

Table of Contents

What Is Rhetoric?	2
Rhetoric and Emotional Intelligence	8
The ABCs of Rhetoric and Terministic Screens	14
What Is <i>Kairos</i> ?	22
The Burkean Parlor	29
The Marketplace of Ideas	35
Rhetorical Listening	40
Fair-Minded Critical Thinking and Listening	48
Rhetoric and Civil Discourse Extension Opportunities and Assessment Activities	55
Notes	59
About the Author	61
About Sphere	62



What Is Rhetoric?

BY EREC SMITH AND KOBI NELSON

Overview

What is rhetoric? The term “rhetoric” is distinct from the term “communication.” Rhetoric is primarily concerned with persuasion, whereas communication is more broadly focused on the sending and receiving of messages. This lesson explores these terms and takes them one step further by asking students to understand and familiarize themselves with specific types of rhetoric. Specifically, this lesson focuses on the differences between the interpersonal (interacting with others) and the intrapersonal (interacting with oneself). Understanding these terms will set the foundation for students to be able to better understand themselves and others when engaging in communication that seeks to persuade oneself or another.



Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of rhetoric?
- What's the value of rhetoric for civil discourse?
- How can rhetoric be a bridge that connects people with diverse viewpoints?

Materials

- Journal
- Artwork that depicts a social situation or a person sitting alone
- TED-Ed Video: "How to Use Rhetoric to Get What You Want"

Vocabulary

For multilingual learners, front-load the vocabulary words below. Students will discover the meanings of these terms throughout the lesson.

- **Interpersonal communication:** Acts of communication that occur between 2 or more people.
- **Intrapersonal communication:** Acts of communication that occur within oneself.

Learning Objectives

- Define the terms "communication" and "rhetoric"
- Understand the differences between intrapersonal rhetoric and interpersonal rhetoric

Warm-Ups

Write or project the following prompt on the board or screen.

Journal Prompt: What is rhetoric? Choose one of the following quotations and explain why you think this most accurately defines rhetoric.

- "The duty and office of Rhetoric is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will." —**Francis Bacon**
- "Rhetoric may then be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever." —**Aristotle**
- "Rhetoric is the art of the good man speaking well." —**Quintillian**
- "[Rhetoric is] the art of moving the soul (psyche) by means of speech." —**Plato**

Discuss your journal entry with a partner. What quotation did you choose? Was it similar or different from your partner's choice? With your partner, compare and contrast the reasons for choosing your quotations, listening carefully to one another's thoughts and reasoning.

DEBRIEF

Why do you think we began today with these quotations? Besides these quotations being about rhetoric, how do these quotations connect with one another? How do these quotations differ from each other?

Define: As a class, come up with a working definition of rhetoric. An example of a working definition is: Rhetoric is using the available means of persuasion to achieve a goal.

Part I: What Is Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Communication?

EXPLORE

To better understand key terms, use the following visual literacy activities to explore communication. Choose a piece of art that depicts a social situation and/or a person sitting by themselves. Project this onto the board or screen.

Some suggestions of artwork include:

- *Nighthawks* by Edward Hopper
- *Waiting* by Edgar Degas
- *The Two Fridas* by Frida Kahlo
- *The Banjo Lesson* by Henry Ossawa Tanner

Silently view the artwork and respond to these questions on your own sheet of paper.

- What is happening in this piece of art? Describe the setting and the person or people depicted.
- Do you think communication is occurring in this piece of art? How do you know? Explain.
- Does the communication look civil? What tells you this?
- What strikes you as interesting about this artwork? Why?
- What questions do you have about the piece of art?

Say: Find a partner and share your responses to the questions posed about the artwork.

DISCUSS

As a whole class, discuss the similarities and differences between partners' responses. Then, explain the terms "**interpersonal communication**" (acts of communication that occur between 2 or more people) and "**intrapersonal communication**" (acts of communication that occur within oneself). If needed, write these on the board or a piece of chart paper for reference.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Ask:

- What kind of communication is occurring in the piece of art we looked at? Interpersonal or intrapersonal?
- When you wrote your thoughts down, what kind of communication was occurring?
- What kind of communication was occurring when you shared your thoughts with a partner?
- Do you think it was helpful to write your thoughts down before speaking with others about the piece of art? Why or why not?

Note: If teaching a class that is shorter than a block period, this is a great place to stop. Be sure to revisit the definitions of interpersonal communication and intrapersonal communication through a review and/or warm-up before jumping into Part II.

Part II: What Is Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Rhetoric?

Say: Now that we better understand interpersonal and intrapersonal communication, we will learn about interpersonal and intrapersonal *rhetoric*.

Remind students of the working definition of rhetoric from the beginning of class. Then, ask students to share their thoughts about the differences between communication and rhetoric. After having 2–3 students share their thoughts, move on to the next activity.

WATCH

As a class or in small groups, have students watch [TED-Ed video](#) called “How to Use Rhetoric to Get What You Want.” This video helps explain Aristotle's definition of rhetoric.



DISCUSS

After the video, discuss the following questions as a class.

- How does Aristotle's definition of rhetoric compare to the definition we came up with?
- What is "deliberative rhetoric," and how is it different from other types of persuasive speech?
- What are logos, pathos, and ethos? How do persuasive appeals help one to engage in deliberative rhetoric?
- How do you think deliberative rhetoric might be helpful when engaging in civil discourse?
- What qualities does deliberative rhetoric have that might help a person engage with ideas across diverse viewpoints?
- After watching this video, what is the difference between "communication" and "rhetoric"?

DEBRIEF

After the discussion, highlight the importance of understanding the difference between rhetoric and communication, being sure to connect the term "rhetoric" to "persuasion." Take a moment to revise the class's working definition of rhetoric and write that on the board or a piece of chart paper.

Ask:

- Now that you know the definitions of interpersonal and intrapersonal communication and rhetoric, what do you think the terms "interpersonal rhetoric" and "intrapersonal rhetoric" mean?

DISCUSS

Let students share their thoughts with a partner or in a small group. Then, have several volunteers share their thoughts with the whole class.

Say: Intrapersonal/interpersonal communication emphasizes how we talk to ourselves and others while intrapersonal/interpersonal rhetoric emphasizes how we persuade ourselves and others. Specifically, intrapersonal rhetoric deals with how we persuade ourselves, and interpersonal rhetoric deals with how we persuade others.

Note: Be sure that students understand the differences between communication and rhetoric as well as the differences between the prefixes intra/inter before moving on to the next lesson.

Closing the Lesson

Project or write the quotations from the beginning of class onto the board.

- “The duty and office of Rhetoric is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will.” —[Francis Bacon](#)
- “Rhetoric may then be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever.” —[Aristotle](#)
- “Rhetoric is the art of the good man speaking well.” —[Quintillian](#)
- “[Rhetoric is] the art of moving the soul (psyche) by means of speech.” —[Plato](#)

Then, ask the following questions of students individually (as an exit ticket) or as a whole class to wrap up the lesson.

- Think back to the quotation you chose at the beginning of the lesson. How has your understanding of it changed or deepened?
- How is communication different from rhetoric? What is the difference between interpersonal and intrapersonal rhetoric?
- How do you think rhetoric (as a whole) can help you be more civil in your discourse?

Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.d:** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3:** 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.



Rhetoric and Emotional Intelligence

BY EREC SMITH AND KOBI NELSON

Overview

This lesson helps students understand the relationship between emotional intelligence, rhetoric, and conflict resolution. Drawing from the wisdom of Epictetus, this lesson creates opportunities for students to examine how their emotional responses can impact their ability to communicate effectively with others. Reflecting on their own experiences, this lesson teaches students that emotional intelligence is a vital part of communication and civil discourse, particularly during challenging conversations.



Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of rhetoric?
- What's the value of rhetoric for civil discourse?
- How can rhetoric be a bridge that connects people with diverse viewpoints?

Materials

- Journal
- Whiteboard or chart paper
- A list of emotionally charged scenarios

Learning Objectives

- Understand how our emotions affect our intrapersonal (internal) rhetoric
- Explain the role of emotional intelligence when engaging in a rhetorical situation

Warm-Up

STEP 1

Review the definitions of intrapersonal and interpersonal rhetoric with students.

STEP 2

Write or project the following quotation by Epictetus on the board.

“Remember that it is not he who gives abuse or blows who affronts, but the view we take of these things as insulting. When, therefore, anyone provokes you, be assured that it is your own opinion which provokes you. Try, therefore, in the first place, not to be bewildered by appearances. For if you once gain time and respite, you will more easily command yourself.”

—EPICTETUS

STEP 3

Explain that Epictetus was a Greek philosopher who encouraged stoicism. Because of this, he thought deeply about how inner thoughts, or intrapersonal rhetoric, affect how we act.

STEP 4

Ask students: Knowing this, what are your thoughts in response to these questions?

- What part of this quotation speaks to the role that intrapersonal rhetoric plays in how we act?
- Do you agree or disagree with Epictetus when he says that it is your own opinion that provokes you to be insulted, not another person? Why?

Explore

Write or project the following journal prompt on the board.

Journal prompt: In your journal, write about a conflict or an argument you have been a part of. Be as detailed as possible in your description, and make sure your entry includes the following elements:

- The setting of the conflict
- The situation (Why did the conflict begin? What caused the argument?)
- What stake did you have in the argument? What stake did the other person have?
- The resolution of the conflict (if it was resolved)

Note: You will share this journal entry with a classmate, so be aware of what you share.

DISCUSS

Let each student discuss their journal entry with a partner. Then, ask for feedback and reactions to the exercise.

ASK

- What role do you think intrapersonal rhetoric plays in this situation (how did you talk to yourself about the situation)?
- What role do you think interpersonal rhetoric plays in this situation (how did you talk with others)?

Note: If needed, take a moment to remind students of the definitions of intrapersonal and interpersonal rhetoric by writing the definitions on the board or asking students to look back at their notes from the previous lesson.

Allow several students to share their thoughts with the whole class. and be sure that students remember that rhetoric involves using the available means of persuasion to achieve a goal.

Apply

To better understand the ways that internal rhetoric and one's interpretation of an event influence our emotional responses, ask students to individually complete the following table.

Scenario	Emotions I Felt Right Away	Immediate Thoughts About the Scenario
You posted a photo from a weekend hangout in which you're genuinely happy and feeling good about yourself. Someone comments, "trying too hard 😊."		
You notice that your three closest friends have started a new group chat without you.		
You volunteer an answer in class that you're confident about, but several students snicker.		
You overhear someone describing your style as "interesting" with a laugh.		
Your parent compares you to a sibling or cousin regarding grades/activities.		

SAY

Create groups of 3–4 students and analyze each scenario by responding to these questions.

- What assumptions are you making about the person or people involved in the situation?
- Are there any other interpretations that could explain this scenario?
- Is there any information you might be missing?

DEBRIEF

Ask students to share what they noticed about their responses to the scenarios in their small groups. What was new or surprising? What thoughts or assumptions changed when you asked more questions about the situations?

Connect

Remind students of this quote by [Francis Bacon](#).

“The duty and office of Rhetoric is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will.”

In small groups or with partners, have students discuss the following questions.

- How does Bacon's idea connect to Epictetus's thoughts about our internal reactions?
- What role does emotional intelligence play in our response to conflict?
- How does emotional intelligence help us have civil conversations?

Closing the Lesson

STEP 1

Have students take out a piece of notebook paper or hand out notecards.

STEP 2

Ask students to create a “mantra” or a one-sentence reminder that will help them reflect before reacting emotionally.

Example: Before reacting, I ask myself: “What is the story I am telling myself about this situation?”

This can be students' exit ticket, or they can keep it for future reminders.

Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.B:** Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D:** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6:** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6:** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.



The ABCs of Rhetoric and Terministic Screens

BY EREC SMITH AND KOBI NELSON

Overview

This lesson explores how our personal values and beliefs shape how we interpret and respond to messages. Through a hands-on activity involving photographs, students will learn how different filters can change their perception of an object. Following this, students will discover two frameworks for analysis (the ABC model and Kenneth Burke's idea of terministic screens) that will help them understand how a person's values and beliefs shape their interpretation. After this lesson, students will be able to better recognize their own terministic screens and interact more civilly in conversation.



Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of rhetoric?
- What's the value of rhetoric for civil discourse?
- How can rhetoric be a bridge that connects people with diverse viewpoints?

Materials

- Journal
- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Script of neutral phrases for terministic screen practice
- A collection of copyright-free photos
- Headline pairings

Learning Objectives

- Understand how our values and beliefs impact how we communicate with others
- Explain why the ABC model and the idea of terministic screens are helpful for engaging in civil discourse
- Analyze headlines to determine the ABCs that inform a person's beliefs

Warm-Up

STEP 1

Give students several images to choose from. These could be from a site like [Unsplash](#) or a set of chosen photos that you have curated for your class.

STEP 2

Ask students to copy/paste their chosen photo onto a document. Then, ask students to create 3 or more versions of their photo using a free online photo filter such as Canva.

When students have finished this, they should have four photos of the same scene, person, or object with varying filters. For example, a student's collection might look like this:



PHOTO 1 (ORIGINAL)

PHOTO 2

PHOTO 3

PHOTO 4

STEP 3

Ask students to share one of their filtered photos with another student. Then, in the same pairs, share the original photo.

STEP 4

Have students respond to the following questions on a sheet of notebook paper or in a journal entry.

- What was your interpretation of the scene, object, or person when you saw the filtered photo?
- How did your interpretation change when you saw the original photo?
- In what ways might the filtered photos you or your partner created mirror our language?

DEBRIEF

As a whole group, discuss students' responses to the journaling questions. Use the discussion to help students have a concrete understanding of the term "filter."

Part 1: The ABCs of Rhetoric

ASK

Show this quote from [Francis Bacon](#) on the board and ask students if they can recall the quotation from the previous lesson. Then, ask if their understanding of this quotation has changed based on what we have learned so far about rhetoric.

"The duty and office of Rhetoric is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will."

—FRANCIS BACON

SAY

This quote connects to foundational principles of how we see and process the world, which, in turn, shapes how we act. We all have values and beliefs that shape our perceptions and influence our experiences. Albert Ellis explained this in his ABC model, which stands for the following:

"A" stands for "the activating event."

"B" stands for "the person's beliefs (about the activating event)."

"C" stands for "the consequences of this belief."

Transition to the next activity by telling students that they are going to practice applying the ABC model to the rhetorical message of various headlines.

MODEL

Show students the following headlines.

- "School's Phone-Free Lunch Period Creates Space for Real Connection"
- "New Policy Forces Students to Surrender Phones During Social Time"

Show students how the ABC framework would be applied to these headlines using the questions above.

ABC Analysis:

- A (Activating event):
 - School implements phone-free lunch period
- B (Beliefs):
 - Interacting without phones is vital for creating meaningful connections with others
 - Phone use is a valid way of connecting and involves personal freedom
- C (Consequences):
 - Support for "unplugged" initiatives that encourage social interaction
 - Resistance to perceived loss of freedom and top-down control over personal devices

PRACTICE

Pair students and give them a set of two headlines (they do not have to be real) that imply two different interpretations of the same event. Some examples are:

- Headline Pair 1
 - "Updated Dress Code Promotes Inclusive Learning Environment"
 - "Strict New Rules Limit Student Self-Expression"
- Headline Pair 2
 - "Later Start Time Allows Teens to Get Much-Needed Sleep"
 - "Schedule Change Disrupts After-School Activities and Family Routines"
- Headline Pair 3
 - "Student-Led Initiative Brings Local Food Options to Cafeteria"
 - "Costly Menu Changes Drive Up School Lunch Prices"
- Headline Pair 4
 - "Technology Enhances Educational Efficiency and Personalization"
 - "Technology Threatens Human Connection in Education"

- **Headline Pair 5**

- “AI Assistant Helps Teachers Provide Personalized Student Feedback”
- “Automated Grading System Reduces Teacher-Student Interaction”

Have students use the ABC framework to analyze each set of headlines. You may use the following questions to guide their thinking.

A (Activating event): What is the activating event?

B (Beliefs): What are the interpretations of the event?

C (Consequences): What are the resulting feelings and actions?

DEBRIEF

When all students have completed their ABC analysis of each headline, ask several pairs to share their application of the ABC model to a couple of the headline pairs. Using the questions below, guide students toward a deeper understanding of the ways our beliefs shape the words we use.

- How do our beliefs (B) act as filters that affect what aspects of reality we notice and focus on?
- Why might different people looking at the same event (A) come to different conclusions (C)?
- How do the words we choose reflect AND shape our understanding of reality?

Part 2: Terministic Screens

Connect the ABCs of rhetoric to the idea of terministic screens by explaining that the term “terministic screens” describes the filters that often shape how we speak and how we interpret the world around us. One can think of terministic screens as glasses we wear that are “colored” by a key value or belief.

For instance, let’s say someone asks you, “What time is it?” If the term or belief that colors your choice is “hate,” you may interpret that question as a veiled test of one’s ability to tell time. If your term of belief of choice is “love,” you may interpret the same question as proof that this person trusts you to give an accurate answer and/or an opportunity to help.

MODEL

Tell students you will be modeling the next activity.

STEP 1

Write one of these phrases on the whiteboard or a piece of chart paper: “This should be good” or “What’s not to love?”

STEP 2

Explain how each phrase could be said and interpreted differently depending on one's values/beliefs and terministic screens. For instance, if one's terministic screen is "hope," the phrase "This should be good" might be stated in an upbeat way and hold an optimistic meaning. However, if one's terministic screen is "cynicism," the same phrase might be stated and heard sarcastically.

EXPLORE

STEP 1

Pair students. Ask each pair to choose to be PERSON A or PERSON B.

STEP 2

Give each student a value (or let them choose a value), such as love, hate, curiosity, caring, etc. Explain that their value is the terministic screen through which their character will see the world.

STEP 3

Hand out one script to each person. Tell students that their chosen value is the perspective from which they will be reading their part of the script.

STEP 4

Ask students to read the script (located at the end of this lesson) with a partner. If there is time, ask partners to read the opposite part of the script and choose a new value/belief and terministic screen to read from.

DEBRIEF

After all pairs have engaged in the activity, debrief with students about the following questions:

- How did your chosen values/beliefs shape how you or your partner read the script?
- What does this exercise show you about the role of terministic screens in shaping our beliefs about ourselves and others?
- What does this exercise show you about the role one's values/beliefs might play in our ability to speak civilly with one another about challenging topics?

Closing the Lesson

You can close the lesson by asking students to reflect on their learning for the day. In an exit ticket or a short journal entry, ask students to respond to the following questions:

- What do the letters A, B, and C stand for in the ABC model?
- What role do our beliefs play in the terministic screens we use to interpret the world around us?
- How do terministic screens affect our language use?

Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.B:** Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D:** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
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- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6:** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Terministic Screen Activity Script

PERSON A: Hey.

PERSON B: Hi.

PERSON A: Haven't I seen you somewhere?

PERSON B: I don't know.

PERSON A: Are you serious?

PERSON B: Yes, I'm serious.

PERSON A: That's typical.

PERSON B: What's typical?

PERSON A: You're kidding, right?

PERSON B: Are you?

PERSON A: Why are you looking at me like that?

PERSON B: Why don't you tell me?

PERSON A: This is interesting.

PERSON B: It is?

PERSON A: Well, that figures.

PERSON B: I should have known.

PERSON A: How could you?

PERSON B: Are you serious?

PERSON A: Yes, I'm serious.

PERSON B: Whatever you say.

PERSON A: OK, bye.

PERSON B: Bye.



What Is *Kairos*?

BY EREC SMITH AND KOBI NELSON

Overview

This lesson builds off previous lessons on emotional intelligence and terministic screens—the way one “filters” the world around them. Using hands-on activities, students will discover the value of *kairos* (the most opportune time to speak or act) in conversation. They will have multiple opportunities to engage with real-world examples that prompt them to think about the role of timing in rhetorical situations. This exploration will create space for discussions that connect the concept of *kairos* to the value of being emotionally aware of oneself and one’s situation, especially when seeking to effectively engage in challenging conversations with diverse viewpoints.



Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of rhetoric?
- What's the value of rhetoric for civil discourse?
- How can rhetoric be a bridge that connects people with diverse viewpoints?

Materials

- Journal
- AWARE framework
- Scenarios about content-related (or student-relevant) issues

Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of kairos in having and maintaining civil discourse with diverse viewpoints
- Explain why terministic screens affect one's ability to discern the "most opportune time"
- Demonstrate the use of kairos in a small group discussion about a difficult topic

Warm-Up

Brainstorm historically popular phrases that may have worked at one time but may sound out of date now. Write these examples on the board. If you are having difficulty coming up with ideas, a few phrases that may get you started are:

- "Don't touch that dial!" (Refers to changing a channel using a TV dial)
- "You sound like a broken record." (Refers to a warped record that might repeat the same sounds over and over)
- "Be kind, rewind." (Refers to ensuring a VHS movie began at the beginning before returning it to a rental store)
- "Roll down the window." (Refers to rotating a handle to roll down the window of older cars)
- "That's keen!" or, "Gee whiz!" (Phrases that were popular in the United States in the 1950s)
- "That's the cat's pajamas!" (Phrase in the United States in the 1930s that meant something of high quality)
- "You're the bee's knees!" (Phrase in the United States in the 1930s that meant a highly admired person)

Then, write or project the following prompt on the board or a piece of chart paper.

JOURNAL PROMPT

Choose one of the following phrases written on the board and answer the following questions in your journal. You may need to use the internet to learn more about the phrase you chose in order to answer the prompts.

- When was your chosen phrase popular?
- What did your phrase mean, or why was it used?
- If you used that phrase now, what do you think the response might be? How might family members respond? How might friends respond? Why?

When all students have finished writing in their journals, ask them to share their thoughts with a partner.

Explore

STEP 1

Ask students to think about the phrases they just discussed and share their thoughts about the role that time plays in phrases like these. Allow a few students to offer their ideas and guide students to the idea that using speech that is appropriate for a specific time and place is a key part of persuasion.

Note: You can remind students that rhetoric uses the available means of persuasion to achieve a goal. When you time your words well, you are using some of the “available means of persuasion” at your disposal. The best moment for a specific word or action to be performed is called *kairos*. Some people use the phrase “that was *kairotic*” to say that the action they observed was the best one for that moment.

STEP 2

Transition to the next activity by telling students they are going to practice thinking about *kairos*.

Ask for five volunteers to perform a “freeze-frame” scenario. Give each volunteer one of the following actions.

- Raising your hand
- Opening the door
- Standing up
- Taking out your phone
- Closing your book or laptop
- Putting on headphones/earbuds

SAY

Each volunteer will perform an action and freeze. Then, we will predict what should happen, what could go wrong, what the best timing is for the next action, and when this action would show bad timing.

DEBRIEF

Following the activity, discuss the connection between kairos (timing) and terministic screens. You may want to pair students or have a whole-group discussion. The following questions may be used to prompt conversations.

- How might a person's terministic screen affect when an action is taken? For instance, how might a person's terministic screen affect the time one chooses to take out a phone? Or put on headphones?
- How might one's culture or background affect one's terministic screen, and how might that impact how one views the "best" moment?
- When have your values or beliefs impacted your understanding of the "best" time?
- How might one's terministic screen and perception of the right time to act or speak affect a conversation with multiple viewpoints?

Connect

Tell students that kairos is important to consider when we think about how to have civil conversations with one another.

STEP 1

Connect the idea of kairos to the AWARE framework (as explained in Sphere's [Civil Discourse Primer](#)). Share each word of the AWARE acronym and show how each word shows one way to engage in conversation.

A = Assert your opinion

W = Wonder about others' ideas and thoughts

A = Accept that others have different opinions

R = Respect the dignity of the other person

E = Establish a goal for the conversation

STEP 2

Tell students that each word in the acronym needs to be used with kairos in mind because it is important to be mindful and aware of timing in order to engage in civil conversation. For example, even though asserting your opinion is at the beginning of the AWARE framework, it is not always appropriate to begin by immediately asserting your thoughts.

Or, if you know you are entering a conversation with people who strongly disagree with one another, it may be best to begin by establishing a clear outcome or goal for the group's discussion. In other words, using the AWARE framework to engage in civil discourse must be informed by the speaker's knowledge and awareness of kairos.

PRACTICE

STEP 1

Pose several scenarios that might cause some disagreement among students. You could create some scenarios that are specific to your content area or use more general ones, such as the examples below.

- A student committee has been created to determine whether a majority of the student council funds should go toward the art and theater departments or sports.
- Your group has been assembled on behalf of the student body, and you have been asked to determine how these funds should be allocated.
- The school board is meeting to determine whether or not cellphone use is permitted inside the school. You are on a student committee that has been chosen to represent the student body at the upcoming board meeting.
- Your school is deciding whether to discontinue open campus lunch privileges, and your group has been commissioned to give an opinion to the principal about this topic.
- You are on the dance committee, and your group is determining the theme for the upcoming winter dance. What theme do you choose and why?

STEP 2

Have students form small groups and give them one scenario to discuss. While students are discussing the topic of their scenario, they should actively use the AWARE framework to note when they assert their opinion, wonder about other people's ideas, accept another person's point of view, respect the dignity of a person who thinks differently, and establish a goal with their conversation partners.

DISCUSS

After students have been given time to have their conversations and note the timing of their contributions, lead the whole class in a discussion about their experiences. The following questions may serve as a guide.

- What did you notice about when it was appropriate/not appropriate to speak during the conversation?
- Were there times when you wanted to say something but it didn't seem right? Were there times when you said something that seemed awkward or a little "off"?

- What role did context play in your decision to speak or not speak at specific times?
- How did you know when it was a good time to jump into the conversation?

The goal of this discussion is to help students reflect on how emotional intelligence, intrapersonal rhetoric, and understanding terministic screens help us know when to jump into a conversation.

SAY

The AWARE framework helps us understand how we can engage in discussions with multiple viewpoints if we are mindful of kairos, or the most opportune moment to speak.

Closing the Lesson

To wrap up the lesson, ask the following questions of students individually (as an exit ticket) or as a whole class:

- In your own words, what does “kairos” mean?
- How is a person’s perception of kairos affected by one’s terministic screen?
- What role does kairos play in helping us have and maintain civil discourse?

Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D:** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6:** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3:** 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.9-10.6:** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.



The Burkean Parlor

BY EREC SMITH AND KOBI NELSON

Overview

In this lesson, students will engage in a thought experiment from philosopher Kenneth Burke called “The Burkean Parlor.” Engaging in this activity will help students think more deeply about how we persuade others and ourselves. Imagine walking into a heated discussion at a party; at that moment, you need to figure out what everyone is talking about and how to enter the conversation. This is exactly what Burke’s “parlor metaphor” explores. Through this lesson, students will have the opportunity to use what they have learned from previous lessons while gaining practical tools for entering and exiting challenging conversations.



Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of rhetoric?
- What's the value of rhetoric for civil discourse?
- How can rhetoric be a bridge that connects people with diverse viewpoints?

Materials

- Blank, white paper
- Discussion topics and late arrival stances
- Visual timer

Learning Objectives

- Examine Kenneth Burke's "parlor metaphor" and apply it to real-world situations
- Utilize rhetorical tools to engage in civil conversations with diverse viewpoints
- Evaluate the use of kairos in a small group discussion about a difficult topic

Warm-Up

Give students a sheet of blank white paper. Tell them they are going to draw what you are going to describe. Then, read Kenneth Burke's parlor metaphor.

"Imagine you enter a parlor. You arrive late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress."

Be sure to stop reading every so often to give students a chance to add important details to their drawing.

DEBRIEF

When you have finished reading and students have finished drawing, discuss the metaphor with students. Some questions to prompt discussion are:

- What is this metaphor telling us about the nature of conversation?
- What role does listening play in this metaphor? What role does speaking play?
- How does kairos show up in the metaphor?
- How does this metaphor mirror modern conversations?

Guide students to think about rhetoric like joining a party that has already begun. Help them understand that you wouldn't burst into a conversation that was already going on without pausing, listening, and learning about the topic being discussed. This is similar to larger conversations in society and academia—or what may be called “the marketplace of ideas.”

The Burkean Parlor Simulation

PREPARE

STEP 1

Set up your classroom so there are 5–7 conversation circles. Each circle should have 4–5 chairs.

STEP 2

Group students into small groups and assign role cards. Roles include:

- Host: Chooses the topic of conversation and begins the discussion
- Guests: Engage in the conversation as if they were at a social gathering
- Late arrival: Enters the conversation after 2 minutes have passed

It would work well to give the late arrivals a particular stance to take on assigned topics. This would ensure a lively discussion and could be a way to challenge students to figure out how to enter and exit a civil conversation with a distinct point of view. Some potential topics and potential stances for late arrivals to take are outlined in the table below.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND LATE ARRIVAL STANCES

Discussion Topic 1

- **Host topic:** Should social media have a minimum age requirement?
- **Late arrival stance:** Social media should be available for all ages with parental guidance.

Discussion Topic 2

- **Host topic:** Should homework be optional?
- **Late arrival stance:** Homework should not be optional, but it should be a reasonable amount.

Discussion Topic 3

- **Host topic:** Should community service be a graduation requirement?
- **Late arrival stance:** Community service is an important part of a high school education and should be required.

Discussion Topic 4

- **Host topic:** Should final exams be required for every class?
- **Late arrival stance:** Students should have the option to take a final exam or complete a project portfolio in every class.

Discussion Topic 5

- **Host topic:** Are dress codes fair and/or necessary?
- **Late arrival stance:** Uniforms are fair and would solve unnecessary debates about dress code.

Discussion Topic 6

- **Host topic:** Should school start later?
- **Late arrival stance:** School should not start later because students need to be ready for the real world.

Discussion Topic 7

- **Host topic:** Should PE be a required class every year?
- **Late arrival Stance:** PE should be required every year so that students can be healthy.

ENGAGE

STEP 1

Set up or project a class timer onto the board.

STEP 2

Have all late arrivals stand at the edge of the classroom and wait to join a group discussion for 2 minutes.

STEP 3

After 2 minutes, prompt the late arrivals to join a conversation and find their way into it.

STEP 4

Allow students to talk for 8–10 minutes longer.

STEP 5

Tell the late arrivals that they must exit the conversation in the next 3 minutes because “the hour grows late.”

DISCUSS

When all students have exited the group conversation, bring back the late arrivals and have the student reflect on the following questions.

- What did you notice about the ways that you and your classmates engaged in the conversation?
- What were the most challenging moments? What parts of the conversation ran most smoothly? Why?
- How well did the conversation flow when the late arrival joined? How well did it flow when the late arrival left?
- What strategies helped find the most opportune time to speak?
- What strategies helped keep the conversation going when diverse viewpoints were expressed and/or not everyone agreed with one another?
- What role did listening play in this exercise?

Closing the Lesson

- To wrap up the lesson, ask the following questions of students individually (as an exit ticket) or as a whole class.
- What are 3 guidelines you give a person who asks: “What is the best way to enter an ongoing conversation?”
- How can you connect today’s experience to engaging in challenging or sensitive conversations with others? What is similar and/or different?
- How does engaging in Kenneth Burke’s “parlor metaphor” add to your knowledge of what it means to use rhetorical tools to be better able to compete in the “marketplace of ideas?”

Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D:** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3:** 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.



The Marketplace of Ideas

BY EREC SMITH AND KOBI NELSON

Overview

This lesson is designed for a 50-minute period and investigates the value of free speech and the marketplace of ideas in a democratic society. Students will be able to explain why free speech is important to self-governance in a democratic society while reflecting on quotations from well-known Supreme Court justices. Engaging in a 4-corners activity will allow students to discuss important ideas about free speech and the marketplace of ideas. By the end of the lesson, students will consider the responsibilities of participants in the marketplace of ideas. This will provide a foundation for future lessons that focus on the value of rhetorical listening.



Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of rhetoric?
- What's the value of rhetoric for civil discourse?
- How can rhetoric be a bridge that connects people with diverse viewpoints?

Materials

- Journal
- *National Constitution Center* video: "The Role of Free Speech in Democracy"
- 4 quotations for the 4-corners activity

Learning Objectives

- Explain why free speech is important in a society that is governed by democratic ideals
- Connect the value of free speech to the value of the marketplace of ideas
- Investigate one's responsibility when engaging in the marketplace of ideas

Warm-Up

Show students [this short video clip](#) of Justice Elena Kagan by the *National Constitution Center*. Then, post the journal prompt on the board and ask students to respond in their journals.

JOURNAL PROMPT

- What does Justice Elena Kagan believe about free speech in a democratic society? Do you agree or disagree with her? Explain.
- In this video clip, Justice Kagan says that "thought, speech, and reflection on ideas" can help in governing a democratic society. What do you think she means by this?

DEBRIEF

Have students talk with a partner about their journal entry. Then, come back together as a whole class and ask a few students to share with the group.

SAY

Last class period, we participated in a simulation of Kenneth Burke's parlor metaphor. Thinking back on that for a moment, what role did free speech play in your conversations? How would your conversations have been different if your speech was restricted?

Note: You might bring up the fact that the late arrivals in the last lesson have restricted speech because they were told to express a specific opinion. Debriefing about this aspect could help students explore the idea of free speech more thoroughly.

Explore

Connect Justice Kagan's ideas about the role of free speech in effectively governing a democratic society to the metaphor of the marketplace of ideas by having students engage in the following activity.

STEP 1

Select 4 key quotations that speak to an aspect of free speech and marketplace of ideas.

STEP 2

Assign each quotation to one of the 4 corners of the classroom. Several quotations you might consider include the following:

- "The ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas—that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out."
—Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1919
- "The classroom is peculiarly the 'marketplace of ideas.' The Nation's future depends upon leaders trained through wide exposure to that robust exchange of ideas which discovers truth 'out of a multitude of tongues, (rather) than through any kind of authoritative selection.'" —Justice Abe Fortas, 1969
- "Every idea is an incitement. It offers itself for belief and if believed it is acted on unless some other belief outweighs it or some failure of energy stifles the movement at its birth."
—Justice Hugo Black, 1969
- "Debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open, and that it may well include vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials." —Justice William Brennan, 1964

STEP 3

Give students a chance to read the quotations and then ask them to choose the quotation they find the most interesting or compelling by standing in the corner of their chosen quotation.

STEP 4

Once all students have chosen a quotation, have them talk with other people in their corner about why they chose that quotation and what they found interesting or compelling.

DISCUSS

Using the discussion prompts below, keep students in their chosen corners and facilitate a whole-class discussion about the 4-corners activity.

- What is similar and different about these quotations?

- What does your chosen quotation say about the value of free speech or the marketplace of ideas?
- If each of these quotations were in our class's "marketplace of ideas," which is the most valuable? Which is the least?
- How did we decide as a class that these were the most valuable and least valuable ideas? Is this how the marketplace of ideas works outside of our classroom?

Use this discussion to garner student opinions about the quotations and their growing understanding of the marketplace of ideas. Students should begin thinking about how this applies to the reality of their everyday lives and the role that civil conversation plays.

Reflect and Connect

STEP 1

Pose the following question to students. Have them write in their journals or discuss with a partner.

How do you know if an idea is valuable and worth investing in?

STEP 2

After several minutes, ask students to share responses. Write students' thoughts on the board or a piece of chart paper. Some suggestions might include the following: facts are better than opinions; a person's experience gives credibility; ideas from leaders are more credible; scholarship is more valuable than the daily news, etc.

STEP 3

Ask students to recall this quotation from Francis Bacon

"The duty and office of Rhetoric is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will."

—FRANCIS BACON

STEP 4

Prompt students to connect Bacon's words to the marketplace of ideas by reminding students that the marketplace of ideas always provides the opportunity for ideas to flourish, whether they are good or bad.

STEP 5

Ask students this question: Thinking about Bacon's words, what is the responsibility of the person "selling" ideas and the person "consuming" ideas?

Closing the Lesson

Close out the lesson by revisiting the connection between free speech and the marketplace of ideas. If there is time, give students a little teaser of the next lesson by asking them what role listening plays in the success or failure of ideas in the marketplace.

Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D:** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6:** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3:** 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.9-10.6:** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.



Rhetorical Listening

BY EREC SMITH AND KOBI NELSON

Overview

This lesson explores the idea of rhetorical listening with the goal of helping students develop practical skills for engaging in civil discourse. Designed for a full 90-minute period or two 50-minute periods, this lesson begins with a visual literacy activity in which students interpret the series of Claude Monet's "Haystack" paintings as a spectrum. This thought is then applied to listening so that students see that listening is much more than simply hearing the words. Drawing from Wayne C. Booth's ideas of rhetorical listening, students will learn about the variations, purposes, and characteristics of listening. Students will understand that engaging in civil discourse requires more than just hearing what someone says, it calls for an approach that seeks to be open and curious to thoughtfully communicate with diverse viewpoints in the marketplace of ideas.



Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of rhetoric?
- What's the value of rhetoric for civil discourse?
- How can rhetoric be a bridge that connects people with diverse viewpoints?

Materials

- Journal
- Monet's Series of "Haystack" paintings from The Art Institute of Chicago
- Video clips that demonstrate types of listening

Learning Objectives

- Define the term "rhetorical listening"
- Identify the variations of rhetorical listening as described by Booth
- Explain why rhetorical listening is important for engaging in civil discourse

Warm-Up

Write or project the following prompt on the board or screen.

JOURNAL PROMPT

Read the following quotation by Booth: "I am not just seeking a truce; I want to pursue the truth behind our differences." Then, respond to the following questions in your journal.

- According to Booth, what is the purpose of communication?
- What is the difference between "seeking a truce" and "pursuing the truth behind our differences?" Do you think this is an important distinction? Why or why not?

Discuss your journal entry with a partner. Be sure to listen carefully to one another's thoughts and reasoning.

DEBRIEF

Ask several students to share their thoughts. Then, as a class, discuss the connections between Booth's thoughts and listening.

Explain that listening is an important part of the exchange of ideas that happens in the marketplace of ideas.

SAY

In this lesson, we will explore the role that rhetorical listening plays in civil conversations. Listening is a vital piece of rhetoric because it is how we better understand and communicate with others who have diverse perspectives and viewpoints.

Listening Is a Spectrum

STEP 1

Give students a handout of the series of Monet's "Haystack" paintings.

STEP 2

Display the slide on the board or screen, and give students time to observe each painting. Ask students to respond to the following questions:

- What colors do you notice in each painting? How are they similar and different?
- What emotions do these paintings evoke? What emotions do you think Monet wanted to invoke through these paintings?

DEBRIEF

Discuss the paintings with the whole class. Ask several students to share their thoughts about the spectrum of colors used in each and throughout the collection.

EXPLORE

Keep Monet's "Haystack" paintings visible, and group students into pairs or small groups. In their groups, students should analyze the paintings and discuss how they would arrange the paintings. (*Handout 1 at the end of the lesson*)

ASK

- What painting would be first?
- What painting would be last?
- What feature(s) did you use to arrange the paintings?

Possible ways to arrange the paintings include darkest to lightest; cool colors to warm colors; most dramatic to most serene; winter weather to fall weather; or morning to evening.

DISCUSS

Have students share their arrangements with the class. Encourage students to see their arrangements as paintings on a spectrum (of weather, time of day, color, etc.), rather than pieces of artwork that fit into a specific category.

ASK

- Why can these paintings be arranged in different ways?
- What is the difference between placing items on a spectrum instead of in categories?
- Are there clear divisions between each painting on your spectrum?

SAY

Similar to how Monet shows a visual spectrum of light, time, and color, listening exists on a spectrum. Booth, a rhetorician and academic, studied this and called it rhetorical listening.

Note: If teaching a class that is shorter than a block period, this is a great place to stop. Be sure to review the idea of listening as a spectrum again with students before engaging in the next activity.

Rhetorical Listening

DIRECT INSTRUCTION

SAY

Rhetorical listening is a kind of listening that goes beyond just hearing what someone is saying. It involves the way we approach listening, depending on our own intentions, purposes, and self-talk. In fact, according to Booth, the way we approach listening falls across a spectrum of purpose that ranges from open and curious to rigid and fixed. The names of these purposes have been adapted for a high school audience.



ENGAGE

STEP 1

Give students a graphic organizer with a table like the one below.

Type of rhetorical listening	Characteristics of listening
Openly curious	
Hopefully engaging	
Calculating	
Fearfully submissive	
Rigidly fixed	

STEP 2

Watch several video clips or listen to a few podcast clips that demonstrate different kinds of rhetorical listening. Some suggested videos and podcast clips include the following:

- Select episodes from NPR's Story Corps
- 60 Minutes clip: "Where Sir David Attenborough Draws His Optimism"
- Selected clips from *Undivide Us*
- Mr. Smith Goes to Washington clip: "No Place in a Man's World"
- Selected clips from "Senator Joe McCarthy on 'Face the Nation' in 1954"

STEP 3

As a class, brainstorm characteristics that correspond to the type of listening in the right-hand column. Note: Because listening is a spectrum, there will be characteristics that overlap.

DISCUSS

Put students in groups of 3–4 and ask them to discuss the following questions.

- What similarities and differences do you find among the characteristics of each type of listening?
- Why might someone engage in each type of listening? For instance, what might motivate someone to listen with open curiosity at one point and fearful submissiveness at another?
- What type of listening is best for engaging in civil conversation? Why?
- What type of listening is best for responsible engagement in the marketplace of ideas? Why?

DEBRIEF

After students discuss, let several students share their thoughts with the whole class. Guide students to an understanding that being open and curious is an important part of using "the available means of persuasion" at one's disposal.

Closing the Lesson

Project or write Booth's quotation from the beginning of class onto the board.

"I am not just seeking a truce; I want to pursue the truth behind our differences."

Then, ask the following questions of students individually (as an exit ticket) or as a whole class to wrap up the lesson.

- Thinking about this quotation, what role does listening play in pursuing "the truth behind our differences"?
- What kind of listening is the most helpful for engaging in difficult conversations with different viewpoints? Why?
- How does listening impact your internal or intrapersonal rhetoric?
- How do you think listening can help you be more civil in your discourse?

Common Core State Standards

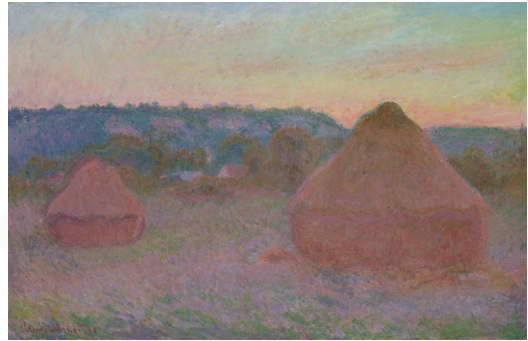
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D:** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3:** 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.9-10.6:** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
- **VA:RE.7.1.HSII.A:** Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments.
- **VA:RE.7.2.HSI.A:** Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.
- **VA:RE.7.2.HSII.A:** Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences.

Claude Monet's Haystack Paintings Student Handout

- Look at the following paintings of haystacks by Claude Monet. What would be the best way to arrange these paintings? Decide what order they should go in by writing the numerical order of each painting in the box beside it.



CLAUDE MONET, **STACK OF WHEAT**, 1890–1891, OIL ON CANVAS, 25 15/16 × 36 3/8 IN. (65.8 × 92.3 CM), SEARLE FAMILY TRUST; MAJOR ACQUISITIONS CENTENNIAL ENDOWMENT; THROUGH PRIOR ACQUISITIONS OF THE MR. AND MRS. MARTIN A. RYERSON AND POTTER PALMER COLLECTIONS; THROUGH PRIOR BEQUEST OF JEROME FRIEDMAN, ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, REF. NO. 1983.29.



CLAUDE MONET, **STACKS OF WHEAT (END OF DAY, AUTUMN)**, 1890–1891, OIL ON CANVAS, 27 7/8 × 39 3/4 IN. (65.8 × 101 CM), MR. AND MRS. LEWIS LARNED COBURN MEMORIAL COLLECTION, ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, REF. NO. 1933.444.



CLAUDE MONET, **STACK OF WHEAT (SNOW EFFECT, OVERCAST DAY)**, 1890–1891, OIL ON CANVAS, 26 × 36 5/8 IN. (66 × 93 CM), MR. AND MRS. MARTIN A. RYERSON COLLECTION, ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, REF. NO. 1933.1155.



CLAUDE MONET, **STACK OF WHEAT (THAW, SUNSET)**, 1890–1891, OIL ON CANVAS, 25 3/8 × 36 7/16 IN. (64.4 × 92.5 CM), GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. DANIEL C. SEARLE, ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, REF. NO. 1983.166.



CLAUDE MONET, **STACKS OF WHEAT (END OF SUMMER)**, 1890–1891, OIL ON CANVAS, 23 5/8 × 39 9/16 IN. (60 × 100.5 CM), GIFT OF ARTHUR M. WOOD, SR. IN MEMORY OF PAULINE PALMER WOOD, ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, REF. NO. 1985.1103.

- Why did you place the paintings in this particular order? Explain your reasoning in the space below.



Fair-Minded Critical Thinking and Listening

BY EREC SMITH AND KOBI NELSON

Overview

This lesson helps students understand the important role listening plays in conversations. Designed for a full 90-minute period or two 50-minute periods, the lesson begins with students co-creating a list of characteristics that show the differences between fair-minded critical thinking and self-interested critical thinking. Engaging in the Expert Panel Activity, students will practice evaluating their own listening patterns so that they can better understand when they are engaging in fair-minded or self-interested critical thinking. This activity is followed by an exercise in which students listen to a partner's interpretation of a challenging reading passage, practice asking for clarification, and build off that viewpoint with their own thoughts and opinions. Reflecting on their own experiences as listeners in two rhetorical situations, this lesson teaches students that listening is a key part of communication and civil discourse, particularly when engaging with a person who holds a different point of view.



Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of rhetoric?
- What's the value of rhetoric for civil discourse?
- How can rhetoric be a bridge that connects people with diverse viewpoints?

Materials

- Journal
- Whiteboard or chart paper
- 2 challenging reading passages (enough copies for each person in the class)

Learning Objectives

- Identify characteristics of fair-minded critical thinking and self-interested critical thinking
- Analyze one's ability to engage in fair-minded critical thinking
- Explain why it is important to restate one's understanding of another's ideas
- Evaluate one's ability to listen and respond in a fair-minded way

Warm-Up

Write on the board: What does it mean to be fair-minded? What does it mean to self-interested?

Have students write a response to these questions in their journals for 2–3 minutes.

DEBRIEF

Ask students to share their thoughts with a partner. Then, ask several students to share with the entire class.

Explore

Transition to a whole-class discussion by drawing a T-chart on the board. One side should have the heading "Fair-minded." The other side should have the heading "Self-interested." Brainstorm with students the characteristics that show a person who is thinking in a fair-minded way and a person who is thinking in a self-interested way.

Some characteristics that students might offer include the following:

Fair-minded	Self-interested
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks at all sides of an issue • Doesn't let their beliefs or interests cloud their judgment • Uses the same standards for everyone • Puts oneself in another's shoes • Tries to understand different viewpoints even if they don't agree • Judges ideas based on evidence, not on what a particular community thinks • Looks at all evidence before making up their mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only accepts evidence that serves one's beliefs or viewpoint • Ignores evidence that challenges one's viewpoint • Pays attention only to evidence that benefits them personally • Forms opinions based on personal benefit instead of what's true • Is very critical of opposing viewpoints and easily accepting of similar viewpoints • Judges ideas based on whether or not they come from their own community

Have students document or take notes on the list of characteristics you co-create. They will need this information for the next exercise.

Activity 1: The Expert Panel Activity

STEP 1

Ask for 4–5 volunteers to serve as experts on a low-stakes topic. You can select the topic for each panelist, or you can have your experts select from a list. Each panelist should have a different topic. Some suggested topics include the following:

- Best movie series (Marvel, Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, etc.)
- Most underrated TV show
- Best video game
- Best music genre
- Best streaming platform
- Best fast-food restaurant
- Best pizza toppings
- Best type of candy/soda
- Most valuable sport
- Most useful hobby
- Best book
- Most interesting fact about a sport
- Most enjoyable extracurricular activity

STEP 2

While your expert panelists are preparing their arguments, hand out a table like the one below. Have students fill in their classmates' names next to Student 1, Student 1, etc.

	Fair-minded thinking	Self-interested thinking
Student 1		
Student 2		
Student 3		
Student 4		
Student 5		

STEP 3

The audience listening to the expert panelists will be observing their own thoughts as each panelist speaks about their topic. Remind students to use the co-created list of critical thinking characteristics to identify moments they find themselves thinking in fair-minded ways and self-interested ways.

STEP 4

Each panelist speaks as an expert on their topic for 2 minutes as their classmates note their internal thinking during each speaker.

Note: To keep expert panelists involved when they are not speaking, hand them the same table the audience completes. They should notice their own fair-minded and self-interested thinking while the other experts are speaking.

DEBRIEF

Following this activity, create small groups of 3–5 students. Each group should debrief about the activity by answering the following questions:

- What expert topic challenged your listening skills the most? Why?
- Were you able to mentally ask more questions about topics you already knew something about or topics that were new to you?
- Did you notice yourself giving more attention to topics and/or experts who shared the same opinions or interests with you?

- When an expert shared something you disagreed with, what was your reaction?
- Did any topics trigger self-interested listening? What characteristics did you notice in yourself?
- Did you use any strategies to be more fair-minded when you found yourself being more self-interested? If so, what were they? If not, is there any strategy you wish you would have used?
- What surprised you most about your own listening habits?
- How might recognizing moments when you are engaging in self-interested thinking help you in other classes? How might it help you in your relationships with friends and/or family members?
- What did you learn about yourself as a listener through this activity?

Allow students to discuss these questions in their small groups. Then, conduct a whole-group discussion about the value of fair-minded thinking when listening to others with different viewpoints.

Note: If teaching a class that is shorter than a block period, this is a great place to stop and pick up again with Activity 2.

Activity 2: Listening to Understand

Draw students' attention back to the moments they had difficulty listening in a fair-minded way.

ASK

How would your listening and thinking have changed if you had been able to ask the experts questions?

Gather ideas from 3–4 students. Guide students to think about the kind of questions that would be best to ask someone who shares a different viewpoint.

Some examples are:

- Could you tell me more about . . . ?
- What evidence or experiences have led you to believe this?
- Could you clarify what you mean by . . . ?
- Can you help me understand what led you to this perspective?

STEP 1

Pair students. One partner should be Partner A, and one partner should be Partner B.

STEP 2

Give each pair a challenging passage from a textbook, article, or piece of literature. Ask each pair to read the passage independently.

STEP 3

During round 1, Partner A states what they believe the passage is about. You can provide sentence stems, such as “This passage seems to be about . . .” or “The most important point in this passage is . . .”

STEP 4

In round 2, Partner B practices stating their understanding of Partner A's response to the text. You might provide sentence stems, such as “What I hear you saying is . . .” or “I understand that you are saying . . .”

STEP 5

For round 3, Partner B builds on Partner A's understanding by saying, “Building off your understanding . . .” or “Your interpretation shows me . . .” or “After hearing your thoughts, I am thinking . . .”

STEP 6

Repeat steps 2–5 with another passage. Have Partner B begin by sharing their thoughts about the passage. Partner A will restate what Partner B says and build off Partner B's understanding.

DEBRIEF

After the activity, have students share their thoughts with one another and/or the whole class.

ASK

After engaging in this activity, what are your thoughts about the value of listening? What role does clarifying your understanding play in fair-minded critical thinking?

Closing the Lesson

Write the following questions on the board as an exit ticket or to prompt a whole-class discussion.

- What did you learn about your own listening and critical thinking habits today?
- What is one thing you would like to do to have stronger listening habits?
- How can you better ensure that you are engaging in fair-minded critical thinking when listening to others?
- How can listening help you better think for yourself? How can listening help you persuade others who may have different viewpoints?

Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D:** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3:** 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.



Rhetoric and Civil Discourse Extension Opportunities and Assessment Activities

BY EREC SMITH AND KOBI NELSON

Overview

Currently, in our polarized world, it is increasingly important for high school students to develop a sense of their own intrapersonal rhetoric. This takes emotional awareness, practice, and ongoing reflection that cannot be effectively evaluated by one assessment tool. With this in mind, we have developed some suggested assessment activities and extension opportunities that can be easily adapted. Each activity points students toward synthesizing their knowledge of rhetoric in practical and engaging ways while maintaining a focus on one's intrapersonal rhetoric and listening skills.

Recommended Opportunities for Assessment

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ESSAY

Students will choose two speeches that share different viewpoints on a particular topic. Then, they will analyze the terministic screens of the speakers and evaluate the effectiveness of their speeches in engaging different listeners. Students will consider the impact of kairos in each speech and give any recommendations they may have concerning the speaker's rhetorical timing.

RHETORIC IN THE MEDIA JOURNAL

Students will keep a journal that analyzes rhetoric in news, media, and/or entertainment. This journal will document what they observe and include the rhetorical characteristics and terministic screens of speakers. It will also explore the ways in which diverse listeners are being engaged in the topic (or not). After completing this, students will reflect on how this activity has impacted or changed their own viewpoints on news, media, and/or entertainment.

RHETORICAL PODCAST SERIES

In a small group, students will create a podcast series (3 or more episodes) that address real-world stories about challenges in civil communication. Speakers in each episode

should model strong civil discourse and listening skills. Each episode should also contain a 3–5 minute reflection in which participants reflect on their own use of listening skills, kairos, terministic screens, and emotional intelligence.

ARTISTIC REPRESENTATIONS OF LISTENING

Students will create a series of artistic representations (sculptures, paintings, drawings, etc.) that showcase the spectrum of listening. The project should include artwork that represents open curiosity, hopeful engagement, calculation, fearful submission, and rigidly fixed listening patterns. When the series is complete, students will write a reflection that explains the artistic techniques they used to show the spectrum of listening.

RHETORICAL DRAMA

In small groups of 4–5, students will write and perform a skit that shows what happens when a person doesn't pay attention to kairos, terministic screens, or intrapersonal rhetoric. The tone of the skit could be funny or dramatic if students clearly portray what happens when a rhetorical situation goes awry. After performing their skit for other students (or filming it themselves), students will write individual reflections on the activity that include their own listening and speaking skills during the group project.

Recommended Extension Activities

REAL-TIME RESPONSE JOURNAL

In a graphic organizer, students will track their internal responses to a live event (a speech, town hall, meeting, panel presentation, live conversation on social media, etc.). Observation points will include student thoughts about conversation patterns, listening patterns, and their metacognitive awareness of critical thinking. Student thoughts could be collected in a graphic organizer such as the one below.

	What conversation patterns do I notice?	How well am I listening? What questions do I have?	Am I engaging in self-interested or fair-minded critical thinking?
Observation 1			
Observation 2			
Observation 3			

CHALLENGING THE ECHO CHAMBER

Students will conduct research and observe a platform where they routinely receive and/or share information. Then, they will reflect on areas in which particular ways of thinking may not be presented or challenged. Following this, students will create a toolkit for anyone on the platform. This will have strategies and suggestions for users to engage in fair-minded critical thinking that values different viewpoints and perspectives.

RHETORICAL TIME MACHINE

STEP 1

Students will choose a significant historical event and research that event through primary sources, constructing a strong understanding of the various stakeholders involved.

STEP 2

Students will reimagine the communication included in the event and “translate” it for a modern audience. This can be done through sample digital media, such as podcast clips, short video clips, blog posts, online news sources, or social media posts. All communication materials must maintain the historical voice even though they are being reimaged in modern communication spaces.

STEP 3

Students will compare/contrast the modern strategies and historical avenues for communication. They will consider the ways in which listening and thinking critically about the messages received is impacted by the following:

- Speed in which information is spread
- Manner in which an audience receives information
- Platform's ability to accommodate diverse viewpoints
- Potential for others to manipulate the speaker's intended message

STEP 4

After their analysis, students will present their findings in a poster presentation, Google Slides presentation, or written essay. Their final product should contain key reflections and takeaways from their engagement with historical documents and their subsequent “translation” of the messages surrounding key events.

WHAT TIME IS IT?

Using the AWARE framework, students will observe a real-world conversation and analyze the timing of those engaged in conversation. They will record their thoughts on an observation template such as the one below.

When did someone ...	Assert their opinion?	Wonder about another's thoughts?	Accept a different viewpoint?	Respect the dignity of another person?	Establish a goal for the conversation?
Description of the moment observed					
Explain why kairos was or was not present					

DIGITAL CONVERSATION DESIGN

Students will design a hypothetical in-person or online space for civil conversation. After researching the strengths and weaknesses in existing spaces (such as social media, town halls, school board meetings, etc.), students will design their spaces and include clear guidelines for the community, a design for moderation, and intentional systems of reward. Students must create tools for productive disagreement as well as a plan for building community across diverse perspectives. These materials should be placed in a folder (digital or otherwise), and a Google Slide deck should be prepared so that students can share their space for civil conversation with others.



About the Author

Stephanie Hasty is an Honors English and AP Literature teacher from Missouri with more than 20 years teaching experience. In addition to authoring and helping launch Sphere's first English unit, Stephanie has been involved with content development and course writing at institutions including Missouri Scholars Academy where she designed a course about Race, Place, and Identity in Missouri for scholars. Stephanie puts the fun in learning by creating experiences that make her content unique for students such as including pop culture and art with her James Bond 007 content!

About Sphere

Sphere Education Initiatives is a nonpartisan organization that works with grades 5-12 educators and administrators to provide them with the knowledge, experience, professional development, and viewpoint diverse resources to bring difficult conversations on the most pressing issues to the classroom and equip our country's students to engage in civil discourse.

For more information please visit sphere-ed.org/publication/principles-civil-discourse-primer or contact Allan Carey, Director, Sphere Education Initiatives at acarey@sphere-ed.org

