## Worksheet 1.3.1: Rhetorical Situations

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What is a **rhetorical situation**? Basically, this is an academic way of referring to all of the different scenarios in which we write or speak (even read). Writing is tool that is used in a broad range of activities and settings. Things like going to the doctor, sharing your political opinion, applying for a credit card, writing a letter of complaint, and even writing notes in class are all activities that rely on writing. However, each of these rhetorical situations or **writing contexts** is different, and each requires specific knowledge of the situation, audience, required information and each depends on differing assumptions, evidence, and language.

I. Think about everything you have done in the past 24 hours and write down the situations in which you wrote **anything**. Some examples include writing a note to your roommate, text messaging, taking notes, writing email, filling out a job application. List these activities below. First, identify the rhetorical situation, then what features of writing are involved in that particular situation (e.g. length of writing, vocabulary, required content, medium, format, tone, audience, level of detail), and finally why or how do you know these rhetorical requirements.

Rhetorical Situation	Features of Writing	Why?

II. You will now work in groups of three to produce a collaborative piece of non-academic writing – a writing artifact. You may choose from one of the following options:

- -A thank-you to your parent's close friends
- -A personal ad for facebook.com or myspace.com
- -A letter of complaint to an airline
- -A one-paragraph review for a community newsletter
- -A letter to a high school friend who is now far away
- -An email to your parents telling them you wrecked your car
- -A cover letter for a job application
- -A short article for the high school newspaper

III. Another way to think about rhetorical situation or writing context is by taking one task and writing for different audience. Using the same situation chosen above, each member of your group is to engage the same task but for a different reader. Depending on the audience, how does your tone change? How do your rhetorical strategies and evidence change?

## -A parent or grandparent

- -A teacher or professor
- -A boyfriend or girlfriend or partner
- -An employer
- -A roommate
- -An English class
- -A stranger

## Keep in mind:

-Be sure that your artifact is representative of the **genre**. Is this a letter you would *actually* send? An article you would write?

-Keep the piece short enough to be copied onto one transparency

-Choose someone from your group to read your artifact to the class

-Be prepared to discuss the **writing features** of your artifact (just as you did on the reverse side of this worksheet)