



Recognizing Rhetorical Devices and Viewpoints in Persuasive Text — Grade Nine

Ohio Standards Connections

Reading Applications: Informational, Technical and Persuasive Text

Benchmark B

Identify examples of rhetorical devices and valid and invalid inferences, and explain how authors use these devices to achieve their purposes and reach their intended audiences. (Grades 8 - 10)

Indicator 8

Identify the features of rhetorical devices used in common types of public documents, including newspaper editorials and speeches. (Grade 9)

Benchmark D

Explain and analyze how an author appeals to an audience and develops an argument or viewpoint in text. (Grades 8 - 10)

Indicator 5

Analyze an author's implicit and explicit argument, perspective or viewpoint in text. (Grade 9)

Lesson Summary:

Students will learn to describe the features of rhetorical devices used in public documents such as speeches or newspaper articles. They also will learn to identify appeals to authority, reason and emotion. Students will analyze an author's implicit and explicit viewpoint.

Estimated Duration: Three hours

Commentary:

As strategic readers, students learn to recognize arguments, bias, stereotyping and propaganda in informational text sources. While recognizing these elements, they are also processing what they are reading by monitoring their comprehension (i.e., asking and answering questions and assessing their own understanding). These skills are fully employed in the pre- and post-assessment activities of this lesson.

The teacher should prepare a hand out with definitions and examples of rhetorical devices and distribute this to students before the pre-assessment.

In the pre-assessment, students are given a copy of a persuasive text and asked to write an analysis of the rhetorical devices and arguments contained in it. As a "pre-assessment" to this pre-assessment, the teacher may choose to review with students those strategies used by writers to shape an argument. Some of the following questions, for example, may be posed to students for discussion before introducing the students to the pre-assessment portion of this lesson.

- What is meant by the phrase "rhetorical devices" and why do writers choose to use them?
- If the purpose for using rhetorical devices is identified as persuasion, then the reader must first identify the argument. Where in the persuasive text is the argument likely to be—the beginning, middle or end?
- How might questioning and distinction-making be used to shape an argument?
- Is the writer of the persuasive text appealing to emotion or reason, and how is the reader able to determine this?
- What enables a reader to identify the tone of a persuasive text?
- What writing strategy is revealed by the development of tone? How might a caring tone, for example, differ from an instructive tone or an entertaining tone?
- What figures of speech may be particularly useful when shaping an argument in writing?

Discussing responses to these questions in a class setting may simply heighten students' awareness of what they will be analyzing when given the copy of the persuasive text and asked to write an analysis on the rhetorical devices and arguments contained in the text.

When discussing the benchmark and indicators addressed in this lesson with many Ohio educators involved with the development of the model curriculum, there was agreement that attaining mastery of the benchmark and indicators addressed in this lesson is a challenge. With this in mind, teachers may need to revisit this lesson on a number of occasions and simply vary the texts to be

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analyzed each time the lesson is revisited.

Pre-Assessment:

Give students a copy of a persuasive text (not one selected for the lesson) and ask them to write an explanation of the rhetorical devices and arguments contained in the text.

Scoring Guidelines:

3 = The student successfully identifies and explains rhetorical devices and arguments used in the text.

2 = The student identifies the rhetorical devices and arguments but is unable to explain one of the two.

1 = The student only identifies the rhetorical devices and/or arguments.

0 = The student does not recognize or explain the rhetorical devices or arguments.

Post-Assessment:

- Students will write a persuasive analysis response on a self-selected text or from choices made by the teacher.
- Students will present the response to the class.

Scoring Guidelines:

3 = The student clearly articulates and fully describes the rhetorical devices used in the selection. The student provides solid analysis of the author's implicit and explicit viewpoints.

2 = The student identifies the features of rhetorical devices used in text. The student demonstrates the ability to analyze the author's viewpoint.

1 = The student does not recognize rhetorical devices but does provide an analysis of the author's viewpoint.

0 = The student does not attempt or complete the assignment

Instructional Procedures:

1. Explain to the students that they will be reading a nonfiction persuasive selection.
2. Explain that they will be learning about rhetorical devices and will analyze an author's viewpoint.
3. Provide definitions and examples of rhetorical devices. Review and discuss them with the class.
4. Bring letters to the editor to class. Read a few of the letters aloud and discuss them.
5. Have students identify the authors' implicit and explicit viewpoints, using specific examples to support their answers.

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6. Discuss which letters are the most persuasive.
7. Have students identify examples of rhetorical devices and explain how the devices impact the overall persuasiveness.
8. Provide students with a text to review in class. Have them read the text, noting viewpoints and use of rhetorical devices.
9. Have each student write a written response to what was read and share the response with the class.

Differentiated Instructional Support:

Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs, to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicator(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator(s).

- Students may be given persuasive texts that are not as challenging but still contain rhetorical devices.
- Students may be asked to read a critical analysis of a text provided and then write a written response to the analysis.

Extension:

Play recordings of famous political speeches for the class. Ask students to describe their reactions to the speeches.

Homework Options and Home Connections:

The post-assessment paper and presentation should require out-of-class research and time.

Materials/Resources Needed:

- For the teacher:* Any nonfiction, persuasive text; historical speeches or current newspaper editorials.
- Handout with definitions and examples of rhetorical devices;
Chalkboard and chalk or an overhead with transparency sheets.
- For the students:* Handouts with definitions and examples of rhetorical devices.