

Rhetorical Situation Worksheet

Your name:

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Completing this worksheet may take more time than you think. It's worth the time. The information you gather will help you later when writing up assignments. But more importantly, the process of addressing each of the questions below will slowly work to change *how* you read texts. Keep in mind that some answers will not be obvious or even observable in the text, and so you may have to do some critical thinking and, at times, even some online research. Use full sentences. Take as much space as you need.

Context & Exigence: What topic/conversation is this text responding to? What year is the text published? What is the exigence--that is, what motivating occasion/issue/concern prompted the writing? The motivating occasion could be a current or historical event, a crisis, pending legislation, a recently published alternative view, or another ongoing problem.

This video was uploaded in 2015. The topic being addressed is seemingly multiculturalism. The motivating occasion seems to be a time when Asghar saw a Coca Cola commercial, which featured many children speaking in their native languages, and it seems as though she was motivated by seeing some of the backlash which the advertisement received. In her own words, she said that this situation really upset her and made her mad. She also said that it felt like a very familiar thing.

Author: Who is the author of this text? What are the author's credentials and what is their investment in the issue?

The author or person speaking in this video is Fatimah Asghar, and she is a South Asian American poet. Some of her credentials include having been a writer and co creator for the Emmy-nominated web series titled *Brown Girls*, and her work has appeared in numerous publications. She says herself that she is Pakistani, Kashmiri, American, Muslim, queer, an orphan, etc. all at the same time.

Text: What can you find out about the publication? What is the genre of the text (e.g., poem, personal essay, essay, news/academic article, blog, textbook chapter, etc.)? How do the conventions of that genre help determine the depth, complexity, and even appearance of the argument? What information about the publication or source (magazine, newspaper, advocacy Web site) helps explain the writer's perspective or the structure and style of the argument?

I suppose the video could be categorized as a personal essay with a poem included. The personal nature allows the audience to understand Asghar's argument through the lens of her personal experiences, and the implementation of a poem at the beginning helps us to further get a glimpse into what she is trying to convey.

Audience: Who is the author's intended audience? What can you infer about the audience (think about beliefs and political association but also age, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, profession, education, geographic location, religion, etc.)? Look for clues from the text (especially the original publication) to support your inference.

I suppose the audience is RushU students, but also TEDx viewers and anybody who may happen to be watching these sorts of videos. But then the audience could also be other children of immigrants, other Muslims, other queer people, etc etc, or just anybody who doesn't feel like they belong to a single group.

Purpose: What is the author trying to accomplish? To persuade, entertain, inform, educate, call to action, shock? How do you know?

I feel like the author is trying to educate her audience. The reason I say this is because she speaks of how she relates to the idea of being denied the right to be considered "American" due to belonging to so many different identities, and the struggle with people viewing others as entirely one dimensions;

Argument: What do you believe is the main claim/idea/argument that the author is trying to communicate? What stance does s/he take?

I feel as though the main claim Asghar is trying to convey is the idea that we are multifaceted, and how there is no one singular objective manner through which someone can be defined. For instance, there is no singular way to be an American. The author's stance is that we as people are multifaceted and are comprised of multiple different identities, and as such, it is impossible to be restricted to just one.

Evidence: How is the argument supported? Types of support include reasons and logical explanations as well as evidence. Types of evidence include anecdotes, examples, hypothetical situations, (expert) testimony, quotes, citing sources, statistics, charts/graphs, research the author or another source conducts, scientific or other facts, general knowledge, historical references, metaphors/analogies, etc.

Asghar supports her argument by providing anecdotes from her own life. For instance, she talks about how she sometimes feels like she's not American enough or Pakistani enough etc etc. because she falls outside of people's definitions of certain groups. She also provides an anecdote on what it is like being the child of immigrants, more specifically how it makes her feel as though it is difficult to call America her home or that she owned the benefits of being American.

Rhetorical Strategies: What aspects of this text stand out for you as a *rhetorical* reader? In other words, what do you observe about what the author strategically *does* (consciously or not) in hopes of appealing to their audience? List here as many observations as you can make about what the text *does*.

One of the aspects of the video which stood out to me the most was when she was reciting a poem in the beginning. Throughout the poem, she repeats various lines many times over, such as "You speak so well, almost like you were born here." I feel like the point of repeating these lines over and over and over again is to suggest how immigrants and their children are often made to feel like outsiders and are treated differently based on the expectations people have of them.

Citation: Add the correct MLA or APA bibliographic entry for this text. Use easybib.com if you prefer.

TEDxTalks. "We Own All the Language in the World | Fatimah Asghar | TEDxRushU." *YouTube*, YouTube, 30 Sept. 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2wpXa_Tr0I.

Notes: What do you want to remember about this text?

One of the things I want to remember about this text is the part where she says it is very easy to see people as one dimensional, because then you don't have to interact with all of their facets. I myself have felt this to be true for some time, and to see someone else also feel the same way is very intriguing. I feel like this quote is very powerful.