K20 LEARN

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Persuade Me

Rhetorical Analysis of Media and Text

K20 Center, Jane Baber, Gage Jeter, Aimee Myers
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Grade Level	10th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	90 minutes
Course	A.P. Literature and Composition, American Literature, British Literature		

Essential Question

What makes a message powerfully persuasive?

Summary

Once students have foundational knowledge of rhetorical analysis and persuasion, this lesson allows students to evaluate the use of rhetorical elements in modern product commercials and political campaign ads. This lesson can be used to make connections to rhetorical devices used in American or British literature. The use of modern commercial and American political advertisements makes the art of persuasion real and applicable to students. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 11th grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 10th through 12th, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students begin by jotting down their thoughts about their favorite commercial. Students then share with the class their thoughts and, in consideration of the essential question, create a collaborative list of the common elements of powerful and memorable commercials.

Explore

Students watch a commercial, write down observations, and work in groups as they rhetorically analyze the media.

Explain

Students review ethos/logos/pathos, rhetorical devices, and logical fallacies through the use of a concept check sheet.

Extend

Students evaluate media as they view a Reagan/Carter political campaign ad and then analyze persuasive elements of the campaign commercial transcript.

Evaluate

Students revisit the essential question by evaluating the effectiveness of persuasive elements and use the Commit and Toss strategy to evaluate one another's analysis of the texts.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

WME501: Analyze how the choice of a specific word or phrase shapes meaning or tone in somewhat challenging passages when the effect is subtle

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 10)

10.3.W.3: Compose argumentative essays, reviews, or op-eds that:

- introduce precise, informed claims
- include a defensible thesis
- acknowledge counterclaims or alternate perspectives
- organize claims, counterclaims, and evidence in a logical sequence
- provide the most relevant evidence to develop balanced arguments, using credible sources
- use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity and concision
- use style and tone that suits the audience and purpose

L.5: Students will expand and apply knowledge of grammar, usage, mechanics, and style to comprehend texts and communicate effectively.
10.7.R: Analyze and evaluate the techniques used in a variety of multimodal content and how they contribute to meaning.
10.7.R: Select texts for specific purposes and read independently for extended periods of time.

Materials

- Index cards
- Writing materials: pens, pencils, paper, etc.

Engage

Show students your favorite (school appropriate) commercial. Once the commercial is over, give a brief explanation of why the commercial is your favorite. Give students a minute to then think about their own favorite commercial.

Distribute index cards to students. (Alternatively, ask students to get out a piece of notebook paper.) Ask students to participate in a Two-Minute Paper instructional strategy. Pose the following prompt to students:

- Describe your favorite commercial—either currently or perhaps from your childhood. Explain why this commercial is/was memorable.

Set a timer for two minutes and encourage students to write their response on an index card or piece of notebook paper. Float the room and encourage students who might be stuck. If the whole class seems to struggle, offer a few more suggestions of your favorite commercials. It just might spark an idea for your students.

After two minutes, ask students to share their writing with an Elbow Partner. Once pairs have had time to discuss, ask for a few volunteers to share out with the class. As students share, encourage them to think specifically about the elements that made the commercials so memorable. It might be beneficial to record a list of these elements on the board.

Tech Twist

Have students use Padlet or Mentimeter to populate a word cloud with the elements they felt made the commercials so memorable.

During this whole-class discussion, guide students toward the essential question: "What makes a message powerfully persuasive?" Encourage students to discuss what counts as a "message" and what makes messages powerful.

Explore

Watch a commercial (classic or contemporary) with a high amount of appeal, logical fallacy, and a clear audience.

Teacher's Note

A few options for commercials are listed under the Resources section at the end of this lesson. However, feel free to choose a commercial that is personally relevant or meaningful for you and your students.

Distribute copies of the "Visual Literacy: Analyzing Media" and allow students to read and annotate it, noting any questions, comments, or concerns they have. Encourage students to not skip the basic observations because these basic observations will allow them to make inferences and analyze the commercial.

After viewing and discussing the handout, play the commercial again. This time, allow students to start filling in the right-hand column of the observations section of the handout as they watch. This handout will help them record simple, concrete details: objects, people, sounds, lighting, images, and symbols. Students will return to these later for more abstract analysis.

Instruct students to form small groups (or strategically place students in groups). Play the commercial a third time, and ask students to share any additional observations with their small group, filling in the right hand column of the observation section of their handouts even more.

Allow each group 1-2 minutes to discuss any additional observations from the commercial.

Once all observations have been recorded and discussed, have students begin to work on Part B of their analysis sheets together. As a group, instruct students to make inferences concerning the intended audience, appeals used, and the commercial's use of persuasion. Provide students 5-10 minutes to complete Part B of their analysis sheets.

Recreate the chart on the whiteboard where groups can fill in their observations and inferences so they can be displayed visually to the whole class.

Allow five minutes for groups to share their analysis of the commercial. Ask students to identify the patterns they see in the observations and inferences. Ask them to consider possible reasons for any differences noted.

Tech Twist

Have students fill in their observations on a shared, collaborative Google Doc. Then, students can use the highlighter tool to highlight the patterns that they see.

Explain

Review concepts of appeals, logical fallacies, and rhetorical devices by using the Concept Check handout. (Feel free to edit the Word document attachment to meet the needs of your students.) Encourage students to annotate the text accordingly:

- Put a STAR next to area they feel like they know well or have a strong knowledge.
- Put a PLUS SIGN next to areas they feel somewhat familiar but not an expert.
- Put a ZERO next to areas they still feel very lost.

Invite students to discuss and cite evidence for any of these that were being used in the commercial even thought it was visual and not written text.

Extend

Ask students to get out a scrap piece of paper and prepare to jot down observations from another commercial.

Show the Reagan/Carter commercial "Peace Through Strength" (1980).

While students watch, encourage them to jot down their observations. Play the commercial a couple of times so students can carefully watch and record their ideas.

Using the Inverted Pyramid strategy, allow students to share their observations with a partner, then allow students to blend their partnership into a small groups (4 students), and finally move into a large group (8 students). With the partner, students will share observations and opinions for just one minute. Next, students move into a small group for about 3 minutes and elaborate on their observations and opinions, expanding their knowledge by listening to other students' thoughts. Lastly, students will expand their small group into a large group. Through this process, students can build confidence in their opinions and defend their thoughts. The last section of the Inverted Pyramid (large group) will take 5-10 minutes depending on the needs of the class.

Instruct groups to decide which appeal was being used most in the commercial and support their claim with evidence from their observations. On poster board, large sheets of paper, or using technology, direct students to create a visual graphic organizer to show their claim and supporting evidence from the commercial. Each group should elect a representative to share with the class. Allow groups to converse as necessary in order to come to a whole class consensus.

Refer back to the essential question: "What makes a message powerfully persuasive?" Allow the class to discuss if and how the Reagan/Carter commercial was powerfully persuasive. On the board, create a list of evidence/examples from the commercial to back up the consensus.

Distribute copies of the transcript of the commercial. Ask students to individually or collaboratively annotate the transcript to identify rhetorical devices, appeals, and logical fallacies. Encourage students to find at least two of each. Have students:

- Circle logical fallacies. Label each and in the margin write a brief statement of its purpose in this specific text.
- Underline rhetorical devices. Label each and in the margin write a brief statement of its purpose in this specific text.
- Star any examples of the three appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos.

Evaluate

To wrap up the lesson, ask students to write a well-constructed paragraph evaluating logical fallacies and rhetorical devices in the transcript. Students should include an arguable claim, textual evidence, and their own commentary.

You may collect written responses and have feedback conferences with students or engage in the Commit and Toss activity.

1. Ask students to crumple their responses into a ball and toss it to another student.
2. Ask the student who receives the response to evaluate the writer's claim, evidence, and commentary using a rubric. (See the attached Argumentation rubric.)
3. After evaluating the response using the rubric, have students share what was strong and weak about the argument they read and critiqued.
4. Feedback can be listed on the board to provide students with a visual representation of their strengths and weaknesses in argument writing.

Resources

- Official Ram Trucks Super Bowl Commercial "Farmer": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMpZ0TGjbWE
- Pfizer: More than Medication Commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAlyHUWjNjE
- Ronald Reagan - Peace Through Strength Campaign Commercial 1980: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VXXwyl5G0A
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Commit and Toss. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505b3d0
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow Partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/ccc07ea2d6099763c2dbc9d05b00c4b4
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Inverted Pyramid. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f507a918
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Mentimeter. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/645
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Padlet. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1077
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Two Minute Paper. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f506cf73
- Purdue University. (n.d.). Logical Fallacies. Purdue Online Writing Lab. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/logic_in_argumentative_writing/fallacies.html