say to Apple with all due respect, it's not too late to change this policy and change the minds of those in the music industry who will be deeply and gravely affected by this. We don't ask you for free iPhones. Please don't ask us to provide you with our music for no compensation.

Taylor

\*Line spacing is condensed so the entire letter can fit onto one page.

---