

S.P.A.C.E.

Method of Rhetorical Analysis



C.A.T.

OVERVIEW | Anytime you read, view, or listen to something, the person who created it made choices that impact the way you, the reader or observer, understand and react to it. To effectively analyze the rhetorical effect—the impact—of the communication on an audience, it helps to have an easy-to-follow method for rhetorical analysis. Use the S.P.A.C.E.C.A.T acronym below as a method for explaining an artifact's effect and impact on an audience.



SPEAKER

- Who created this artifact? Was it an individual, a business, a government, or something else?
- What do you know about creator, their background, and their experience? What do you not know about them?
- How is the artifact's meaning or effect changed or influenced because of the person who created it?



PURPOSE

- Why did the creator of the artifact make this? What are they hoping to accomplish with it?
- Are they trying to persuade, educate, entertain, inform, incite, motivate, inspire, or something else?
- How well does the medium or channel in which they're communicating help accomplish the purpose?



AUDIENCE

- Who is the intended audience of the artifact? Who did the message reach beyond the intended artifact?
- What assumptions did the creator make or what expectations did they have about the audience?
- What impact did the audience's culture, background, mood, or experience have on the message?



CONTEXT

- When and where was this artifact created and delivered? How was it intended to be displayed or distributed?
- What was happening in the community, country, culture, or world when the artifact was created?
- Would the message have been interpreted differently if it were delivered in a different time, place, or event?



EXIGENCE

- Why does this message matter, especially in the moment of creation, for the speaker or audience?
- What moved the creator of the artifact to create it? Were they inspired, angered, frustrated, or something else?
- Does the message have lasting impact, even after it was created? Why or why not does it matter now?



CHOICES

- What specific communication choices did the creator use to convey the message? Why did they make those choices?
- What impact does diction, sentence structure, organization, layout, color, figures of speech, etc. have on the message?
- Are there choices the creator could have made but didn't that may have changed the message?



APPEALS

- How did the creator intend to appeal to their audience? Through emotion, logic, or credibility?
- Are elements of the artifact—such as danger, adventure, sex, health, age, youth, popularity, etc.—that were likely intended to appeal to the audience? Are there elements that did not appeal or may have offended?



TONE

- What is the general tone of the message? Happy, serious, energized, something else? How do you know?
- What do you learn about the message or speaker's attitude from the tone?
- Does the tone shift in certain parts of the communication? What is the purpose for the shift?