

RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES EXERCISES

LEARNING TARGETS

- Students will be able to understand rhetorical techniques, including emotional diction, formal diction, parallel structure, rhetorical questioning, allusion, and humor in order to identify and analyze the effectiveness of these techniques in speeches and texts.
- Students will understand how audience influences rhetoric in order to analyze the impact of audience on a speech.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- **ELA.9-10.RI.6:** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
- **ELA.9-10.W.1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
 - a. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
 - b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
 - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses 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.
 - d. Establish and maintain an appropriate style and objective tone.
 - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

INSTRUCTIONS

When prompted by the Rhetorical Techniques PowerPoint, complete the below activities. Refer back to the PowerPoint as needed.

EXERCISE 1: WARM UP

[Watch this video.](#) Then, in the box below, answer the following discussion question from the **Rhetorical Techniques PowerPoint**. Please remember, there is not necessarily a correct answer. This activity is just a warm up to prepare you for the upcoming activities about rhetorical techniques.

- a. How does Martin Luther King, Jr. get his audience to listen?
- b. Who do you think his audience is? Do you think his audience impacts how he developed his speech?
- c. Do you think Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech is effective? Yes or no? Support your answer with well-reasoned points

a.

b.

c.

EXERCISE 2: WHAT RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES WOULD YOU USE?

- Imagine you were asked to make the graduation speech at your commencement.
 - What rhetorical techniques would you use? Please choose two different techniques.
 - Then, develop an argument as to why those techniques would be the most effective.
 - Before you answer the above questions, let's look at an example:

Example	
Technique	Argument
Parallel Structure	<p>Parallel Structure aligns with my natural speaking style. Even in informal conversations, I repeat myself to make a point. By utilizing parallel structure in my commencement speech, I would be able to leverage by natural speaking style to improve my speech.</p>
Emotional Diction	<p>Graduation is an exciting, but often bittersweet time. Given that my audience for the commencement address is other graduates and their families, emotional diction will allow me to draw in my audience by using words that highlight the emotional intensity of this event.</p>

Now it is your turn:

Technique	Argument

EXERCISE 3: ANALYZING RHETORIC

- Revisit the [Martin Luther King, Jr. Speech](#) from the first exercise.
- Develop a thesis about its rhetorical effectiveness.
- Identify two rhetorical techniques he used, make a claim regarding if they were effective, and support your claim with well-reasoned points and evidence from the speech itself.

Thesis:	
Technique	Claim/Points

EXERCISE 4: WHAT RHETORICAL TECHNIQUE IS THIS?

Watch or read each of the following speeches and match each speech to its rhetorical device. Justify each decision with a well-reasoned claim and evidence from the speech. Some videos may utilize the same rhetorical devices. The most important aspect of this exercise is that you support your chosen rhetorical technique with a strong argument.

Speech	Rhetorical Technique	Justification
Women's Rights are Human Rights		
Remember the Titans Gettysburg Speech		
Cady Heron's Spring Fling Queen Speech , <i>Mean Girls</i>		

EXERCISE 5: CONSIDER THE AUDIENCE

- Choose one of the following texts to read:
 - [Malcom X “The Ballot of the Bullet”](#)
 - [LeBron James: I’m Coming Back to Cleveland](#)
 - [Hilary Clinton Women’s Rights are Human Rights](#)
- Develop a claim as to how the audience might have influenced their speech. Defend your claim with valid reasoning and sufficient evidence.

Claim:	
Reasoning and Evidence:	

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	5 (90 – 100 points)	4 (80 – 89 points)	3 (70 – 79 points)	2 (60 – 69 points)	1 (69 or below)
ELA9-10.RI.6	The student's answers in exercises 2 -5 demonstrate a deep understanding of rhetorical techniques and their impact on a speech or text.	The student's answers in exercises 2 -5 demonstrate an understanding of rhetorical techniques and their impact on a speech or text.	The student's answers in exercises 2 -5 demonstrate a general understanding of rhetorical techniques and their impact on a speech or text.	The student's answers in exercises 2 -5 demonstrate a vague understanding of rhetorical techniques and their impact on a speech or text.	The student's answers in exercises 2 -5 do not demonstrate an understanding of rhetorical techniques and their impact on a speech or text.
ELA.9-10.W.1	The student's answers in exercises 2 – 5 include strong claims that are well supported with valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	The student's answers in exercises 2 – 5 include claims that are supported with valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence	The student's answers in exercises 2 – 5 include claims that are somewhat supported with valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence	The student's answers in exercises 2 – 5 include weak claims that are vaguely supported with valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence	The student's answers in exercises 2 – 5 include weak claims that are not supported with valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence