**Annotating Rhetorical Elements**

Rhetorical elements are the things an author considers and discovers as she designs and carries out her project. When we read, these elements can help us come to terms with and understand an author’s project. In academic writing, these elements—such as object of study, purpose, exigence, and relevance—are often stated directly and they often appear in the same section or area of every text. For example, the purpose is almost always found in the introduction, and stated with common language, such as *The aim of this project is to* or *Our purpose is to*. Below is a list of the five rhetorical elements we’ll be annotating in this class, along with an additional annotation (thinking ahead) that will help us build our own projects.

**purpose**

What is the goal of the text? In other words, what are the authors trying to do with their project? Look for terms such as *aim, goal, focus, reason for,* or *hope*.

**exigence**

What is the missing piece or gap in the research that started the authors’ project? Look for terms of contrast or negation (e.g., *however, despite, nevertheless, no, none, not*).

**object of study**

What is the subject that the authors are studying? Look for a key concept that shows up in the abstract, the introduction, the conclusion, and maybe the title.



**\*thinking ahead**

What places in the text interest you? Write a note that explains in detail an area of interest in the text that makes you curious to learn more. Or, make a connection to another text.

**relevance**

What do the authors suggest is the significance or usefulness of their work to the field? Who do they identify as their primary audience? Look in the discussion, conclusion, or implications section.

**new offering**

What is the thesis or argument? What is the new perspective that the authors are offering to the research conversation? Look for places in the introduction where authors explain their main findings or opinions.

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To annotate for rhetorical elements, identify **at least one place** where each rhetorical element is located in the text. Using the appropriate colors (e.g. yellow for object of study), insert a comment next to your chosen place in the text that explains how the rhetorical element is presented. For each rhetorical element answer the questions below:

1. What rhetorical element have you found? Try to paraphrase the information.
2. What language clues tell you this is the element you have identified? For example, “I noticed this element because of the word(s)…”
3. Where is it placed in the text? For example, “Here, early in the introduction, the author presents…”