

Rhetoric: Convincing and Being Convinced

What should I learn in this lesson?

Rhetoric

- I can explain how an author uses rhetorical appeals such as ethos, pathos, and logos to create a tone that advances a point of view and reveals a claim. (RI5/RI6)
- I can detect and discuss bias, propaganda, and logical fallacy. (RI5/RI6)
- I can explain how an author uses rhetorical techniques such as parallelism, allusion, alliteration, rhetorical question, and repetition to create a tone that advances a point of view and reveals a central idea. (RI2/RI5/RI6)

Rhetoric, Persuasion, Argument, Propaganda: Each of these terms talks about a different aspect of the art of convincing someone to believe what you want them to believe. Whether you are reading about politics or viewing an ad, part of being an individual in society today is knowing when and how someone is trying to influence your opinion. In this lesson, we explore the basics of the Art of Rhetoric.

Ethos, Pathos, Logos: The Classical Rhetorical Appeals

Humanity has been thinking about how to persuade people for a long time! Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC) came up with the idea that we tend to use three fundamental types of persuasion: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. These are called the classical rhetorical appeals.

Type of Persuasion	Example
<p>Ethos — This kind of argument is based on shared moral values and calls upon an audience’s sense of moral right and wrong. These arguments often assert that someone has experience or relationship that deserves your trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "As a doctor, I am qualified to tell you that this course of treatment will likely generate the best results." ● “Our expertise in roofing contracting is evidenced not only by our 100 years in the business and our staff of qualified technicians, but in the decades of satisfied customers who have come to expect nothing but the best." ● “You know me – I’ve taught Sunday School at your church for years, babysat your children, and served as a playground director for many summers."
<p>Logos — This kind of argument is based on rational statements rooted in logic. These arguments often present data, examples, or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "The data is perfectly clear: this investment has consistently turned a profit year-over-year, even in spite of

<p>analogies.</p>	<p>market declines in other areas."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "History has shown time and again that absolute power corrupts absolutely." • "You don't need to jump off a bridge to know that it's a bad idea. Why then would you need to try drugs to know if they're damaging? That's plain nonsense." • "In 25 years of driving the same route, I haven't seen a single deer."
<p>Pathos — This kind of argument is based on specific examples of suffering or potential threats, these examples tap an audience's emotions — pity, fear, sorrow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "If we don't move soon, we're all going to die! Can't you see how dangerous it would be to stay?" • "Better men than us have fought and died to preserve this great nation. Now is our turn to return the favor. For God and country, gentlemen!" • "Don't be the last person on the block to have their lawn treated — you don't want to be the laughing stock of your community!"

In 1873 [Susan B. Anthony](#) gave [the following speech](#) in an attempt to convince people that women in American should have the right to vote. Sadly, Anthony died in 1906 before she was able to see progress in this area. However, this right was finally guaranteed by the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920.

Friends and fellow citizens: I stand before you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's rights, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any state to deny.

The preamble of the Federal Constitution says:

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people - women as well as men. And it is a downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government - the ballot.

For any state to make sex a qualification that must ever result in the disfranchisement of one entire half of the people, is to pass a bill of attainder, or, an ex post facto law, and is therefore a violation of the supreme law of the land. By it the blessings of liberty are forever withheld from women and their female posterity.

To them this government has no just powers derived from the consent of the governed. To them this government is not a democracy. It is not a republic. It is an odious aristocracy; a hateful oligarchy of sex; the most hateful aristocracy ever established on the face of the globe; an oligarchy of wealth, where the rich govern the poor. An oligarchy of learning, where the educated govern the ignorant, or even an oligarchy of race, where the Saxon rules the African, might be endured; but this oligarchy of sex, which makes father, brothers, husband, sons, the oligarchs over the mother and sisters, the wife and daughters, of every household - which ordains all men sovereigns, all women subjects, carries dissension, discord, and rebellion into every home of the nation.

Webster, Worcester, and Bouvier all define a citizen to be a person in the United States, entitled to vote and hold office.

The only question left to be settled now is: Are women persons? And I hardly believe any of our opponents will have the hardihood to say they are not. Being persons, then, women are citizens; and no state has a right to make any law, or to enforce any old law, that shall abridge their privileges or immunities. Hence, every discrimination against women in the constitutions and laws of the several states is today null and void, precisely as is every one against Negroes.

After reading the speech above, copy and paste examples of the types of classical rhetorical appeals in the box.

Type of Persuasion	Example from Text
Ethos — This kind of argument is based on shared moral values and calls upon an audience’s sense of moral right and wrong.	•
Logos — This kind of argument is based on rational statements rooted in logic. These arguments often present data, examples, or analogies.	•
Pathos — This kind of argument is based on specific examples of suffering or potential threats, these examples tap an audience’s emotions — pity, fear, sorrow.	•

Rhetorical Techniques: Using Language To Persuade

People who are skilled at writing speeches and advertisements know that there are certain language use patterns and techniques that gain attention and move emotions. A few examples of these kinds of rhetorical strategies are listed below.

<p>parallelism</p>	<p>When listing two or more parts in a sentence, using the same parts of speech in the same order to increase symmetry and increase intensity. ex. “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” (Charles Dickens — This is the opening sentence of his novel <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>.)</p>
<p>alliteration</p>	<p>Using words that start with the same letter next to each other to draw attention to the words. “And neither the angels in Heaven above / Nor the demons down under the sea /Can ever dissever my soul from the soul /Of the beautiful Annabel Lee” (Edgar Allan Poe — This is from his poem “Annabel Lee.”)</p>
<p>allusion</p>	<p>Making a reference to something outside the text and assuming that the reader or viewer knows about it. Many allusions are Biblical, Shakespearean, Mythological, Historical, or Pop Cultural. Ex. "Mildred ran from the parlor like a native fleeing an eruption of Vesuvius." OR "Montag stopped eating... he saw their Cheshire cat smiles burning through the walls of the house." (Ray Bradbury — <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>)</p>
<p>rhetorical question</p>	<p>A question used to support an argument by showing how obvious a certain conclusion should really be. These questions are usually not answered. For example, in Josephine Baker’s speech just before the MLK, Jr. spoke at the March on Washington, she talks about wanting to be able to go into a hotel in America and order a cup of coffee in the lobby, but not being able to because she is black. She says: “They were mad because I told the truth. And the truth was that all I wanted was a cup of coffee. But I wanted that cup of coffee where I wanted to drink it, and I had the money to pay for it, so why shouldn’t I have it where I wanted it?”</p>
<p>repetition</p>	<p>Using a word or phrase multiple times to build intensity in a speech. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a genius with repetition, as shown in this excerpt from his famous, “I Have a Dream” Speech, given at the March on Washington: “There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, ‘When will you be satisfied?’ We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: ‘For Whites Only.’ We cannot be satisfied as long</p>

	as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until 'justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.'”
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[The following speech](#) was given by [Nikki Giovanni](#) in 2007 at a memorial ceremony for shooting victims after 32 people were shot and killed during a shooting on the campus of Virginia Tech. Highlight and label the rhetorical techniques she uses to make her point.

We are **Virginia Tech**.

We are sad today and we will be sad for quite awhile.

We are not moving on; we are embracing our mourning.

We are **Virginia Tech**.

We are strong enough to stand tall tearlessly;

We are brave enough to bend to cry

And sad enough to know we must laugh again.

We are **Virginia Tech**.

We do not understand this tragedy. We know we did nothing to deserve it, but neither does the child in Africa dying of AIDS; neither do the invisible children walking the night away to avoid being captured by a rogue army; neither does the baby elephant watching his community be devastated for ivory; neither does the Mexican child looking for fresh water; neither does a Appalachian infant killed in the middle of the night in his crib in the home his father built with his own hands being run over by a boulder because the land was destabilized. No one deserves a tragedy.

We are **Virginia Tech**.

The Hokie Nation embraces our own and reaches out with open heart and hand to those who offer their hearts and minds. We are strong and brave and innocent and unafraid. We are better than we think, and not quite what we want to be. We are alive to the imagination and the possibility we will continue to invent the future through our blood and tears, through all this sadness. We are the Hokies.

We will prevail!

We will prevail!

We will prevail!

We are **Virginia Tech**.

Propaganda, Logical Fallacy, and Bias

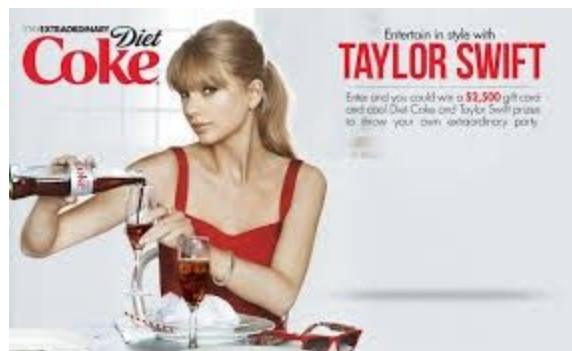
Biased sources have a clear inclination toward one side of a controversial issue. In an attempt to convince people to see their point of view, biased sources sometimes engage in **logical fallacy** or **propaganda**.

Bandwagon

This argument is based on the idea that it is a good idea to do what everyone else is doing. The fallacy of this argument is that the majority is not always right.



Celebrity Testimonial



This argument is based on the idea that people want to believe the same things that their favorite celebrities believe. The fallacy of this idea is that celebrities are often giving opinions about topics on which they are not educated.

Card Stacking

This argument is based on the idea that people will want to do something if they only consider the positive points in support of their argument. For this reason, in card stacking, the person making the argument lists

all the pros of a choice and none of the cons. The fallacy of this argument is that it over simplifies the issue.



False Choice




Here, the argument is stated so that it seems that there are only two choices. The fallacy of this technique is that there are more than just two choices.

Glittering Generalities

In this argument the fallacy is that a writer uses emotionally appealing diction so closely associated with highly valued concepts and beliefs that it carries conviction without supporting information or reason.



<p>Transfer</p>	<p>In this argument ad designers project positive or negative qualities (praise or blame) of a person, entity, object, or value (an individual, group, organization, nation, patriotism, etc.) on another person, entity, object, or value in order to make the second more acceptable or to discredit it.</p> 
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<p>Plain Folk</p>	<p>In this kind of argument the speaker presents him or herself as an average Joe, a common person who can understand and empathize with a listener's concerns.</p>
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Personal Attack (ad hominem)

In this argument a writer attacks someone's character or motive, rather than an attempt to address the actual issue at hand.



Appeal To Fear (ad populum)

The fallacy of attempting to induce acceptance of an unexamined or unproved conclusion by arousing the feelings, prejudices, or interests of a political party, mob, or any large group of people.



The Big Lie

Also called "alternative facts," "truthiness," "gaslighting," "post-truth,"

	<p>and “fake news,” this argument consists of simply saying the same lie over and over again in multiple media outlets until people begin to believe it.</p> <p>For example, beginning in the 1920’s the tobacco industry assured customers that cigarettes were neither unhealthy nor addictive. The makers of Old Gold cigarettes claimed “Not a cough in a carload.” And in 1994, James W. Johnston, CEO of R.J. Reynolds, told a congressional committee, “Cigarette smoking is no more ‘addictive’ than coffee, tea, or Twinkies.” These lies kept people smoking for decades.</p> <p>The reality, of course, is quite different. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 480,000 Americans die every year from cigarettes.</p> <p>In 1998, the four largest tobacco companies reached a settlement with 46 states to pay \$206 billion over 25 years to help cover the medical costs of smoking-related illnesses.</p>
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Find an advertisement online and copy and paste it in to this box. Then explain how the ad is an example of at least three different types of propaganda or logical fallacy.

They Say, I Say -- Summary/Argument Paragraphs

Choose ONE of the THREE non-fiction passages listed below, and write the “They Say / I Say” Response for it.

- Are you interested in how and why sports are important to people? Listen to part of an episode from the podcast [This American Life to explore this idea](#). This episode is called “Time Out” and each different act is about a different sport. Just listen to the “act” that interests you most, or read the transcript.
- Interested in science and psychology? Read this article about how the intervention [discussed in this study](#) might help high school Freshmen to control stress.
- Want some humor and philosophy mixed in with cartoons? Read [this slide show called “You’re Not Going To Believe What I’m About To Tell You” from The Oatmeal](#). It considers why it is difficult for us to change our minds once we already think we know what we believe.

Use the paragraph templates below to write two paragraphs about the non-fiction text you read. The bold words are the sentence frames that help you to transition between different types of critical thinking. The words in all caps that are underlined help to explain what information you'd put after the sentence frame.

They Say: Use Summary To Shows What You Learned From The Article

The general argument by (NAME OF AUTHOR) **in his/her work** (GIVE THE TITLE OF THE ARTICLE. PUT IT IN QUOTATION MARKS AND CAPITALIZE ALL IMPORTANT WORDS) **is that** (GENERAL ARGUMENT. THIS SHOULD BE IN YOUR OWN WORDS AND SHOULD BE BROAD. THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE YOU MORE THAN ONE SHORT SENTENCE). **More specifically,** (LAST NAME OF AUTHOR) **argues that** (GET MORE SPECIFIC THAN YOU DID WITH THE GENERAL ARGUMENT. YOU CAN USE SEVERAL SENTENCES HERE). **He/She writes,** "(QUOTE FROM THE ARTICLE. FIND A LINE OR TWO THAT IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SPECIFIC ARGUMENT. BECAUSE YOU'RE QUOTING, PUT QUOTATION MARKS AROUND IT)." **In this passage,** (AUTHOR LAST NAME) **is suggesting that** (NOW YOU NEED TO EXPLAIN WHAT THE AUTHOR MEANT WITH THE QUOTE. PRETEND YOU'RE TRANSLATING THE QUOTE AND YOU CAN'T USE ANY OF THE SAME WORDS). **In conclusion,** (AUTHOR'S LAST NAME)'s **belief is that** (CONCLUDE WITH A STATEMENT THAT BRINGS YOUR WHOLE SUMMARY TOGETHER).

I Say: Use Argument Writing To Share Your Opinion

In my view, I believe (TAKE TIME TO EXPLAIN WHY YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE AUTHOR/ISSUE PRESENTED). **For example,** (HERE YOU COULD BRING IN A REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE, CREATE AN EXAMPLE, DEAL WITH A SPECIFIC POINT IN THE ARTICLE AND EXPLAIN WHY YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE). **Although** (WHO DO YOU THINK MIGHT OBJECT TO WHAT YOU SAID? THE AUTHOR? A CERTAIN GROUP OF PEOPLE? NOTE: IF YOU ARE AGREEING WITH THE AUTHOR, THE AUTHOR PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE OBJECTING TO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING) **might object that** (WHAT WOULD THE OBJECTION TO YOUR EXAMPLE BE?), **I maintain that** (STATE YOUR OPINION, YOUR RESPONSE TO THIS OTHER PERSON OR GROUP). **Therefore, I conclude that** (BRING YOUR RESPONSE TO A CLOSE).

SOAPSTone WORKSHEET

Directions: Use The following as a graphic organizer to be used for **primary source document analysis** from the website. You will need to print one worksheet per document.

S What is the subject of the piece? What are the general topics/and/or/ideas contained in the text?

O What is the occasion? What are the time, place, and setting of the piece?

A Who is the audience? To whom is the piece directed?

P What is the purpose? What is the purpose or reason this piece was written?

S Who is the speaker? Who is the voice that tells the story?

Tone What is the tone of the piece? What is the attitude or emotional characteristics present in the piece?

What to Look For:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the Speaker?• The voice that is speaking.• Identification of the historical person (or group of people) who created the primary source.• What do we know about this historic or contemporary person?• What role does he play in an historic event?• What is the Occasion?• What is the time and place?• The context in which the primary source was created?• What is the Geographic and Historic intersection at which this source was produced?• Who is the Audience?• The readers to whom this document is directed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The audience may be one person, a small group, or a large group; it may be a certain person or a certain people.• What is the Purpose?• What is the reason behind the text Why was it written?• What goal did the author have in mind?• What is the Subject?• What is the general topic, content, or idea contained in the text?• Summarize in a few words or phrase. What is the Tone?• What is the attitude expressed by the speaker?• Examine the choice of words, emotions expressed, imagery used to determine the speaker's attitude.
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