**6 Rhetorical Elements Common in Academic Writing**

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| **Exigence/Motivation/ Background** | * The issue, problem, or situation that **motivated** the author to write * Look for terms of contrast or negation (e.g. *however, despite, nevertheless, no, none, not*) and terms like *problem* or *concern* * Three types of exigence:  1. **Personal**: the personal reason the author is interested in writing the text 2. **Social**: the social problem that the author is attempting to solve 3. **Research**: a gap in the current research conversation that scholars in the field have not addressed yet | What *motivated*the author to write this text? |
| **Purpose** | * The **reason** the author completed this project * What the author **hoped to accomplish** by writing this text * Look for terms such as *aim, goal, focus, reason for,* or *hope* * Often an action or **verb** (infinitives like “to inform” or “to determine”) | What did the author *hope to accomplish* by writing this text? |
| **Object of Study** | * The **main focus** or subject of the author’s text * Usually a **noun** * This should be **specific** to a single text | What *specifically* is this text about? |
| **Methodology** | * The steps the authors took to collect and analyze data * A description of the data they collected and the analytical methods * Look for a methods section or verbs like *conduct, study, gather, select, survey, interview, or observe*. | What research methods were used by the authors to answer their driving questions? |
| **New Offering/ Thesis/Contribution** | * A **big idea** that is supported throughout a text * **The idea** the author wants readers to understand **about the object of study** once they have completed reading the text. * Look for terms such as *This suggests..., These results mean..., One way to interpret these findings...* | What *big idea*does the text work to explain/argue for?  What does the author think about the object of study? |
| **Relevance/Audience** | * The **specific** group of people the author had in mind when writing this text * Consider **where** a text is published and **who** will find the information most useful * Look in the discussion, conclusion, or implications section for terms that indicate future possibility, like *can/could, may, should, or will* | *Who* did the author write this text for?  What do the authors suggest is the significance of their work to the field? |