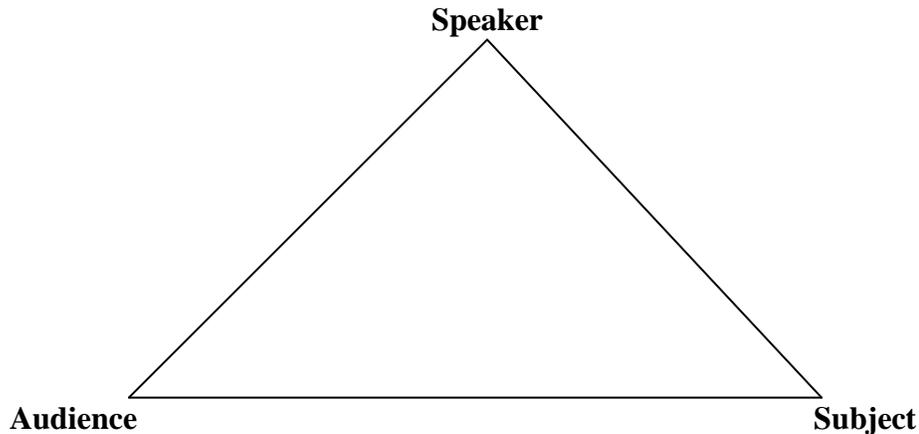


The Rhetorical Triangle: Subject, Audience, Speaker's Persona

Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle



Subject: the writer/speaker evaluates what he or she knows already and needs to know, investigates perspectives, and determines kinds of evidence or proofs that seem most useful

Audience: speculating about the reader's expectations, knowledge, and disposition with regard to the subject writers explore.

Speaker: writers use who they are, what they know and feel, and what they've seen and done to find their attitudes toward a subject and their understanding of a reader.

- Voice or Persona: the character the speaker creates as he or she writes

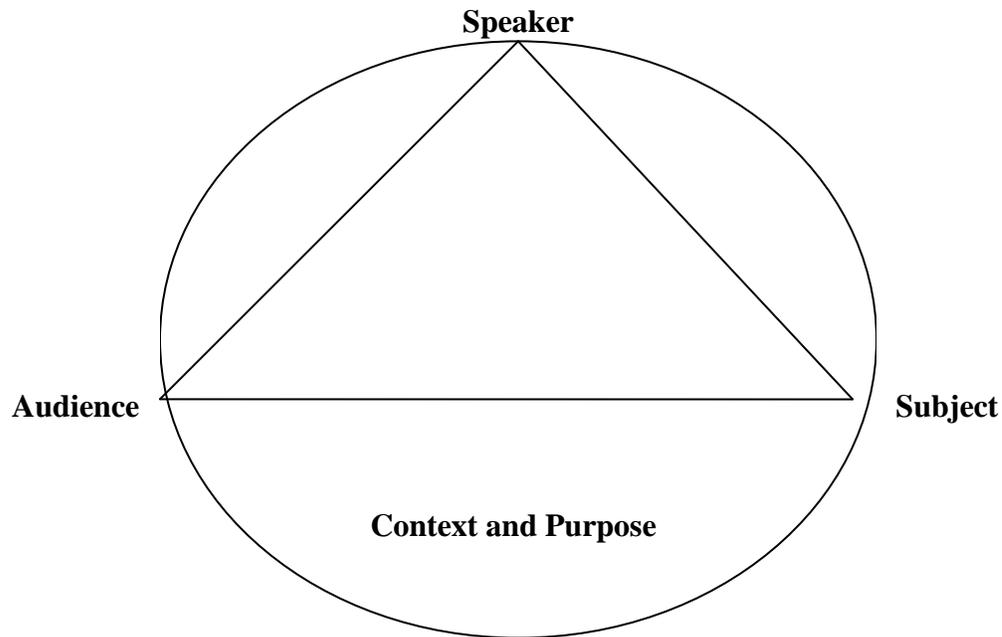
In order to make the rhetorical relationship most successful, writers use appeals

Appeals to Logos, Pathos, and Ethos

- **Logos:** an appeal to reason or logic; the logical thinking that informs speakers' decisions and readers' responses
 - Offer clear, reasonable premises and proofs
 - Develop ideas with appropriate details
 - Make sure readers can follow the progression of ideas
- **Ethos:** an appeal to ethics or one's character; writers connect their thinking to readers' own ethical or moral beliefs
 - Writers demonstrate they are credible, good-willed, and, knowledgeable about their subjects
- **Pathos:** an appeal to emotions; writers draw on the emotions and interests of readers and highlight them; the most powerful and immediate appeal
 - Use of personal stories and observations
 - Use of figurative language
 - This appeal dominates advertising

*These appeals are often intertwined and used together, simultaneously

Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle + Context and Purpose



- **Context and Purpose affect every element of the rhetorical triangle**

Context: the situation in which writing and reading occurs

- An exploration (or analysis) of that situation can lead to understanding of what underlies writers' choices
- We can't know for sure what they mean, but we have rhetoric to help us interpret
- Context can alter rhetorical choices in form and content

Purpose (aim or intention): the reason for writing or speaking (to inform, persuade, entertain)

- Words and forms carry writers' intentions, but they may be misunderstood
- Investigating how readers perceive intentions exposes where and how communication happens or is lost
- Rhetoric is the way to connect intentions with responses, to reconcile readers and writers
- Intention is carried throughout an entire piece, and it often changes