

Unit Topic: Persuasive Writing; Speech Analysis and Presentation

Subject Area Essential Question (s):

- How can we attract and hold an audience's attention?
- How do we adjust our speech and writing to respond to specific audiences purposes and situations?
- How does the use of evidence help to support our ideas and to make an argument more convincing?
- How do we use a system of shared conventions to communicate with one another?
- How can we use the organization of a text to understand what we are reading?

Unit Level Essential Question(s):

- How have speech writers today and in the past applied skills in rhetoric?
- How do we apply these skills in order to creatively and articulately express views of our own?

Goals

A: Skills

Communicator

Receptive:

- identify an imagined audience for their essay, a group or population of people whom they want to persuade

Expressive

- develop a clear thesis statement that communicates their view on a particular issue
- when presenting their speech, speak clearly and audibly before an audience of peers
- express their reading of a particular speech or sample writing with peers in small groups
- write short, ½-page responses to writing prompts related to course readings (speeches)
- write in a formal, academic style, also employing vocabulary that is appropriate to their specific audience

Investigator

Inquiry:

- conduct research outside of class appropriate to their topic and select evidence from their research that appropriately supports their thesis
- examine both sides of their topic, carefully noting the arguments of the opposing side in order to address and confront at least one counter-argument
- analyze samples of student writing in the persuasive style, pointing out strengths and weaknesses of each sample
- examine speeches written by famous leaders of the past and present, identifying rhetorical techniques within the speech and noting their effect on the audience

Innovation:

- construct a full, five-paragraph, persuasive essay that communicates and defends their position on a particular issue
- apply rhetorical techniques learned in this unit to their persuasive essay
- apply grammar skills learned in this unit to final essay
- choose and defend one side of this issue, in a manner that is both logical and creative

Self-Directed Learner

Self-Awareness:

- determine and articulate their own position on issues within their school, broader community, and society
- identify a specific issue for which they are most passionate
- flexibly adapt and fine-tune their essay topic and evidence throughout the writing process

Skills in Taking Responsibility:

- effectively paraphrase research findings in order to avoid plagiarism
- properly cite sources in MLA format

- brings all materials to class in order to participate in collaborative aspects of the lesson

Community Steward

Skills in Awareness of Others:

- consider persuasive essay topics that concern themselves, but also members of a broader community (their school, community, and society), with the ultimate goal of effecting positive change in these settings.

Collaboration Skills:

- contribute actively in small-group “workshops” and “Stations Activities,” not relying fully on peers to determine answers and/or produce work

B: Content Knowledge

Definition of rhetoric: *the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing*

Rhetorical Devices:

- Inclusive Language
- Analogy
- Anaphora
- Allusion

Persuasive Writing Terms:

- Ethos
- Pathos
- Logos
- Purpose
- Audience
- Credibility
- Character
- Thesis statement
- “Hook” Statement

Grammar Terms:

- Independent vs. Dependent Clauses
- Dependent Word Markers
- Subordinating vs. Coordinating Conjunctions
- Adverb Clauses (in connection with thesis construction)

MA Curriculum Framework - [RI] 6, [RI] 4, [RI] 8, [W] 8, [W] 4, [W] 1, [SL] 1.

C: Understandings

- Rhetoric is the art of effective speaking and writing
- Our communication skills can be helpful for persuading audiences towards positive changes in their attitudes and/or behavior
- World leaders from the past and present have employed skills in rhetoric to enact such positive change, from American presidents, to civil right’s leaders, to celebrities.
- A speaker’s body language, tone, volume, vocabulary, grammar, and effective argumentation are all essential to communicating their ideas
- Writing is a fluid process; while there are set stages of the “writing process,” especially with persuasive writing, writers should expect to adapt their thesis and main points throughout, as they consider how best to persuade an audience

Evidence of Student's Reaching Goals:

- *Note-Taking* (Fill-in-the-blanks) - teacher presents notes on powerpoint display to students for certain topics (rhetorical devices, grammar concepts, etc.) and give students the same note-sheet with certain words or phrases left blanks. Students pay attention to the lecture by filling in the blanks as notes are presented.
- *Stations Activities* - students identify examples of different rhetorical devices (as well as “ethos,” “pathos,” and “logos”) from sample texts posted at various “stations” across the room.
- *“Extended Exit Tickets”* (free-write responses) - students respond to a speech with their own views and opinions or imagine themselves within the speaker’s point of view or situation in order to understand this view. This activity should also help students for arriving at a topic for their persuasive essay and speech.

Inquiry - and Skill-Based Teaching and Learning Ideas:

- *Rhetorical Concepts Quizzes / Grammar Quizzes* - students are assessed on their notes from class on the various rhetorical concepts (rhetorical devices, definitions of ethos, pathos, logos, etc.). Also, students demonstrate their cumulative knowledge of grammar concepts learned as well as new topics, including independent and dependent clauses and transition terms: “However,” “Nonetheless,” “Although,” etc.
- *Brainstorming Activities* - students initially brainstorm topics for their persuasive essay and speech by “Complaining” - that is - making a list of attitudes or behaviors that bother them and also determining their stance on a range of issues (in school, the community, and their society). Students will refine these lists by checking off topics that they could realistically argue.
- *“Writer’s Workshops”* - students practice constructing thesis statements and provide each other with feedback, analyze the BEST evidence for different body paragraphs, etc.
- *Graphic Organizers* - students outline their introduction paragraph, including the “hook” statement and thesis statement, using a graphic organizer. They will also complete a graphic organizer to outline their entire essay, including body paragraphs and a conclusion.
- *Persuasive Essay and Speech* (Summative Assessment)- students will write and deliver a TED Talk style speech on a topic of their choice.

Key Texts and Resources:

“I Have a Dream” (1963) - Martin Luther King
Inaugural Speech (1961) - John F. Kennedy
“Ain’t I a Woman?” Sojourner Truth
Speech to the United Nations: “Gender equality is your issue too” (2014) - Emma Watson
“Malala Yousafzai: ‘Our books and our pens are the most powerful weapons.’”
The Guardian, theguardian.com, 12 July 2013. Web. 8 Feb. 2015.
Raimes, Ann. *Grammar Troublespots*, New York: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
TED Talks - see list on outline