

# *Writing Spaces*

## Assignments & Activities Archive

### Rhetorical Moves Analysis of Emails

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# Rhetorical Moves Analysis of Emails

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## Overview

The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to rhetorical moves analysis as a way to approach and respond to a variety of genres as well as better understand rhetorical concepts such as audience and purpose. To do so, students begin by reviewing an example analysis by Jacobson, Pawlowski, and Tardy (221-223) of a student absence email. After that, students are split into different groups, each coming up with another common email scenario (e.g., request an extension, schedule an appointment, clarification on feedback). Each individual in the group writes their own email and pastes it into a shared google doc. From there, each group designs a table similar to Jacobson, Pawlowski, and Tardy (223), entering the various rhetorical moves they have made and labelled in the emails. Groups then share their work with the rest of the class, discussing their moves and how these moves were impacted by a variety of factors, including audience and purpose. The practice of rhetorical moves analysis of emails encourages students to see the fluidity within genres and promotes a discussion on audience, purpose, and constraints. Lastly, through a brief in-class reflection, students reflect on learning about rhetorical moves, any challenges or confusion associated with them, and the impact they may have in future compositions.

## Time Commitment

2 class sessions

## Materials

Students will need access to “[Make Your ‘Move:’ Writing in Genres](#)” by Brad Jacobson, Madelyn Pawlowski, and Christine M. Tardy and

google drive (although the activity can also be done on paper or any other shared platforms).

### Activity Process

- Before the in-class activity, students should read “Make Your ‘Move:’ Writing in Genres” by Brad Jacobson, Madelyn Pawlowski, and Christine M. Tardy (Writing Spaces, Volume 4). To ensure students read the piece, I often tie it into an annotation assignment or a reading response assignment for points/credit.
- Next, the initial activity of reviewing the authors’ moves analysis occurs in class and asks students to discuss the purpose and effectiveness of this analysis.
- During the same class session, students are then placed into groups to come up with another common email scenario for which each individual student then writes an email.
- After writing out their individual emails, students then review these emails in groups and establish a table similar to Jacobson, Pawlowski, and Tardy. Students analyze the rhetorical moves that have been made by them and their peers, write these rhetorical moves up, and determine whether these moves are common, required, or rare in the chosen email scenario.
- Finally, each group presents their table and discusses some takeaways. This is where instructors can guide students with questions that particularly elicit the impact rhetorical concepts such as purpose, audience, and constraints have in relation to particular rhetorical moves.
- Finally, a brief written in-class reflection asks students to reflect on their impression of rhetorical moves and the role and usefulness in future compositions.

## Learning Outcomes

Students engaging in this activity/assignment will:

- Develop an understanding of rhetorical moves and rhetorical concepts, such as audience, purpose, and constraints.
- Think critically and practice articulating the rhetorical choices in their writing.
- Gain insight into the fluid nature of genres.
- Reflect on the rhetorical moves made in their writing and the impacts these have, helping them consider the usefulness of rhetorical moves in future writing situations.

## Learning Accommodations

- Material can be presented in multiple formats to include in-person instruction and asynchronous, digital delivery.

## Works Cited

Jacobson, Brad, et al. "Make Your 'Move': Writing in Genres". *Writing Spaces*, vol 4, edited by Dana Driscoll, Megan Heise, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter. Parlor Press, 2022, pp. 217-233. <https://writingspaces.org/make-your-move-writing-in-genres/>. Accessed 8 Aug. 2024.