

Subject	The explicit subject here is whether scientists pray and, if so, what they pray for. Implicitly, the subject is the nature of faith.
Occasion	The occasion is Einstein's receipt of a letter from Phyllis Wright asking questions about science and religion.
Audience	The primary audience for the letter is Phyllis herself, though the formality of his response suggests that Einstein realized that his letters would have a larger audience. (Note that he won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921, so by 1936 he was a world-renowned scientist.)
Purpose	Einstein's purpose is probably the most complex element here. At its most straightforward, his purpose is to respond to a sincere schoolgirl's question about science and religion. Beyond that, it seems that Einstein's purpose is to expand Phyllis's horizons a bit, to help her understand that science and religion do not necessarily represent two antagonistic ways of thinking.
Speaker	The speaker, a scientist approaching age sixty, is responding to a girl who is likely twelve, so his purpose is intertwined with that speaker–audience relationship; the wise elder in dialogue with the younger generation.

Ultimately, Einstein does not “answer” Phyllis directly at all; rather, he returns the question to her by offering different ways to think about the nature of science and religion and the way spiritual and scientific perspectives interact. Viewed in this light, Einstein's purpose can be seen as engaging a younger person—who might become a scientist—in thinking more deeply about her own question.

ACTIVITY

Using SOAPS, analyze the rhetorical situation in the following speech.

9/11 Speech

GEORGE W. BUSH

Good evening.

Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts.

The victims were in airplanes or in their offices—secretaries, businessmen and women, military and federal workers. Moms and dads. Friends and neighbors.

Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror. The pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge structures collapsing, have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger.

These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed. Our country is strong. A great people has been moved to defend a great nation.

Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve.

America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining.

Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature, and we responded with the best of America, with the daring of our rescue workers, with the caring for strangers and neighbors who came to give blood and help in any way they could.

Immediately following the first attack, I implemented our government's emergency response plans. Our military is powerful, and it's prepared. Our emergency teams are working in New York City and Washington, D.C., to help with local rescue efforts.

Our first priority is to get help to those who have been injured and to take every precaution to protect our citizens at home and around the world from further attacks. The functions of our government continue without interruption. Federal agencies in Washington which had to be evacuated today are reopening for essential personnel tonight and will be open for business tomorrow.

Our financial institutions remain strong, and the American economy will be open for business as well.

The search is under way for those who are behind these evil acts. I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.