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### Rhetorical Situations in Science Writing

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## Writing for the Sciences

### KEY TERMS WE WILL BE DISCUSSING THROUGHOUT THE COURSE

- **Rhetorical:** Expressed in terms intended to persuade or impress.
- **Rhetorical Situation:** Purpose, Audience, Genre, Exigence, Stance, Media/Design
  - **Purpose:** Addresses what you hope to accomplish and the primary purpose of the writing task: Is the task to entertain, to inform or to persuade?
  - **Audience:** Who is the potential audience for the essay? To whom are you writing or speaking to? What are the audience's background education and life experiences?
  - **Genre:** What are the characteristic features? What presentation and medium are being used to convey content? Does the genre call for any specific strategies?
  - **Exigence:** What need motivates the writer?
  - **Stance:** Attitude toward a topic. The manner by which writers position their argument, request, or information. Is it objective? Critical? Curious? Opinionated? Passionate? Indifferent?
  - **Media/Design:** Multimodal formats combine words, images, sound, hyperlinks to express meaning.

### KEY RHETORICAL QUESTIONS FOR SCIENCE WRITING

1. What was the study's motivating research issue?
2. Why was the study worth conducting?
3. What was novel and unique about the study?
4. What hypotheses guided the study?
5. What were the specific purposes of the study?

### KEY QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING YOUR AUDIENCES

Who are your primary and secondary readers?

How are your readers likely to relate to you?

What do your readers know and need to know about your topic?

Why is your audience reading your paper?

What values, preconceptions, and biases might readers hold about your research issue?

What qualities of written communications your readers value most?

How will your audiences go about reading your paper?

**Hypothesis** - a supposition or proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation.