

The Rhetorical Situation

Communications & Media

No text persuades in the abstract. Every one answers a particular occasion.

Five things to settle before drafting.

The situation

Exigence: the problem calling for words

Audience: who can actually act

Constraints: what limits what you may say

Speaker: the standing you bring

Occasion: the moment and its expectations

Consequences

No exigence, and there is nothing to say

Wrong audience, and nothing can change

Ignored constraints read as tone-deaf

Borrowed standing collapses on contact

Bitzer put exigence first: rhetoric responds to a situation. Others answer that rhetoric also creates the situation it responds to.