

The Big 4 for Reading for Context: Situation, Audience, Purpose, Claim

By Mandy Hobmeier

Situation:

- What rhetorical situation is the author responding to?
- What current cultural/social/environmental/educational/political/etc. circumstances is the author engaging with?
- What “conversation” is the author participating in?
- What are the various positions, stances, and roles?

Audience:

- Who is the target audience? Is it you? Are there many?
- What does the author share (values, beliefs, goals) with the audience(s)?
- What are potential differences or gaps between the author and audiences?

Purpose:

- What is the author’s goal?
- What would they like to achieve with their position?
- What would they like to elicit from their audience? Raising awareness? Shifting a definition or perspective? Taking action?

Claim:

- What is the argument they are making?
- What is their stance? Why?
- And why does this arguable issue and their stance matter?

