Responding Using the Rhetorical Situation
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There are many points to consider when responding to writing. Whether you are responding to a book, article, film, other video, music, or even a peer review, you will want to respond in a thoughtful manner that points to the text’s effectiveness. Here is a quick guide to the rhetorical situation and some questions that might help steer your response effectively.

**Ethos (credibility)**
- What qualifies the writer to speak on the subject?
- How does the writer connect with the audience?
- How does the written product relate to the topic?
- What attitude or tone does the writer have?
- What language or vocabulary is being used to construct identity?
- Are there any biases evident in the writing (gender, race, age, class, etc)?

**Logos (logic)**
- What is the author suggesting as truth?
  - Can it be argued, how?
- What evidence does the author use to support their point?
  - Are they using quality sources, or are their sources weak?
- Is the writer’s argument complete?
  - Is there anything missing? Could it be improved by more information?
- Is the evidence relevant to the thesis?
  - Some evidence doesn’t directly support the author’s claim.
- Is the evidence current and accurate?
  - Old data may be outdated, inaccurate, and no longer useful.
- Does the evidence have authority and purpose?
  - Are they using reliable sources, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, that support the writer’s main claim?
- What reasons might someone argue the author’s claim?
  - Consider as many possible counter-arguments

**Pathos (emotion)**
- Is the writer targeting the audience appropriately?
- Who is the audience? How can you tell?
  - What is the writer assuming about the audience’s beliefs, values, and attitudes?
  - Are these assumptions implied or stated?
- Are the writer’s emotions apparent to readers, providing appropriate emotional appeal?
- Is there too much or too little emotion being used?
  - Who benefits from the writer’s appeal and who does not?