Group Activity: Exploring the Rhetorical Situation: Using Sources to Respond to Questions

Purpose:
The following exercise is designed for two reasons: (1) to further your understanding of the rhetorical situation; and (2) to prepare you to respond critically to readings.

Directions:
You will have ______ minutes to complete each exercise. Each round offers key terms, a question, and some direct quotations. The key terms are associated with a rhetorical situation. Please work together to discuss and answer the question. In the course of answering the question, please draw upon one or more quotations in some way, either through paraphrase, summary, or direct quotation. You are encouraged to use the templates provided in They Say/ I Say to help you include what others say. Don’t forget to add what you say as well. After discussion, record your group’s response to the question on a piece of paper. Put all members’ names on the sheet of paper as well.

Round Five: Rhetorical Situation
Key Terms: Author, Ethos

Q: What leads you to (dis)trust and (not) accept what a writer has to say?

“The ethos of the Declaration of Independence is constructed as a reflection of the logos and pathos. The ethos is a rational, balanced, enlightened ethos, as reflected in the logical structure of the document and its careful avoidance of emotional tones” (Wysocki & Lynch, 2007, p. 192).

“You already know, simply from living with others, and perhaps without thinking much about it, how to shape yourself, your clothing, your actions, and your words so that you fit into a Friday night party, Sunday’s church bench, Monday morning’s classroom, or Wednesday afternoon’s job” (Wysocki & Lynch, 2007, p. 192).

“Authority involves using your own experience or the reputations of others to support your arguments. Another way to strengthen your authority is to demonstrate your practicality, ethical principles, and goodwill. These three types of authority were first mentioned by Aristotle as a way to show your readers that you are fair and therefore credible, and these strategies still work well today (Johnson-Sheehan & Paine, 2013, p. 445).

As an author, you need to establish your own authority: to show you know what you’re talking about by citing trustworthy sources; to demonstrate that you’re fair by representing positions other than your own even-handedly and accurately; and to establish some kind of common ground with your audience (Lunsford et al, 2013, p. 289).