

Reading Response 4: Exigency

Vieregge defines exigency as “the reason why my message is indispensable to my reader” (Vieregge 1). He included many strong examples, but I think another strategy for invoking exigency is appealing to curiosity. If a writer can raise a question that readers feel they need to be answered, the text then becomes essential. For instance, true-crime podcasts often hook listeners by presenting a mystery or unsolved case, which creates urgency through curiosity rather than fear or logic. I have struggled before to find a purpose in my writing when responding to assigned prompts. Sometimes the prompt feels too general, and it’s hard to know where to start or what I should write about. To resolve this, I try to connect the prompt to something in my own life or interests. For example, if a prompt asks me to reflect on a challenge I’ve faced, I would pick a moment that feels meaningful to me. Framing the assignment this way gives the writing a larger purpose to me and making it easier to write. A nonfiction text that felt indispensable to me was the documentary *The Social Dilemma*. The film explores how social media platforms manipulate users with different manipulative algorithms, often without them knowing in order to maximize engagement. By showing real-world consequences such as mental health impacts and political polarization, the documentary made the subject feel urgent and essential. It left me questioning my own online habits and considering the broader societal effects social media will have. I read Greta Thunberg’s 2019 UN speech on climate change. The strategy she uses is urgency and fear, shown when she says, “I want you to panic... and act as if the house was on fire.” This was highly effective because the metaphor really showed that action is necessary and that changes need to be made quick. Genres not mentioned in Vieregge’s article include advertising and social media. In these genres, writers create exigency by connecting to the audience’s daily life and personal choices. For example, ads often emphasize immediate benefits or consequences to convince readers they need to act quickly, while social media posts can use trends or peer influence to make content hard to ignore. This approach can make the message feel relevant and pressing.