Communicating Science: Writing to an Audience


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Introductions.

Who am I?
Introductions.

- Who am I?

- Who are you? What are you interested in? Where do you see yourself working?
Introductions.

- Who am I?

- Who are you? What are you interested in? Where do you see yourself working?

- What do you expect me to talk about?
What is rhetoric?
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- Aristotle: “The faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion.”
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- **Aristotle**: “The faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion.”

- A way to determine the most accurate, useful, valuable opinions

- Both a critical and constructive art
What is rhetoric?

- **Andrea Lunsford**: “Rhetoric is the art, practice, and study of human communication.”

- **I.A. Richards**: “Rhetoric is the study of misunderstandings and their remedies.”

- **Kenneth Burke**: “The use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols.”

- **Lloyd Bitzer**: “Rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action.”

- **Gerard A. Hauser**: “Rhetoric is an instrumental use of language.... One person engages another person in an exchange of symbols to accomplish some goal. It is not communication for communication's sake. Rhetoric is communication that attempts to coordinate social action. For this reason, rhetorical communication is explicitly pragmatic. Its goal is to influence human choices on specific matters that require immediate attention.”
Rhetoric: Using language effectively to persuade, inform, educate, or entertain

Rhetorical Situation: The circumstances in which you communicate.
The rhetorical situation

The Context in which you write

The Culture in which you write

The Writer

The Purpose

The Audience

The Topic
The rhetorical triangle.

- Who is your audience?
- What is your purpose?
- Who are you to speak?
The rhetorical appeals.

- Ethos
  - Trust
  - Authority

- Persuasion
- Logos
  - Logic
  - Reasoning
- Pathos
  - Emotion
  - Beliefs
Practicing with audience.

- Explain the NCAA tournament to:
  - Your two year old son
Practicing with audience.

- Explain the NCAA tournament to:

- Your friend who doesn’t know much about basketball
Explain the NCAA tournament to:

- Michael Jordan
Practicing with audience.

- Describe your college spring break to:
  - Your best friend
Practicing with audience.

- Describe your college spring break to:
  - Your mom
Practicing with audience.

- Describe your college spring break to:

- Your grandma
Ask a student on campus to donate money for cancer research.
Practicing with audience.

- Ask a cancer survivor to donate money for cancer research.
Ask a cancer researcher to donate money for cancer research.
Major paper.

- Explain the topic of your major paper to Pete!
Explain the topic of your major paper to me!
Explain the topic of your major paper to your grandma!
Brainstorming.

- MESM Major Papers need to have an AUDIENCE and a GOAL (what rhetoricians call a consequence).

- What is your topic? Who is your audience? What is your goal?

- What do you know about your audience? What else do you need to know? Do they already care about your issue? How will you get them to care? Does your audience even realize there is a problem to be solved? Who else has tried to solve this problem and how?
A note about communicating science.

“The deficit model is asymmetrical: it depicts communication as a one-way flow from science to its publics. Its practitioners do not try to persuade; they assume that the public is already persuaded of the value of science. They do not try to build trust; they assume that the public is already trusting. The deficit model implies a passive public: it requires a rhetoric that acts to accommodate the facts and methods of science to the public's limited experience and cognitive capacities. The goal is better appreciation of science; the genre is epideictic. In this model, in accord with the prevailing ideology of science, communication is solely cognitive: knowledge alone is transferred; ethical and political concerns are ruled out as irrelevant. The preferred methods of scholars of the deficit model - surveys of the public, content analyses of the media - assume the model's central focus: the state of science, not the situation of the public.”


“The contextual model is symmetrical: it depicts communication as a two-way flow between science and its publics. Its practitioners do not assume that the public is already persuaded of the value of science. They try to build trust; they do not assume that the public is already trusting. The contextual model implies an active public: it requires a rhetoric reconstruction in which public understanding is the joint creation of scientific and local knowledge. The goal is a better integration of the needs of science and its publics; the genre is deliberative. In this model, communication is not solely cognitive; ethical and political concerns are always relevant. The preferred method of the scholars of the contextual model - the analysis of case studies - assumes the model's central focus: not the state of science, but the situation of the public.”

CONTEXTUAL MODEL
A note about communicating science.

- Contextualize your work!

- Depict communication as a two-way flow between science and its publics.
- Don’t assume your audience is already persuaded of science’s value.
- Build trust.
- Integrate the needs of science and its publics.