

# Ethos-Building Mini Assignments



## 1. Leveraging Your Context

The goal of this assignment is to use what you've learned about rhetorical analysis to empower yourself. You've analyzed texts, images, and even, to some extent, spaces and objects, inferring the values, intent, and rhetorical strategies of their creators. Now, it's time to use what you've learned to increase your leverage in a real-life rhetorical context in which you are currently embroiled. You may choose your context as a student, a family member, employee, and/or member of a particular gender, race, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, etc. In choosing your context, consider your core values statements to ensure that your work is as meaningful as possible. In choosing your context, you may draw from the following examples.

*If you choose your context as a student:*

- Do a rhetorical analysis of a department webpage or hallway bulletin board to better understand what that academic department values and what they're likely to offer you as a student. Is this department a good match for you, considering your values and goals? If you major with this department, in what ways are they likely to support you? Can you anticipate any mismatches between your goals and values and the kind of support this department can offer?
- Identify any fellowship opportunities that appeal to you. Comb the informational material to determine who offers the fellowship and why. What kind of students are they seeking and what do they hope to gain from sponsoring them?

*If you choose your context as a burgeoning professional:*

- Learn about your target industry by doing rhetorical analyses of the LinkedIn profiles of the people most successful in your field. Combine your findings into a coherent analysis, and explain its implications to you personally, in light of your own values and goals. Given what you've learned, how would you best position your skills and abilities when engaging with this industry?

*If you choose your context as an employee:*

- Do a rhetorical analysis of a work memo to better understand what your employer values. How can you leverage your findings to bolster your power or position?

## 2. Building Relationships

Our relationships with networks larger than ourselves can do a great deal to increase our agency. Take this opportunity to do something that bolsters an existing relationship with a group of people or institution or that creates a new one.

- Apply to an internship, fellowship, job, or other opportunity that may help you on your road to success. Keep a copy of the application materials and, in a 1 – 2 page paper, explain the application process and the rhetorical choices you made to ensure your application’s success given the situation and audience. “Rhetorical choices” in this case refer to the rhetorical appeals you made (*logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*), your vocabulary and tone, sentence structure and syntax.
- Make a *LinkedIn* page that showcases your skills and values. In a 1 – 2 page paper, explain the rhetorical choices you made to ensure your page’s success given your target audience and the values of your target industry. “Rhetorical choices” in this case refer to the rhetorical appeals you made (*logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*), your vocabulary and tone, sentence structure, syntax, and the information you decided to include or exclude. It also refers to design decisions concerning the choice and placement of images, spacing, color, image choice.
- Write an email to someone you don’t know but who might be able to help you, either right now or at some time in the future. Offer them help or support of some kind. In a 1 - 2 page paper, explain the rhetorical choices you made in writing your email. “Rhetorical choices” in this case refer to the rhetorical appeals you made (*logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*), your vocabulary and tone, sentence structure, syntax, and the information you decided to include or exclude.