

Questions to encourage examination of a Rhetorical Situation
based on the work of Grant-Davie in “The Rhetorical Situation and its Constituents”

Identify and name the exigence.

Essential questions related to exigence:

1)What is the discourse about?

What fundamental issues are represented by the topic of the discourse?

What values are at stake?

What questions need to be resolved by this discourse?

2)Why is this discourse needed?

What has prompted the discourse?

Why is now the right time for it to be delivered?

Why does the discourse matter—why are the issues important?

Why do the questions it raises really need to be resolved?

3) What should this discourse accomplish? (questions at the stasis of policy and procedure)

What are the goals of the discourse?

How is the audience supposed to react to the discourse?

Consider the rhetor. (Remember that “the roles of rhetor and audience are dynamic and interdependent.”)

Identify and consider your audience.

Consider the existence of “composite” audiences consisting either of several factions or of individuals who each represent several different groups.” (p. 270)

Who is the audience?

How does the discourse “defines and create contexts for readers.”

Consider the “audience addressed” and the “audience invoked by considering

Consider the constraints

Identify and name the *positive* and *negative* constraints - “as all factors in the situation, aside from the rhetor and the audience, that may lead the audience to be either more or less sympathetic to the discourse, and that may therefore influence the rhetor’s response to the situation” (p.273)

Identify “which parts of the context bear on the situation enough to be considered constraints” and consider their impact and an appropriate approach. (p. 273)