Grade 12 - Journalism Unit 2 - Not "What" but "How": Rhetorical Analysis

Unit Focus

This unit builds on the prior one, as students will now need to be critical consumers of the media they encounter. They will learn about how authors structure their texts to make specific arguments. Students will analyze why authors make the stylistic choices that they do. Rhetorical appeals and devices will be studied, and students will also consider how some arguments are based in logical fallacies. In addition to looking at written pieces, students will also analyze visual texts (posters, videos, etc.).

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)

Standards

- Common Core
  - *English Language Arts: 11-12*
    - Reading: Informational Text
    - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1)*
    - Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2)*
    - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10). *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.4)*
    - Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.5)*
    - Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6)*
    - Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1)*
    - Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.B)*

Transfer

Students will be able to independently use their learning to...

T1 Evaluate the author's message and purpose, citing text evidence to support conclusions.

T2 Identify specific choices that writers make and analyze why they are made as well as their potential impact.

T3 Identify an intended audience and analyze the link between the audience for whom a text is created and the stylistic and rhetorical choices made.

Meaning

Understanding(s)

Students will understand that...

U1 Writers and speakers make intentional choices to persuade their audiences.

U2 Critical consumers of media must be able to identify flawed logic and rhetorical choices.

U3 Readers/viewers must be conscious not just of what is said in the news but also how and why the news is delivered.

U4 Visuals (posters, videos, etc.) can be used rhetorically.

Essential Question(s)

Students will keep considering...

Q1 Why do authors make specific choices (structure, format, style, etc.)?

Q2 How can rhetoric be used to manipulate an audience?

Q3 Why is being a critical consumer of media important?

Q4 How can the medium of a text impact its meaning?

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

- Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.C)*
- Writing
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1– 3.) *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4)*
- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1)*
- Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A)*
- Speaking & Listening
- Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4)*
- Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5)*
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.3)*
- Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's Artful Sentences) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.3.A)*
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5)*
- Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.A)*
- Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations. *(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.B)*

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- Analyzing: Examining information/data/evidence from multiple sources to identify possible underlying assumptions, patterns, and relationships in order to make inferences. *(POG.1.2)*
- Product Creation: Effectively use a medium to communicate important information. *(POG.3.2)*

Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill

Knowledge	Skill(s)
Students will know... **K1** Rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) and rhetorical devices **K2** Logical fallacies **K3** Considerations for an analysis of a visual text (color, shapes, font - size and type, music, tone of voice, etc.) **K4** Definitions of tone and connotation	*Students will be skilled at...* **S1** Performing a rhetorical analysis on nonfiction text, general media, satire, and fake news **S2** Identifying and debunking flawed logic **S3** Analyzing a visual text **S4** Analyzing the words and phrases to determine author's intent and author's bias