

Rhetoric and Academic Writing

Rhetoric is the faculty (dunamis) of observing in any given situation the available means of persuasion.

--Aristotle, *Rhetoric*

[Rhetoric is] the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols.

--Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*

Classical Perspectives of Rhetoric

- Plato: philosophical
- The Sophists: sophistic
- Aristotle: *techne*



Cannons on Rhetoric

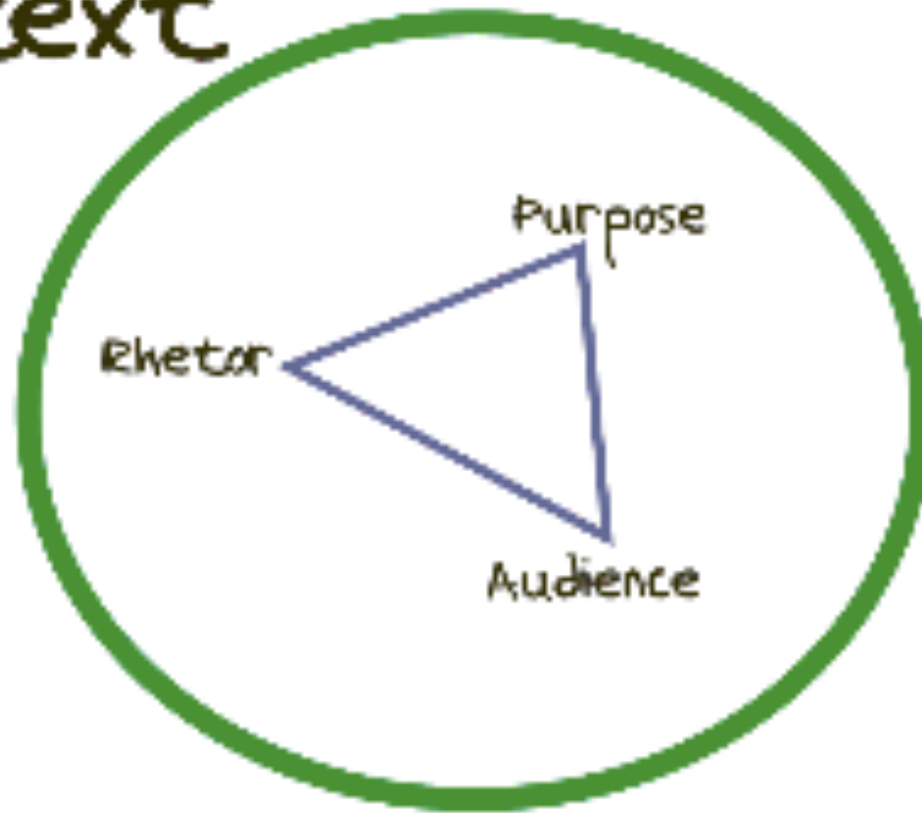
- **inventio** (invention): The process of developing and refining your arguments.
- **dispositio** (arrangement): The process of arranging and organizing your arguments for maximum impact.
- **elocutio** (style): The process of determining how you present your arguments using figures of speech and other rhetorical techniques.
- **memoria** (memory): The process of learning and memorizing your speech so you can deliver it without the use of notes. Memory-work not only consisted of memorizing the words of a specific speech, but also storing up famous quotes, literary references, and other facts that could be used in impromptu speeches.
- **actio** (delivery): The process of practicing how you deliver your speech using gestures, pronunciation, and tone of voice.

The Rhetorical Triangle

- Purpose/Message
- Speaker/Writer (rhetor)
- Audience
- Context

Rhetorical Triangle

Context



the
rhetorical
triangle

Rhetorical Appeals

- **Appeal to Ethos (Ethical Appeal or Appeal to Character):** refers to the choices that writers make to create mutual trust between their audience and themselves. Ethical choices are the rhetorical choices authors use to represent themselves as reliable, credible, and believable authorities.
- **Appeal to Logos (Logical Appeal):** refers to the rhetorical choices that writers make to appeal to an audience's reasoning powers. Writers often choose to convince their readers by demonstrating the reasonableness of their argument.
- **Appeal to Pathos, Pathetic Appeal (Emotional Appeal):** refers to the rhetorical choices writers makes to appeal to an audience's emotions. Its effectiveness often depends on the writer's skillful use of language and narrative.

Rhetorical Appeals: Ethos

Ethos Strategies:

- Cites authorities.
- Establishes common ground with the audience (audiences).
- Demonstrates open-mindedness—acknowledges evidence and feasibility of other perspectives.
- Establishes credibility by explaining or illustrating credentials.

Rhetorical Appeals: Logos

Logos Strategies:

- Uses logical reasoning and defines terms.
- Uses sufficient, relevant, and timely evidence.
- Clarifies the grounds for claiming cause/effect relationships.

Rhetorical Appeals: Pathos

Pathos Strategies:

- Vivid description
- Figurative language
- Emotional and values-based language
- Personal stories and anecdotes

Rhetorical Appeals

