

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.

The topic is about the relationship with your mother. The text is published in 1990. What motivates the author to write this piece is the experience of her relationship with her mother.

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

The author of this text is an Asian American writer, Amy Tan. Her investment in this issue is how language is a form of expression and communication.

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?

Amy Tan's "Mother's Tongue" is published by The Threepenny Review. The genre of the text is a personal essay. This genre explains the author's personal issue with language (specifically language barrier). For example, her mom speaking broken English is evidence.

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.

The author's intended audience is her mother. Her mother is an Asian who had difficulty speaking English, but can adapt.

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

The author was informing the audience with a bit of humorous entertainment. She proves a claim while trying to entertain her audience.

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

The main idea is how language is expressive and a form of communication

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.

The argument is supported by some examples, quotes, and analogies.

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*.

There are humorous dialogue that I found interesting, which the author intended to do.

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

Tan, Amy. *Mother Tongue*, by Amy Tan - University of Missouri–St. Louis. The Threepenny Review, 1990, <https://umsl.edu/~alexanderjm/Mother%20Tongue%20by%20Tan.pdf>.

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

What I want to remember about this text is the daughter's (author) reaction to her mom using an expressive language, even though her mom is facing a language barrier.