

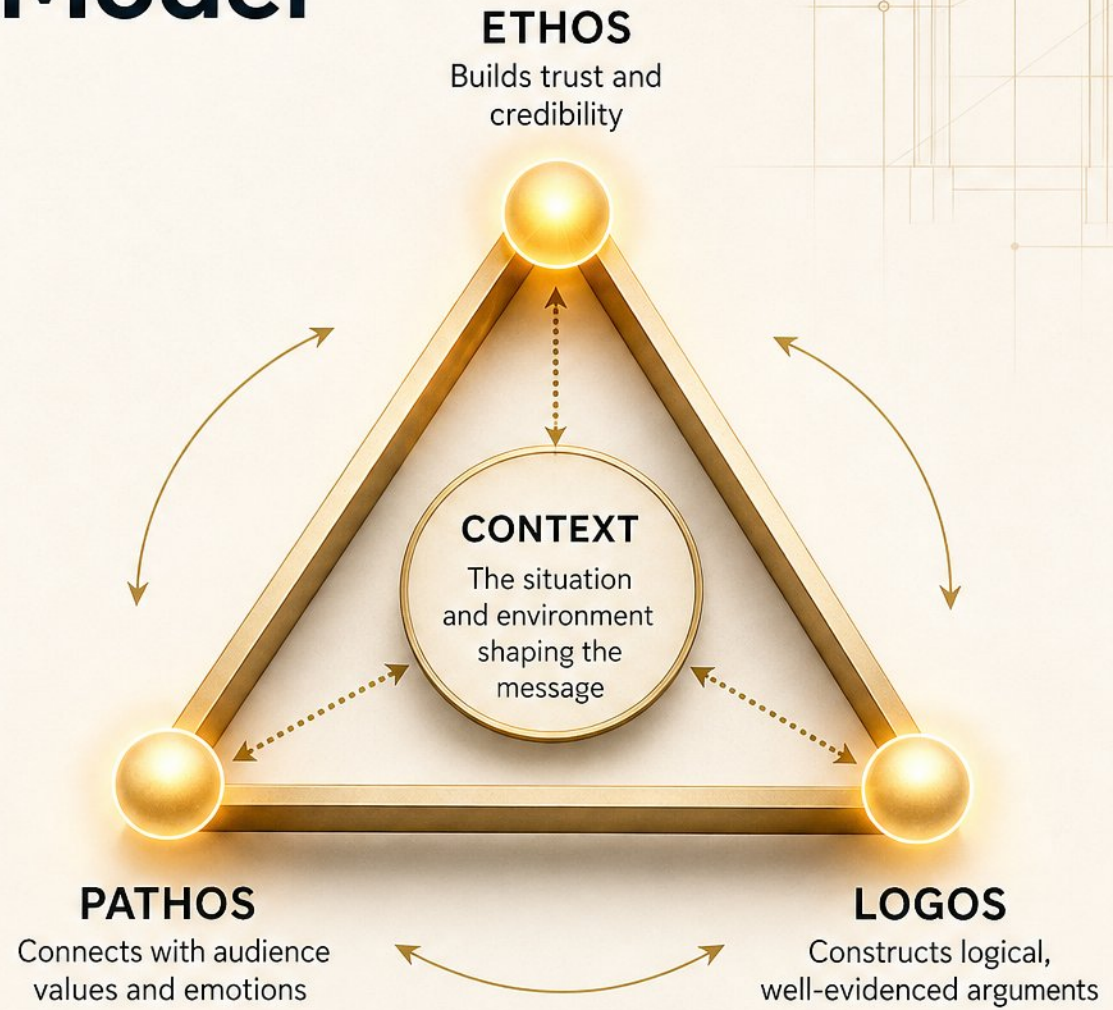
Understanding Rhetoric: Audience, Purpose, and Choice

- - Rhetoric: strategic choices in language, structure, and evidence
- - Core drivers: audience, purpose, and situational context
- - Analysis builds critical reading and persuasive skills
- - Course journey: frameworks → analysis → ethical action



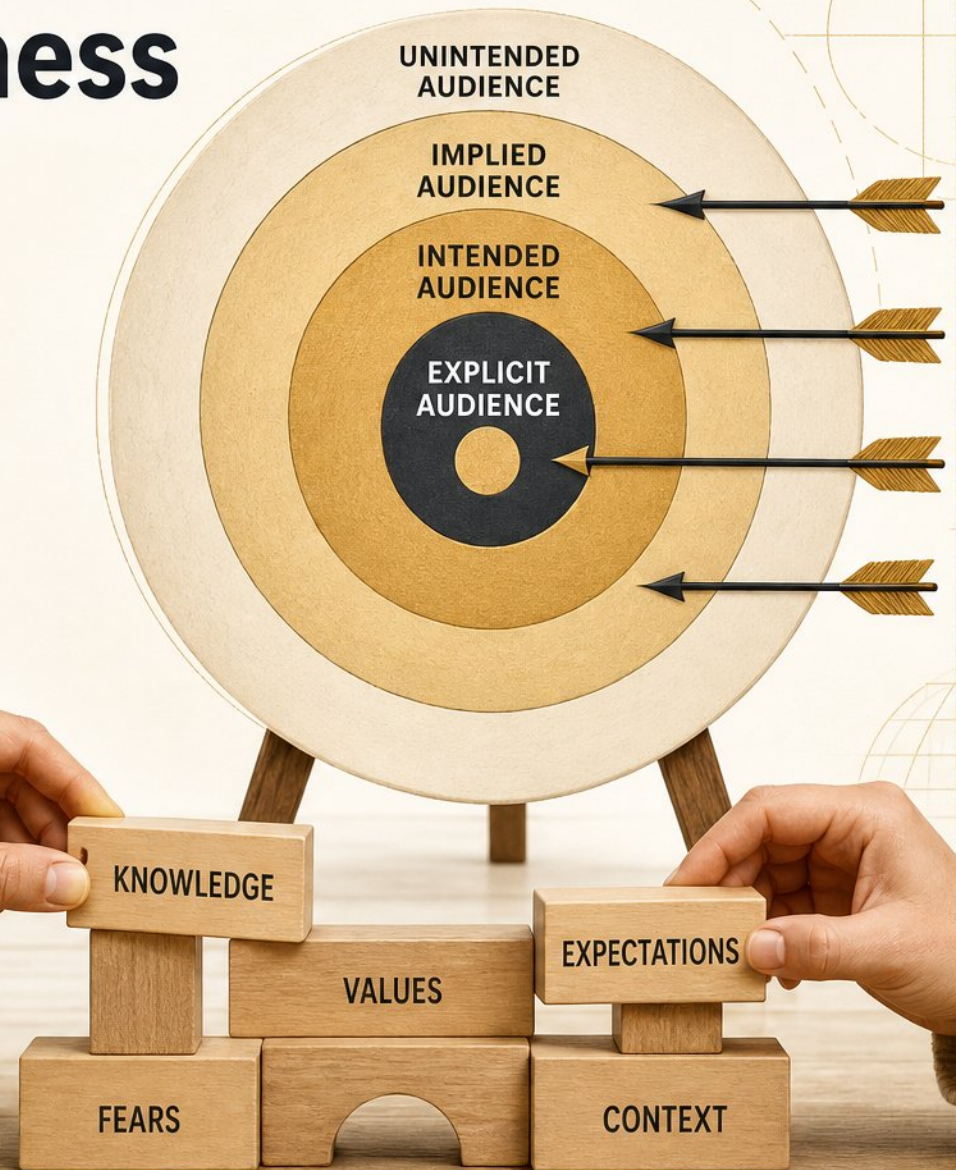
The Rhetorical Triangle: A Foundational Model

- Visual model linking speaker, message, audience, and context
- Ethos: builds trust and credibility
- Pathos: connects with audience values and emotions
- Logos: constructs logical, well-evidenced arguments
- A shift in one corner forces adjustments in the others



The Root of Every Choice: Audience Awareness

- Audience: explicit, intended, implied, and unintended listeners
- Implied audience and discourse communities shape who a text addresses
- Analyze audience knowledge, values, fears, and expectations
- Same science adapted differently for peers, policymakers, and the public
- Pitfalls: jargon for novices or oversimplification for experts



Purpose as the Engine of Communication

- Explicit purposes: inform, persuade, entertain
- Hidden purposes: build image, distract, signal identity
- Purpose dictates genre, medium, and structure
- A call to action demands different structure than explanation
- Example: climate data vs. policy advocacy shifts language and evidence

ONE MESSAGE, DIFFERENT PURPOSES

“Rising temperatures are changing our climate.”



INFORM

Explain the facts clearly and objectively.



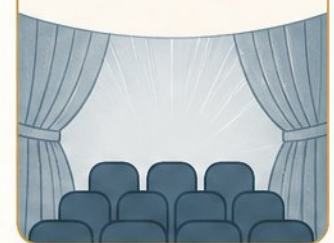
PERSUADE

Argue for a change and motivate action.



ENTERTAIN

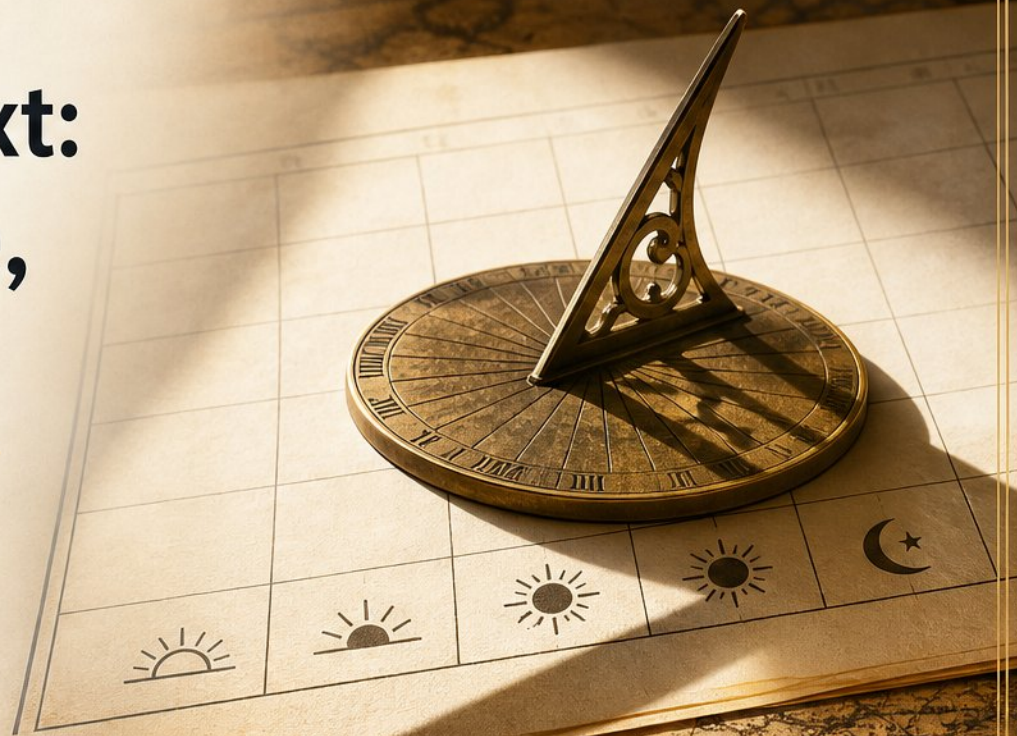
Engage emotions and create a memorable experience.



Purpose shapes what we say, how we say it, and the impact it creates.

Situational Context: Kairos, Exigence, and Constraints

- Context is more than time and place: includes history, culture, and medium
- Bitzer's Rhetorical Situation: exigence, rhetorical audience, and constraints
- Kairos: seizing the opportune moment; wrong timing can kill a good message
- Constraints—genre, taboos, power—limit and shape your available choices



Deconstructing Language Choices: Diction, Tone, and Framing



- Word choice: denotation vs. emotional connotation



- Framing shapes perception before argument begins



- Tone signals relationship to audience and subject



- Metaphor and repetition as strategic persuasion tools



- Same idea, different words = different effect

Original idea:

The committee should act now to address the issue before it causes more problems for everyone involved.

①

Urgent / Direct

The committee **must act now** to **stop this issue** from creating more problems for everyone.

Stronger verbs create urgency and immediacy.

②

Collaborative / Inclusive

The committee should **work together** now to address this issue and **prevent further** problems for everyone involved.

Inclusive language builds partnership and shared responsibility.

③

Cautionary / Reflective

If the committee **delays action**, this issue **could lead to** **more problems** for everyone involved.

Conditional framing highlights risk and consequences.



Same idea. Different tone. Different impact.

Deconstructing Structural and Evidence Choices

- Organizational patterns serve purpose: chronological, problem-solution, comparison, narrative
- Evidence selection—stats, stories, testimony—calculates what persuades a specific audience
- Emphasis, backgrounding, and omission are all deliberate rhetorical moves
- Trump's mobilization arc: from personal anecdote to existential threat
- Charles III's Ciceronian structure: rapport, history, policy, closing prayer



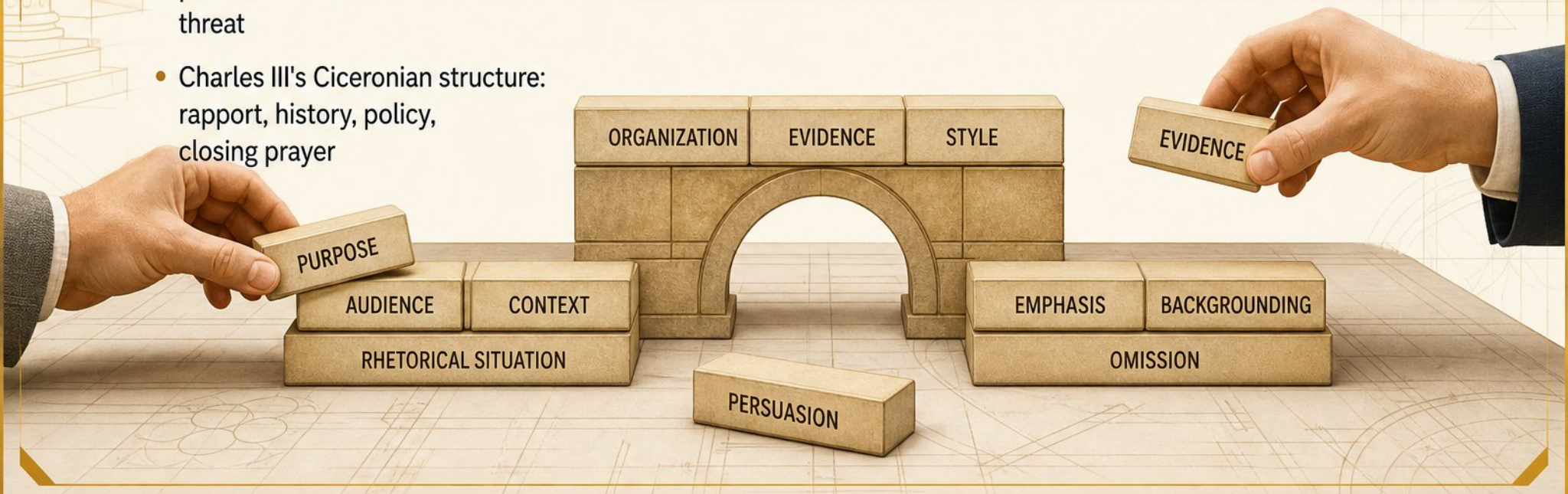
CHRONOLOGICAL
ARC



PROBLEM-SOLUTION
ARC



COMPARISON
ARC



Visual Rhetoric:

Layout, Typography, and Image as Choice



- Visual rhetoric persuades through layout, color, typography, and imagery.



- Design builds ethos (credibility), pathos (mood), and logos (clarity).



- Layout conventions like grids and white space signal formality.



- Serif vs. sans-serif fonts convey tradition vs. modernity.



- The same content in a tabloid vs. a government doc makes a different argument.

TABLOID NEWSPAPER
Emotional • Immediate • Engaging

DAILY HERALD
TODAY'S NEWS. YOUR VOICE.

**CITY IN CRISIS:
LEADERS REACT
AS TENSIONS RISE**



VOICES FROM THE STREETS
Residents speak out about what comes next.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
FULL STORY INSIDE

UNUSUAL



VOICES FROM THE STREETS

Bold, condensed headlines, strong color contrast, large imagery, tight spacing create urgency and emotion.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT STYLE
Formal • Authoritative • Informative

The Gazette
OFFICIAL NEWS OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

City Leaders Address Current Challenges
Administration Outlines Next Steps and Community Priorities



City officials held a press conference today to discuss ongoing challenges and outline priorities for the months ahead.

The administration emphasized a commitment to transparency, public safety, and long-term community well-being.

MORE INFORMATION INSIDE

City Leaders Address Current Challenges
Administration Outlines Next Steps and Community Priorities

Serif typography, ample white space, subtle lines, and a clear hierarchy convey authority, clarity, and objectivity.

Case Study in Depth: Trump's 2026 Primetime Address



- Primary audience: base seeking confirmation; secondary: persuadable viewers



- Layered purposes: inform, push SAVE America Act, fuse identity



- Post-election context amplifies polarization and urgency



- Foot-in-the-door: economic claims → election narrative → call to action



- Key moves: authority appeals, repetition, fear-appeal with low-effort solution



SPEECH EXCERPT

"Our economy was stronger than ever before, and we will make it stronger again. Washington's corrupt system stole this election, but with the SAVE America Act we will restore our country and put America First once again. I need you with me — together, we will save our nation."

AUDIENCE REACTIONS



Base Audience:
Confirms beliefs, feels validated, energized to act.



Persuadable Viewers:
Curious or uncertain, weighing claims, seeking clarity.



AUTHORITY APPEALS

Positions speaker as the legitimate leader and protector.



REPETITION

Reinforces key phrases and central themes.



FEAR APPEAL

Highlights threats and consequences to raise urgency.



LOW-EFFORT SOLUTION

Presents SAVE America Act as the simple fix and path.

Contrasting Case Study: King Charles III's 2026 Address to Congress

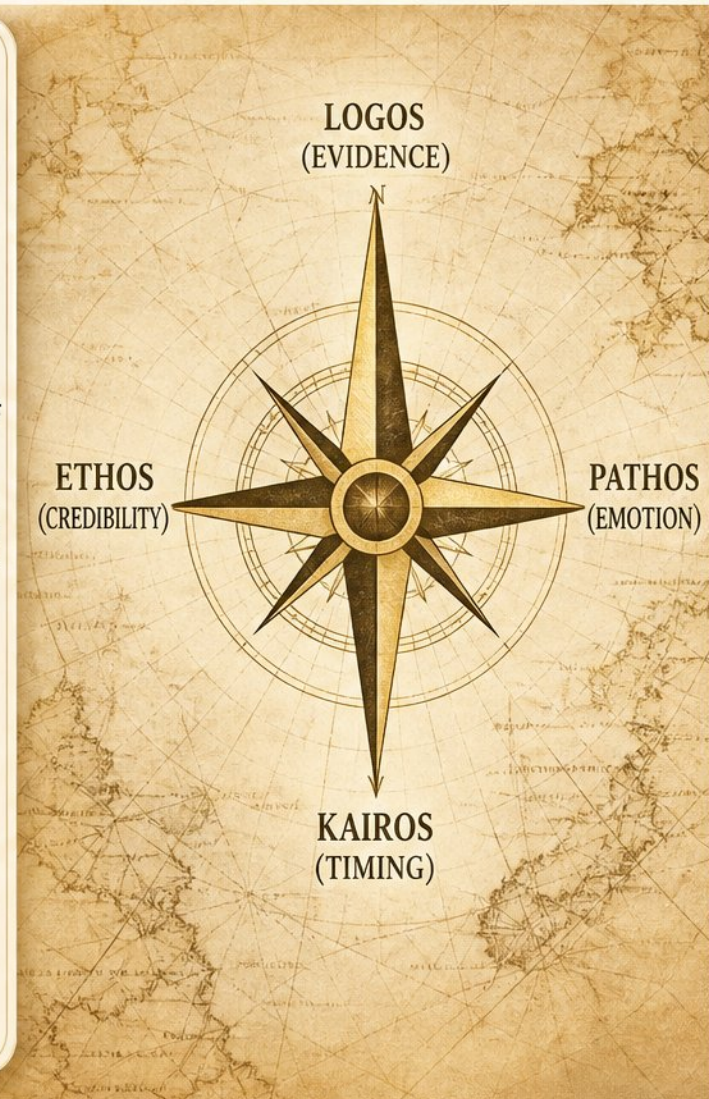
- ◆ Speaker contrast: institutional monarch vs. populist rally orator
- ◆ Audience: Joint Congress; purpose: alliance renewal and counter-isolationism
- ◆ Structure: Ciceronian arc from shared history to present policy
- ◆ Key moves: Magna Carta lineage, 1939 parallel, argument in closing prayer
- ◆ Same analysis framework reveals entirely different persuasion strategies



Tracing a Thread:

How Purpose Radically Reshapes the Same Message

- Same core data (e.g., nurse burnout rates) across three genres
- **Academic article:** high register, statistical evidence, IMRaD structure
- **Policy brief:** actionable recommendations, executive summary for decision-makers
- **Public blog:** narrative hook, relatable anecdotes, accessible language
- Adaptation is not 'dumbing down'—it's strategic bridge-building



Applying the Framework: A Guided Analysis Exercise



- Analyze a current multimodal artifact (PSA, ad, or speech)



- Identify audience, purpose, context, and key choices



- Test alternatives: How would the message shift for a different audience?



- Write a claims linking choices to effects (ethos, pathos, logos, kairos)



- Use a reusable annotation framework for independent analysis

ARTIFACT: EXCERPT FROM A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (SPEECH)

“We all want a community where everyone has a chance to thrive.

Appeal to shared values (pathos)

Inclusive language (ethos)

Small choices today can create a stronger tomorrow.

Actionable call to action (logos)

Let's look out for one another and build the future we all deserve. ”

Hopeful future focus (kairos)

Solidarity and unity (ethos/pathos)

AUDIENCE: Community members

PURPOSE: Inspire collective action

CONTEXT: Local challenge; timely appeal

KEY CHOICES: Inclusive pronouns, hopeful tone, simple syntax, parallel structure

WHAT IF?

Different Audience

If audience is young students

If audience is local leaders

Use simpler words, more visuals, peer examples

Emphasize impact, responsibility, community data

Message shifts in tone, examples, and appeals while purpose remains.

ANNOTATION FRAMEWORK

- ☐ Audience
- ☐ Purpose
- ☐ Context (Kairos)
- ☐ Key Choices
- ☐ Appeals (Ethos, Pathos, Logos)
- ☐ Effects

From Analysis to Action: Becoming a Strategic Communicator



- Define audience, purpose, constraints, and desired action



- Use a Rhetorical Planning Brief before you draft



- Self-check: ethos, pathos, logos before finalizing



- Distinguish ethical framing from manipulation



- Analysis skills build more honest, effective messages

RHETORICAL PLANNING BRIEF

AUDIENCE

Informed professionals who care about impact and integrity.

PURPOSE

Persuade the audience to support the proposed initiative.

CONSTRAINTS

Time-limited presentation; technical jargon must be minimized.

DESIRED ACTION

Approve the initiative and champion it within their teams.

KEY MESSAGE

This initiative advances our mission and creates lasting value.

EVIDENCE & SUPPORT

Research findings, stakeholder stories, and expert insight.

ETHOS

PATHOS

LOGOS

Key Takeaways and Capstone Activity



AUDIENCE

- - Audience, Purpose, Context drive every communication choice



PURPOSE

- Rhetoric is strategic choice-making, not decoration or manipulation



CONTEXT

- Capstone: Analyze a text for exigence, audience, purpose, and 3 linked choices



CHOICES

- Use the self-assessment rubric to evaluate your rhetorical awareness

SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC



- Use the self-assessment rubric to evaluate your rhetorical awareness



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Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

personwise.ai/t/bd4cb884/public