Persuasive Writing Lessons

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LESSON PLAN

Developing Persuasive Arguments through Ethical Inquiry: Two Prewriting Strategies

Grades	9 – 12
Lesson Plan Type	Standard Lesson
Estimated Time	Three 50-minute sessions
Lesson Author	**Teresa Henning, Ph.D** Marshall, Minnesota
Publisher	**NCTE** National Council of Teachers of English

PREVIEW

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students use focused prewriting strategies to explore content and ethical issues related to a persuasive assignment. These strategies work best after students have established their topic and audience and have begun exploring their rhetorical (writing) situation as it relates to a specific, local problem about which they have some knowledge. These strategies would pair well with Joelle Brummitt-Yale's "Persuading the Principal: Writing Persuasive Letters about School Issues".

FEATURED RESOURCES

- Ethical Inventory Questions: This tool helps students discover ethical values that they possess and may share with others.
- Ethical Question Star: Students use this tool to discover what ethical values relate to a specific rhetorical (writing) situation of their choice.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

This lesson takes the position that "ethical inquiry is an important form of critical thinking and as such it is an important component of students' cognitive development." Including prewriting heuristics that encourage ethical inquiry when students are preparing to write practically focused persuasive pieces can help students create "sufficient, audience-based content for their work" and "understand that writing is a form of action and as such can have consequences for themselves and others in the world."

Further Reading

Henning, Teresa. "Ethics as a Form of Critical and Rhetorical Inquiry in the Writing Classroom." *English Journal* 100(6): 34-40.

[Read more about this resource ▸]

STANDARDS

NCTE/IRA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

RESOURCES & PREPARATION

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Flip chart paper and markers
- Computers with Internet access

STUDENT INTERACTIVES

Grades   3 - 12 | Student Interactive | Organizing & Summarizing
Persuasion Map

The Persuasion Map is an interactive graphic organizer that enables students to map out their arguments for a persuasive essay or debate.

Grades   K - 12 | Student Interactive | Writing & Publishing Prose
Letter Generator

The Letter Generator is a useful tool for students to learn the parts of a business or friendly letter and then compose and print letters for both styles of correspondence.

PRINTOUTS

- Lesson Overview Discussion Questions handout
- Ethical Inventory Questions
- Ethical Question Star (two copies per student)
- Sample Writing Situation
- Sample Completed Ethical Question Star
- Peer Review Guidelines
- What Ethical Values Did I Use?
- Sample Ethical Rubric (to add to an existing persuasive letter writing rubric)

WEBSITES

- CCCC Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants: A Bibliography
  This bibliography of print resources from CCCC provides links to codes of ethics from various professional

organizations that can be used to support the 'extensions' described for this lesson. These codes can also be mined for values to promote discussion as the class works to complete the ethical inventory questions.

■ Web Resources for Teachers from GoodCharacter.com
This web page provides links to writing, discussion, and other classroom activities that focus on ethics and character in the K-12 classroom. The resources are free, and the discussion resources provide tips for how to lead class conversations on ethics.

■ The Markkula Center For Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University
This online center provides a wealth of free resources on ethics across a range of disciplines. The resources are too numerous to list here, but the links to character and campus ethics might be of use to teachers who would like to link ethics to other projects in their classroom.

PREPARATION

1. Read "Ethics as a Form of Critical and Rhetorical Inquiry in the Writing Classroom" from *English Journal* 100.6 (2011) to get a sense of how this lesson works and the types of responses it can generate.

2. A persuasive unit should be in progress in the classroom; students should have a topic and audience. If a persuasive unit is not already in progress, it is recommended that teachers use Joelle Brummitt-Yale's "Persuading the Principal: Writing Persuasive Letters about School Issues" to prepare for this lesson.

3. Write out your own answers to the questions on the Lesson Overview Discussion Questions handout. Use the Lesson Overview Discussion Questions handout to guide whole class discussion and overview the lesson (see also directions on the handout).

4. Gather flip chart paper and markers.

5. Make copies of the following materials for students:
   ■ Ethical Inventory Questions
   ■ Ethical Question Star (two copies per student)
   ■ Sample Writing Situation
   ■ Sample Completed Ethical Question Star
   ■ Peer Review Guidelines
   ■ What Ethical Values Did I Use?
   ■ Sample Ethical Rubric (to add to an existing persuasive letter writing rubric)

6. Test the Persuasion Map and Letter Generator student interactives and make sure that you have the appropriate software installed for them to run effectively. You will need computers with internet access for each student to use these interactives. If you need additional help with these interactives, please visit our Technical Help page.

7. Plan for computer use on Session 3 of this lesson so that students can access the Persuasion Map interactive and for when students are ready to format their final drafts as letters and reflect on their use of ethical values so that students can use the Letter Generator interactive.

8. Add an ethical component to the Peer Review Guidelines for Persuasive Letters (see Student Assessment/Reflection section of this lesson for more details).

9. Add an ethical component to the assessment of student work by modifying the ReadWriteThink Rubric for Persuasive Letters (see **Student Assessment/Reflection section** of this lesson for more details).

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

Students will:

■ work cooperatively to understand what ethical values they already possess and how their culture has shaped those values.

■ learn about and use a new prewriting heuristics to consider ethical values when developing persuasive messages.

■ make use of ethical values when drafting persuasive messages.

SESSION ONE

1. Review the questions/answers to the Lesson Overview Discussion Questions handout and use the lesson overview questions to guide a brief, 5 to 10 minute general discussion about ethics and persuasive writing.
2. After the class has a chance to answer the questions, be sure to also share your answers to the questions.
3. Make sure all students have copies of the Ethical Inventory Questions.
4. Copy the first question from the Ethical Inventory Questions hadnout onto a piece of flip chart paper (or you may choose to use an overhead, a whiteboard, a computer with LCD projector, etc.; the important part is that these questions/responses can be saved for later sessions).
5. Engage the whole class in completing the first ethical inventory question together while recording the class's answers to the Ethical Inventory Questions on the flip chart paper. Here are some sample answers and suggestions for each question:

   - **Discovering values related to personal ethics**: What makes for a good person? Neighbor? Friend? Parent? Sibling?

     - Some common answers to this question include: a good person is fair, honest and shares. A good neighbor helps other neighbors in need, respects others rights by not playing music too loud and by keeping up his/her property. A good friend is someone who won't tell my secrets. A good parent is someone who cares, helps and loves me even when I do wrong. A good sibling is much like a good parent or friend. He/she is someone I can trust. If students get stuck on this set of questions, ask them to think of their favorite person, neighbor, parent, teacher, friend, etc. and describe that person to the class. The good traits that are ethical the teacher should record. For instance, a friend who keeps secrets is one who exhibits the ethical value of trustworthiness.

   - **Discovering values related to social ethics of care**: How do the people in the first question show that they care for one another? Common answers to this question include actions such as sharing, giving, helping, and forgiving. If students get stuck, as them to think of a time when someone helped them. Ask them to report out what kind of help they received and align it to ethical values. For instance, if a parent spent a lot of time helping a child with homework, a value the parent may have exhibited is patience.

   - **Discovering values related to social utilitarian ethics**: What are some actions people take to make the world a better place? What makes these actions good? Here, it might be helpful for students who get stuck to brainstorm about real people who made some aspect of the student's home, school, church, neighborhood, town, county, country or world better. Starting with examples from the news of people helping others is also a good idea. Some common actions people take to make the world a better place include: responding to fix negative consequences that they did not create such as cleaning up animals after an oil spill, sacrificing something important to save or care for another life such as ruining a favorite, expensive pair of shoes or outfit to pull someone else out of harm's way.

   - **Discovering values related to social policies/rules**: What makes for a good organization? A school? A church? A corporation? A government?

     - Here again, looking for actions from the news that relate to organizations might be a good idea. For instance, Purina recently donated food to animal shelters in need. An area school gathered items for a food pantry. Our government gave money to people in Japan after the earthquake and so on. Asking students what makes these actions good ones will get to ethical values such as caring, sharing, responsibility, respect, and many others.

   - **Discovering values related to social rights/laws and rules**: What rights, rules, and laws are important to you as a citizen of the United States? As a member of this school? As a member of your church? As a member of your town? Here teachers may want to be prepared to bring in the bill of rights to the discussion as well as the preamble to the constitution. Both documents point to ethical values we have as Americans. Some of these values include, the belief that all people are created equal, have the right to pursue happiness and have the right to free speech. The teacher might provide these answers to get the discussion started and then ask for other examples.

   - **Discovering values related to conservation**: What do people do to care for the earth, its air and water, and its plants and animals? What makes these actions good? Here again examples from the news about protecting the health of the environment can get students discussing. For instance, Americans are being encouraged to go green by using public transportation, car pooling, and other means of

transportation such as walking and biking. The teacher might ask the class the positive effects that these alternatives yield to get at ethical values.

6. Repeat steps 5-6 until all answers are complete.

7. Flip chart answers should be hung on the walls and used in session two.

8. This session can be altered to accommodate small group work by using the Jigsaw Strategy. In the Jigsaw Strategy, students work in teams to create content for themselves and their peers. The teacher must first model out loud how to create this content. In the case of the ethical inventory questions, the teacher should model how she or he would answer one set of questions. After modeling, the teacher should point out key features the teams should seek to mimic when creating their answers. For more specifics about how to transition from this modeling to group work, refer to the Jigsaw Strategy Guide.

SESSION TWO

1. Hang the flip chart paper up in the classroom for reference during this session.

2. Invite the class to take no more than 10 minutes to get up and review the flip charts. As they review the charts, students should take notes about what commonalities and differences they see in the values displayed on the charts.

3. In round-robin fashion, have students report out the commonalities and differences they noted in step 2.

4. Make sure students have copies of both the Sample Writing Situation and a blank Ethical Question Star .

5. Using the Sample Writing Situation and working as a whole class, guide the class in completing the Ethical Question Star for the rhetorical writing situation. When the class gets stuck, be sure to point out the flip chart answers hanging around the classroom and ask them if anything from the chart can be used to answer each question.

6. After the discussion, share with students the Sample Completed Ethical Question Star for this writing situation. Ask the class how the student who completed the star could have used the star to help him or her write a persuasive letter. Record these answers on the board and use them to reinforce to students the need for each of them to complete their own question star on this topic.

7. Once steps 1-6 are finished, students should work on completing a question star of their own for their own writing situation. Students should be allowed to work in pairs or larger teams so that they can consult each other for help. Students should also be encouraged to look at the flip chart answers for help.

8. For homework, students should finish their ethical question stars and bring them to the next class period.

SESSION THREE

1. Divide students into groups of three.

2. Direct groups to share their stars in round-robin fashion with the rest of the group.

3. The group members should respond to each star by offering one praise statement and one suggestion. For instance, the group might note that one value will work well in the student's paper (a praise comment), and that the student should add something about fairness to his/her star (a suggestion comment).

4. The group should finish its work in no more than 20 minutes.

5. Once all the group discussion is complete, ask the class how they might use the details from their stars to write their papers.

6. Using the Ethical Question Star the whole class completed for the Sample Writing Situation, ask the class how ideas from the question star can be used to complete the persuasive map interactive.

7. Once the whole class work is finished, students should work to complete a Persuasion Map for their own papers using the interactive. Students should be allowed to work in pairs or larger teams so that they can consult each other for help.

8. Before students are sent to work on their own, be sure to share with them the assessment tool that you've created to help guide them through the assignment (quite possibly a persuasive rubric with the addition of the Sample Ethical Rubric). Be sure to allow time for student questions to make sure they understand what is expected of them.

9. Teachers should be prepared to follow these prewriting sessions with drafting, reviewing, and revising lessons that they would usually do for any writing unit.

EXTENSIONS

- Have students use their choice of the ethical inventory questions or the ethical question star to interview their intended audience. After interviews are complete, have students informally report to the class what they learned from their interview and how they might apply what they learned to their project. The *ReadWriteThink* Tip Helping a Teen Prepare for an Interview provides a video and a list of process-based strategies students can follow for a successful interview.

- Have students do internet research on ethical values by searching for 'codes of ethics' related to any of the following: their topic choices, an area of interest or hobby, or a career choice. After research is complete, have students informally share with the class how what they found is similar and different from the ethical values the class reported while completing the ethical inventory questions. To prepare their findings for the class presentation, students can use the *ReadWriteThink* Venn Diagram Interactive.

- Have groups of students create a presentation or multimedia project in which they take a position on what it means to be a good person in the 21st-century. In developing ideas for this project, students should use the ethical inventory questions to interview others on this topic, and they should research 'codes of ethics' on the internet related to their areas of interest. Students should also do research to discover 'role models' who personify their view of what it means to be a good person. The goal of the project should be to encourage students to synthesize other perspectives in creating a comprehensive portrait of what it means to be a good person in the 21st-century. Creating a PowerPoint poster that students 'deliver' to the class is one way to put this idea into practice. Traci Gardner's *ReadWriteThink* Lesson Designing Effective Poster Presentations provides strategies for creating such posters.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT/REFLECTIONS

- Observe student discussions and in class work; prepare to assist and ask guiding questions to help students generate ethical values and relate them to their writing. Some guiding questions that can help students discover their values include: what about this issue upsets you? Why should people care about this issue? If nothing is done to resolve this problem, who will be hurt? Will any laws be broken if nothing is done?

- Add an ethical component to the Peer Review Guidelines for Persuasive Letters. Including an ethical component can be as simple as inserting this prompt into the peer review handout: Identify the ethical values the writer has used in the letter. How well do these values relate to the writer's argument? What values, if any, should be added to or removed from the letter?

- Ask students to reflect on their use of ethical values and thinking when they have completed their final project by attaching a short, reflective letter to their finished work. See the print out What Ethical Values Did I Use? for more details.

- Add an ethical component (see the sample ethical rubric) to the Rubric for Persuasive Letters (be sure to share this rubric with students before their assignment is given).

RELATED RESOURCES

LESSON PLANS

Grades 3 – 5 | Lesson Plan | Standard Lesson
Can You Convince Me? Developing Persuasive Writing

Through a classroom game and resource handouts, students learn about the techniques used in persuasive oral arguments and apply them to independent persuasive writing activities.

Grades 9 – 12 | Lesson Plan | Standard Lesson
Communicating on Local Issues: Exploring Audience in Persuasive Letter Writing

Students will research a local issue, and then write letters to two different audiences, asking readers to take a related action or adopt a specific position on the issue.

Grades **6 - 8** | Lesson Plan | Standard Lesson
Students as Creators: Exploring Copyright

This lesson gives students the tools they need to consider the ethical issues surrounding use and ownership of copyrighted materials.

Grades **6 - 8** | Lesson Plan | Standard Lesson
Persuading the Principal: Writing Persuasive Letters About School Issues

Students learn that you don't have to raise your voice to raise a point. Writing a persuasive letter to your principal is a great way to get your opinions heard.

STUDENT INTERACTIVES

Grades **3 - 12** | Student Interactive | Organizing & Summarizing
Persuasion Map

The Persuasion Map is an interactive graphic organizer that enables students to map out their arguments for a persuasive essay or debate.

Grades **K - 12** | Student Interactive | Writing & Publishing Prose
Letter Generator

The Letter Generator is a useful tool for students to learn the parts of a business or friendly letter and then compose and print letters for both styles of correspondence.

STRATEGY GUIDES

Grades **5 - 12** | Strategy Guide
Using the RAFT Writing Strategy

This strategy guide introduces the RAFT technique and offers practical ideas for using this technique to teach students to experiment with various perspectives in their writing.

Grades **3 - 8** | Strategy Guide
Using the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning Technique

In this strategy guide, you will learn how to organize students and texts to allow for learning that meets the diverse needs of students but keeps student groups flexible.

Grades **6 - 12** | Strategy Guide
Developing Persuasive Writing Strategies

This strategy guide describes the techniques used in effective persuasive writing and shares activities you can use to help students understand and use persuasion in their writing and critical thinking.

PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY

Grades **9 - 12** | Professional Library | Journal
Ethics as a Form of Critical and Rhetorical Inquiry in the Writing Classroom

What can improve students' engagement in persuasive writing? A strong ethical dilemma and strategies for developing intelligent responses.

COMMENTS

■ **Published Comments**

Daniel Emery
December 18, 2013

I would not put research and big names into categories apart from ethos, pathos, and logos. Most claims to authority are logical appeals or ethical appeals. While I understand that they add concreteness, it makes it harder to understand the relationship between rhetorical authority and outside sources.

It might be useful to import some of the Toulmin model of argument to make the relationships between claims and data more apparent.

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Thinkfinity | *verizon*foundation

Developing Persuasive Argument through Ethical Inquiry:
Two Prewriting Strategies

Lesson Overview Discussion Questions

Directions: This handout is for teachers to use to develop an 'overview' of the ethics lesson for their students. Teachers should do the following with the handout:

1. Answer the questions on the handout;

2. Use the questions to guide a whole class discussion;

3. Share their answers to the questions with the class AFTER students have first tried to answer the questions themselves.

Lesson Overview Discussion/Lecture Questions

1. What does the word ethics mean to you? (Possible answers could include: being a good person, doing what is right, doing no harm…)

2. Where do ethics come from? (Possible answers could include: from my church, from my parents, from my teachers, from a text like the Bible or the Koran or the Torah…)

3. Why is it important to use ethical behavior when writing persuasively? (Possible answers include: it will give me more to write about, the audience will trust my advice, the audience will do what I suggest, it is personally important to me to do the right thing, I want others to be proud of my work…)
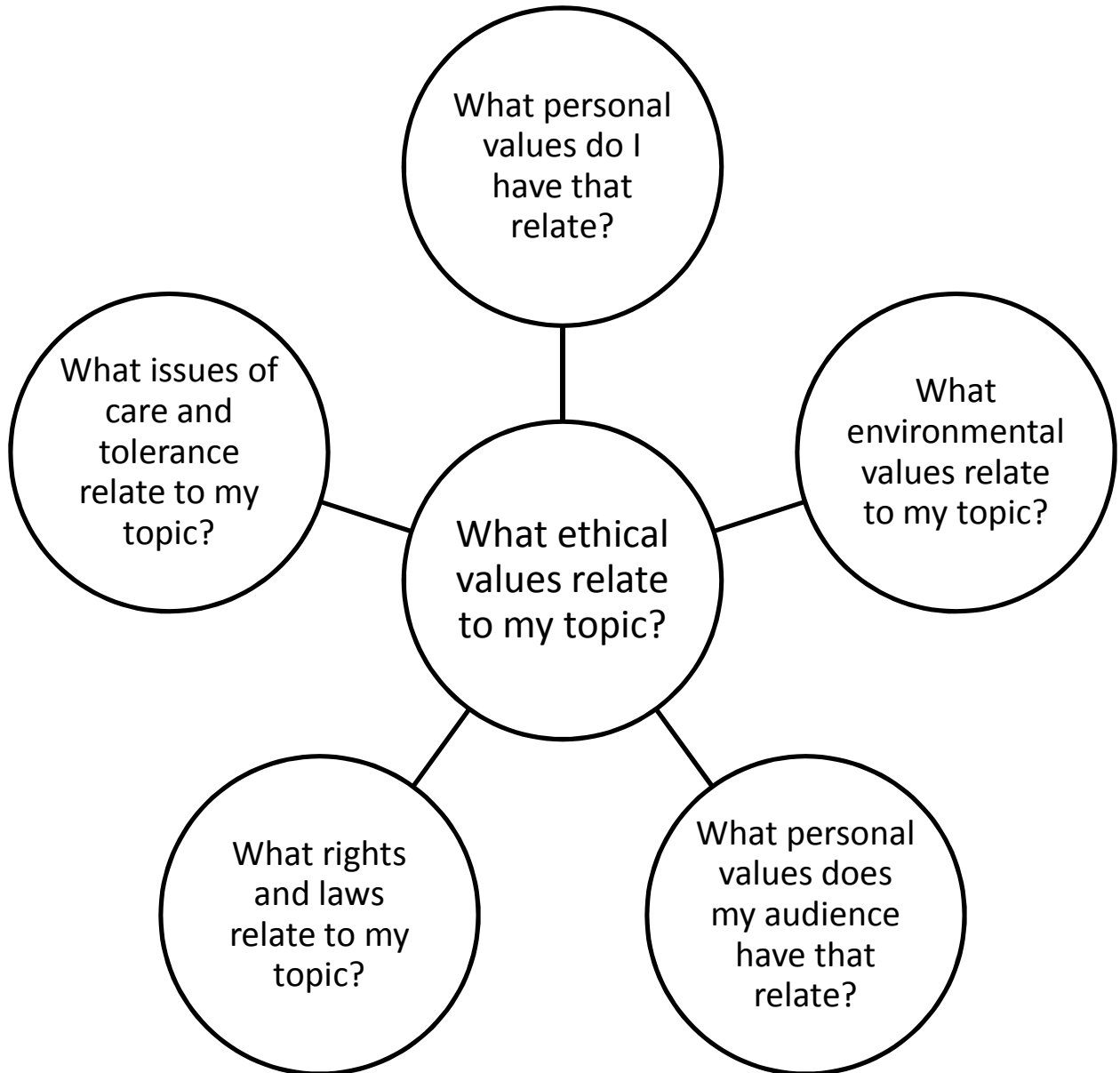
Ethical Inventory Questions

(Derived from Richard Johnson-Sheehan's Ethical Categories)

1. **Discovering values related to personal ethics:** What makes for a good person? Neighbor? Friend? Parent? Sibling?

2. **Discovering values related to social ethics of care:** How do the people in the first question show that they care for one another?

3. **Discovering values related to social utilitarian ethics:** What are some actions people take to make the world a better place? What makes these actions good?

4. **Discovering values related to social policies/rules:** What makes for a good organization? A school? A church? A corporation? A government?

5. **Discovering values related to social rights/laws and rules:** What rights, rules, and laws are important to you as a citizen of the United States? As a member of this school? As a member of your church? As a member of your town?

6. **Discovering values related to conservation:** What do people do to care for the earth, its air and water, and its plants and animals? What makes these actions good?

Ethical Question Star for Exploring a Rhetorical Situation

(Derived from Richard Johnson-Sheehan's Ethical Categories)

What personal values do I have that relate?

What issues of care and tolerance relate to my topic?

What environmental values relate to my topic?

What ethical values relate to my topic?

What rights and laws relate to my topic?

What personal values does my audience have that relate?

Source: Johnson-Sheehan, Richard. Technical Communication Today. 3rd ed. New York: Pearson, 2010. Print.

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Sample Writing Situation

The Situation:

Imagine you are a high school student who makes regular use of your school's football field because you are involved in football, band, cheerleading, poms, or some other activity that requires you to use the field.
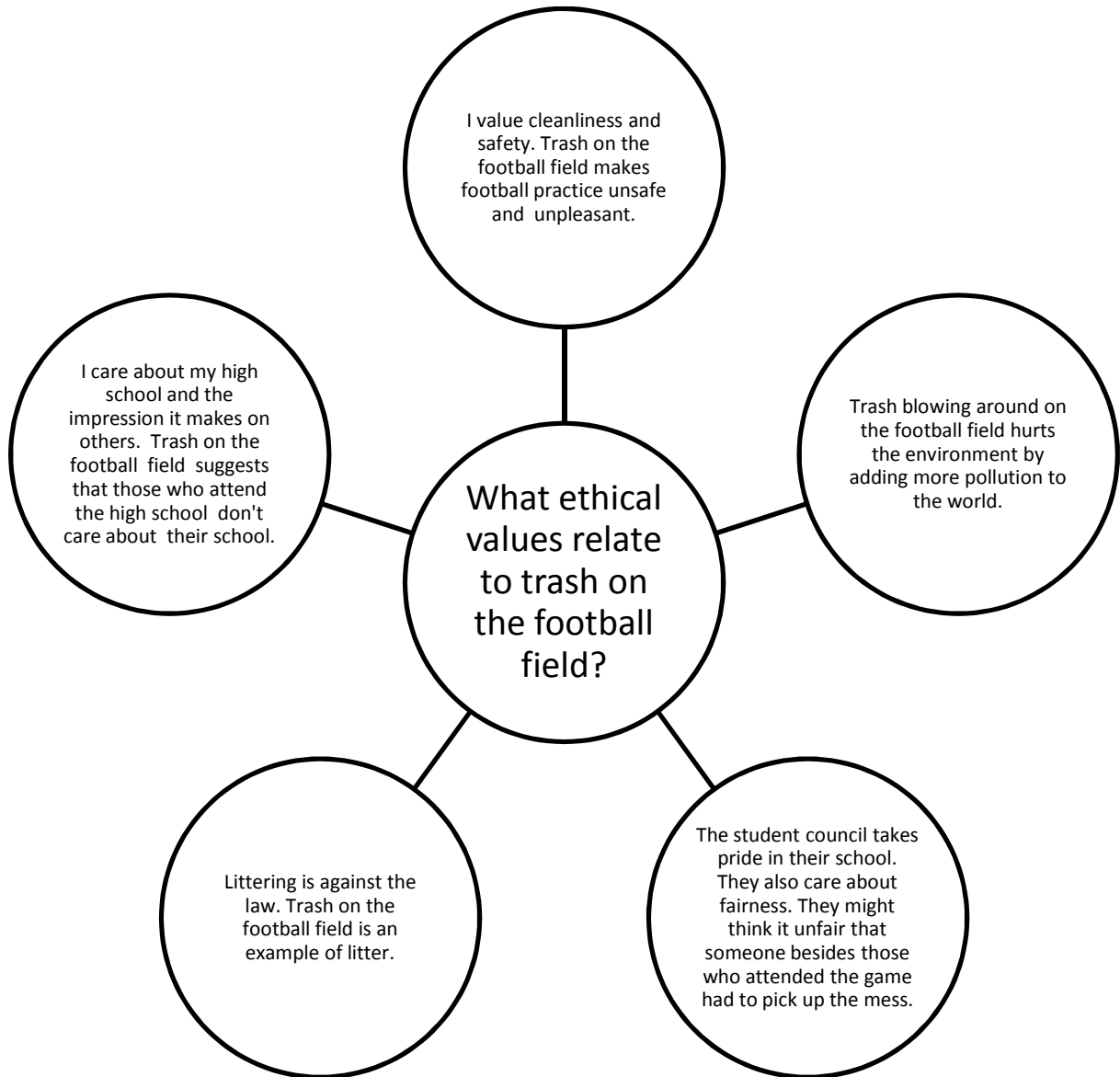
On the way to school Monday morning after the Homecoming game, you notice that the football field is covered in trash. Your friend says he is surprised by the amount of trash on the field. He comments to you that all that trash makes the school look awful and makes it hard to use the football field.

After some research, you discover that the full, topless garbage cans around the field were blown over during the weekend's wind storm. The school's maintenance team spent Monday morning picking up trash. You think it is unfair for someone to have spend time picking up this trash and decide to write a letter to the student council to recommend that as their next service project the council generate funds to buy ten trash cans with lids for use at high traffic events such as the homecoming celebration.

Your Challenge:

Working with your classmates and teacher, complete the Ethical Question Star for this writing situation.

Sample Completed Ethical Question Star

I value cleanliness and safety. Trash on the football field makes football practice unsafe and unpleasant.

I care about my high school and the impression it makes on others. Trash on the football field suggests that those who attend the high school don't care about their school.

Trash blowing around on the football field hurts the environment by adding more pollution to the world.

What ethical values relate to trash on the football field?

Littering is against the law. Trash on the football field is an example of litter.

The student council takes pride in their school. They also care about fairness. They might think it unfair that someone besides those who attended the game had to pick up the mess.

Peer Review Guidelines for Persuasive Letters

Author_____

Reviewer_____

Directions: Read your letter aloud while reviewers listen carefully. When you finish reading, ask reviewers to write any questions or comments below.

Reviewer's   uestions Comments after Listening

After all group members have read their drafts aloud, the group will read each draft silently and answer the following   uestions.

.   Identify the intended audience for the letter. How does the writer address the needs and interests of that particular audience

.   What does the author want the audience to do   (This should be the writer's goal or thesis statement.) How does the writer convey this to the audience   What reasons does the writer use to persuade readers

.   How does the writer organi e the content of the letter   Do reasons and examples seem to be se uenced in a logical order

.   Identify something the writer does particularly well.

.   Identify something the writer can do to improve the letter.

What Ethical Values Did I Use?

Directions: Write a short letter of no more than a page to your teacher and classmates in which you discuss how you used ethical values in your persuasive letter. Be sure to answer the following questions in your letter.

1. What ethical values did I use in my paper and where?

2. Why did I use these values?

3. How do these values make my argument more persuasive?

4. If I had more time, what other values might I use in my paper to make it stronger?
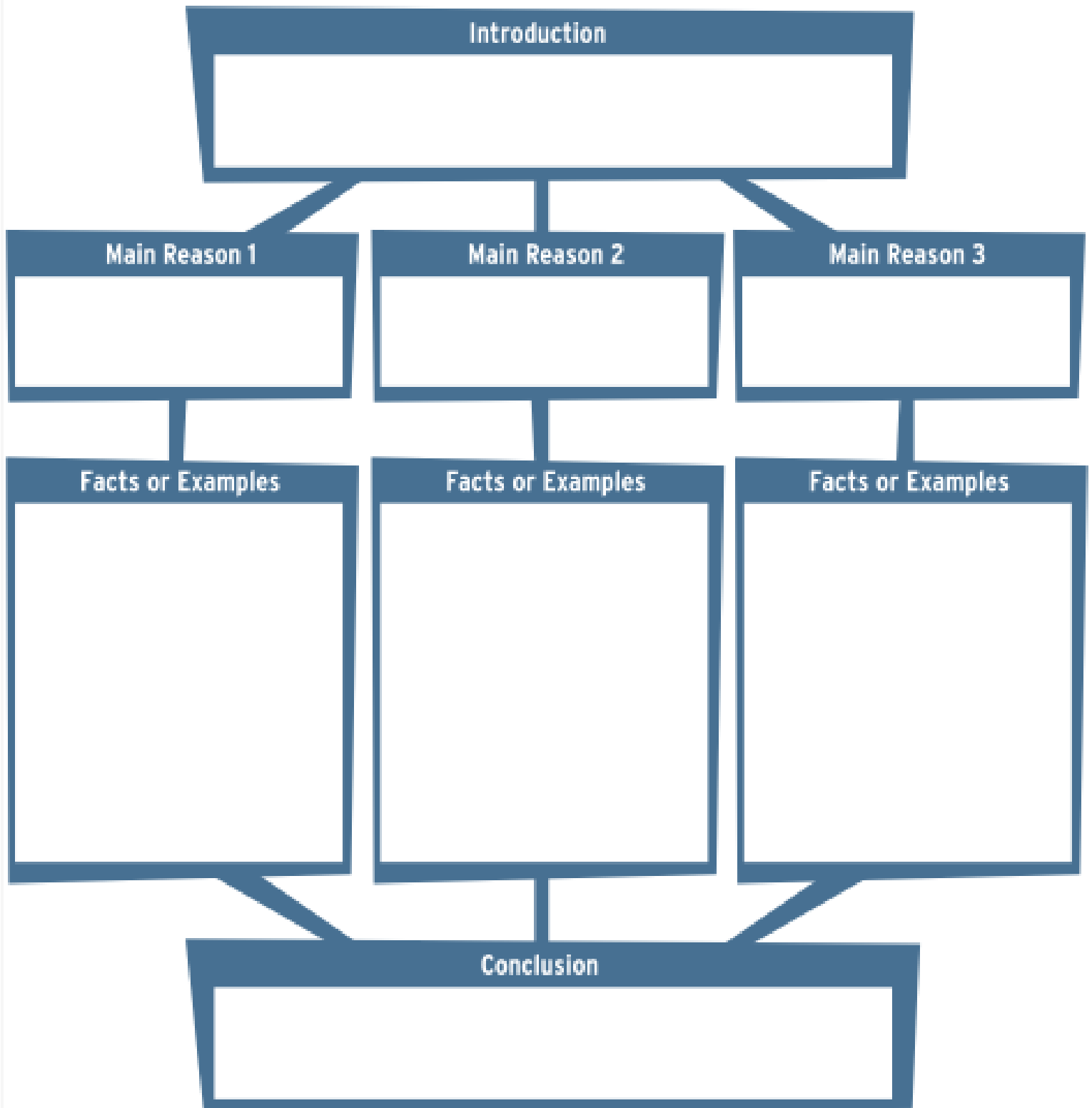
Sample Ethical Rubric

(Add to an Existing Persuasive Letter Writing Rubric)

	4	**3**	**2**	**1**
Attention to Ethical Values	The writer uses relevant and specific ethical values in support of his/her position.	Most of the ethical values the writer uses are relevant, specific, and support his/her position.	At least one specific and relevant ethical value is used in support of the writer's position.	Ethical values are not used or the values used are not relevant to the writer's position.

Letter to the Editor Peer Review Questions

. Does the letter begin with a salutation and end with a signature block

. What article is the letter writer discussing   Is the article named in the first sentence or paragraph

. In the first paragraph, what main reason does the letter writer give for responding to the article   What position is the letter writer taking on the issue

. What specific points does the letter writer use to support the position taken in the letter

. How does the letter conclude   Is the conclusion appropriate for the letter

. What advice would you give the author of this letter

. What did you like the most about this letter   Why

PERSUASION MAP

by: _____

topic: _____

Introduction

Main Reason 1	**Main Reason 2**	**Main Reason 3**
Facts or Examples	**Facts or Examples**	**Facts or Examples**

Conclusion

http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/copyright-infringement-debate-over-855.html

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LESSON PLAN

Copyright Infringement or Not? The Debate over Downloading Music

Grades	9 - 12
Lesson Plan Type	Unit
Estimated Time	Ten 50-minute sessions
Lesson Author	Suzanne Taylor Frostburg, Maryland
Publisher	**NCTE** National Council of Teachers of English

PREVIEW

OVERVIEW

This lesson takes advantage of students' interest in music and audio sharing as part of a persuasive debate unit. Students investigate the controversial topic of downloading music from the Internet. They draw upon their prior knowledge and experience by discussing their own sources of music and Internet practices then conduct Internet research to investigate the history and legal issues of copyright infringement related to sharing audio files. Students use graphic organizers and interactive Web tools to synthesize information as well as to evaluate content and point of view. After students map their information, they take a stand on the controversy and develop persuasive arguments on their position that they present in a class debate on the subject of downloading.

FEATURED RESOURCES

Debating Music Downloads Travelogue: Students can use this online tool to explore Web resources related to music downloads.

Analyzing Opinions on Music Downloads Chart: Students can use this online chart to analyze how the music download debate from multiple perspectives.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Providing students with an opportunity to explore contemporary issues through formal debate focuses instruction on argumentative and persuasive structures within the context of an active rhetorical situation with a clear audience. As Randi Dickson explains, "Integrating writing and debate encompasses multiple strands of language arts: students read and view a variety of texts for information and understanding, write for real purposes, hone their listening skills, and practice speaking in front of an audience. They incorporate research and library skills and often include historical and scientific texts. A unit on argument also moves the traditional literary texts out of the forefront and makes room for teaching through a variety of texts" (35).

Second, the focus of debate on contemporary issues increases student engagement in the project and prepares students for participation in a democratic society. Dickson asserts, "Students who engage in writing and debating about current social, political, and historical issues learn to participate in making judgments and understand why beliefs are formed and held" (35). This process of informed exploration and debate encourages critical analysis rather than snap decisions and encourages students to consider building support

for the positions that they take.

Further Reading

Dickson, Randi. "Developing 'Real-World Intelligence': Teaching Argumentative Writing through Debate."
English Journal 94.1 (September 2004): 34-40.

STANDARDS

NCTE/IRA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

RESOURCES & PREPARATION

STUDENT INTERACTIVES

Grades **3 - 12** | Student Interactive | Organizing & Summarizing
Persuasion Map

The Persuasion Map is an interactive graphic organizer that enables students to map out their arguments for a persuasive essay or debate.

PRINTOUTS

- Point of View Chart

- Debate Rubric

WEBSITES

- Debating Music Downloads Travelogue
- Analyzing Opinions on Music Downloads Chart
- Online Point of View Chart
- Debate Roles and Rules

PREPARATION

- Preview the Debate Over Downloading Music Links to check that the school's firewall will allow the sites to be viewed.

- Reserve computer lab time to conduct research as well as to work with the Persuasion Map.

- Make copies of the Debate Rubric.

- Test the Point of View Chart on the computer, or make copies of the print chart.

- Test the Persuasion Map on your computers to familiarize yourself with the tools and ensure that you have the Flash plug-in installed. You can download the plug-in from the technical support page.

- See Debate Central from the University of Vermont for a wide variety of information about debate, including learning materials, videos of debates, instructional videos, debate news, and links to debate organizations.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

Students will

- evaluate Websites and online information.

- extract main ideas and supporting details from online resources.

- analyze arguments for and against a position, paying particular attention to the role of point of view.

- take a stance on a controversial issue, based on their research.

- defend their positions in classroom debate, providing supporting facts and details for their arguments.

SESSION ONE

1. Ask students to respond to the following questions in their journals:

   - What do you know about downloading music on the Internet?

   - Have you ever downloaded music? What Web resources have you used?

   - What do fans, artists, and companies think about this practice?

   - Do you feel it is okay to download music? Why or why not?

   - Why would some people call it piracy?

2. After about 15-20 minutes, ask students to discuss their responses with the rest of the class.

3. Through the discussion, identify some class experts, students who frequently use downloading technology.

4. Invite the class experts to share what they know about the ways that the technology works and how they use it.

5. Ask students to record their questions about the legalities of downloading in their journals.

6. Explain that during the following sessions, the class will complete Internet research on these questions and related issues.

SESSION TWO

1. Ask students to use the Debating Music Downloads Travelogue to explore four Websites on the subject of downloading music.

2. Encourage students to take notes in the Travelogue as they examine the sites.

3. If students need additional practice evaluating Web resources, conduct a mini-lesson using the resources from the Inquiry on the Internet: Evaluating Web Pages for a Class Collection lesson plan.

4. At the end of the session, ask students to share some of the information they have discovered.

SESSION THREE

1. Arrange students in small groups or partners for the next stage of research in the computer lab.

2. Ask students to complete Analyzing Opinions on Music Downloads chart with partners or group members in order to explore information on music downloads further.

3. At the end of the session, ask students to share some of the information they discovered.

SESSION FOUR

1. Ask students to respond to the following questions in their journals:

   - What makes a source reliable?

   - What biases did you encounter during your research?

   - How did the audience and purpose for the site relate to the information included?

2. Allow students to share their journal entries, if desired.

3. Based on the information they've gathered, ask groups of students to compile their information, using the online or print point of view chart.

4. Remind students to print the charts, and bring the notes to the next session.

SESSION FIVE

1. Ask students to compile their research, notes, and printouts to prepare for further examination of the related issues.

2. As a full class, in small groups, or in their journals, ask students to share their opinions on the controversy surrounding music downloads, using the following questions to guide discussion:

   - Do they agree with record companies, artists, or fans?

   - What are the arguments for downloading?

   - What are the arguments against downloading?

3. Explain the final project to students: Students will join teams of 3 or 4 students. Working together, teams decide whether to take a pro or con stance with regard to music downloading. Using the Persuasion Map, teams will outline their main arguments and supporting facts and details.

4. Present information on debate roles and rules. Point to the information on the site on organizing arguments for debate and planning strategies.

5. Pass out and discuss the Debate Rubric, so they know what they are aiming towards with their debate.

6. Allow the rest of the session for students to choose a project and stance, join groups, make plans, and gather ideas.

SESSION SIX

1. Remind students of the assignment, and answer any questions.

2. Demonstrate the Persuasion Map for the class, and answer any questions students have about the final project options.

3. Allow students the remainder of the session to complete the Persuasion Map and work on their debates.

4. Circulate through the room, and assist them as they work on the pros and cons of downloading music.

5. Encourage students to refer all of their collected information as they make points and structure their arguments.

6. Remind students to print out their Persuasion Map by the end of the session.

SESSION SEVEN

1. Remind students of the project criteria, pointing to the Debate Rubric.

2. Answer any questions students have about the project and the criteria.

3. Discuss the importance of structuring debates with the information from Taking Sides Debates or Lincoln/Douglas and Team Debate Format.

4. Allow students the reminder of the session to structure and prepare their debates using index cards (where they can record notes and key points).

5. Provide assistance and feedback as necessary. Encourage students to share questions with peers for feedback and support as well.

SESSION EIGHT

1. Remind students of the project criteria, and answer any questions students have about the project and the criteria.

2. Allow students to work on their arguments and notes for the majority of the session.

3. With approximately 30 minutes remaining in the session, gather the class and assign groups to debate each other.

4. Present the debate guidelines, and encourage students to use the list to assess and clarify their positions.

5. Answer any questions and assign groups to different areas of the classroom where they can practice their debates.

6. Provide assistance and feedback as necessary.

7. Remind students to come to the next session ready to present their arguments.

SESSIONS NINE AND TEN

1. Remind students of the criteria for their presentations, and allow a few minutes at the beginning of the session for students to make last minute preparation.

2. Structure student debates so that students turn-taking flows smoothly.

3. As students present their positions, assess their work using the Debate Rubric.

4. When the debates are completed, invite classmates to provide others with verbal feedback.

EXTENSIONS

- Instead of debating their positions, have students write persuasive papers summing up their positions on downloading music. The paper should include their main arguments for or against and to support their arguments with facts or details. Students will use the Persuasion Map, outline their main arguments and supporting facts and details. Pass out the example position statement and go over the persuasive writing scoring guide so they understand the criteria for the project.

- Once students have completed the lesson and their debates, the class can periodically revisit this topic and any updates or changes in the legal status of music downloads.

- Students can give multimedia presentations on downloading, including some of the programs they use and the music they download.
- The EconEdLink lesson plan Online Mayhem I: Metallica Versus Napster presents additional information on copyright infringement and music downloads. The information provides a useful supplement to the debate process.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT/REFLECTIONS

This lesson lends itself to a great deal of teacher observation during each session. Take notes on students' progress, comments, and work habits throughout the research and composing process. If desired, respond informally to the ideas that students gather in their journals. Use the Debate Rubric to assess the final presentation formally.

RELATED RESOURCES

STUDENT INTERACTIVES

Grades 3 - 12 | Student Interactive | Organizing & Summarizing
Persuasion Map

The Persuasion Map is an interactive graphic organizer that enables students to map out their arguments for a persuasive essay or debate.

CALENDAR ACTIVITIES

Grades **6 - 12** | Calendar Activity | April 10
The Statute of Anne, an influential copyright law, went into effect in 1710.

Student groups do web research, compile their information, and make a booklet on copyright rules for the class to use as a reference.

Grades **3 - 12** | Calendar Activity | January 8
On this day in 1935, Elvis Presley was born.

Students visit the National Archives to read a letter written by Elvis Presley to President Nixon. The Letter Generator is used to write a letter to a current artist suggesting a meeting with the President.

STRATEGY GUIDES

Grades **6 - 12** | Strategy Guide
Developing Persuasive Writing Strategies

This strategy guide describes the techniques used in effective persuasive writing and shares activities you can use to help students understand and use persuasion in their writing and critical thinking.

PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY

Grades **9 - 12** | Professional Library | Book
Preventing Plagiarism: Tips and Techniques

DeSena offers a practical guide on how high school and college teachers can structure assignments and guide students so that students don't plagiarize.

COMMENTS

■ **Published Comments**

Kathy Lehman
November 09, 2010

We use an adaptation of this lesson with library science students. They write a persuasive statement defending their opinion on downloading music on the library blog. This is an eye opening research project for them. We hope to include the lesson in a curriculum guide we are writing this winter. Please respond with permission for us to refer to you lesson in our guide. We especially like the interactive features with the established list of web sites, graphic organizers for information gathering and persuasive map to plan their response. Thank you for responding to our request.

Point of View Chart

	For Music Downloads	Against Music Downloads
Consumer		
Record Company		
Recording Artist		

Student name: _____ **Date:** _____

Debate topic/position: _____

DEBATE RUBRIC

	3	**2**	**1**
Viewpoint	Viewpoints are clear and organized.	Most viewpoints are clear.	Viewpoints are unclear and disorganized.
Use of facts and examples	Arguments are supported with facts and examples.	Most arguments are supported with facts and examples.	Arguments lack factual support.
Relevance of supporting arguments	All supporting arguments are relevant.	Many, but not all, supporting arguments are relevant.	Few supporting arguments are relevant.
Strength of arguments	All arguments are strong and convincing.	Some arguments are convincing.	Arguments are not convincing.
Speaking voice	Voice can always be heard.	Voice is heard most of the time.	Voice is difficult to hear.
Preparation	Student is well prepared.	Student needs more preparation.	Student is unprepared to defend argument.

Total Score: _____ /18

DEBATE ROLES and RULES

[Roles](#)
[Rules](#)

Opening Statement Presenter:
Gathers the main arguments into an introductory statement. Does not give specific information; just says "this is true because of A and B and C."

1._____

Topic Presenters:
Present the main arguments for the team. Each presenter give specific details that **prove** A and B and C.
(2 or 3)

1._____
2._____
3._____

Rebuttal Presenters:
Answer the arguments of the other team. These presenters must take notes as the other team is presenting their arguments and respond to every argument, using specific information to **disprove** them.
(1 or 2)

1._____
2._____

Closing Statement Presenter:
Presents the closing arguments for the team. Repeats the main idea for this and this and this reasons.

1._____

Debate Rules
No put downs.
You must raise your hand if it's not your time to speak.
Teams lose 1 point for each interruption.
Teams lose 1 point for whispering while another speaker is talking.

TIMES
Opening statements for both sides = 3 minutes each
Arguments for both sides = 3 minutes each
Rebuttal conference = 1 minute
Rebuttals = 2 minutes each

Closing statements for both sides = 3 minutes each

The Debate

Date:
Class:

PRO   **CON**

Clear statement of main idea in opening statement

Points
1.
2.
3.

Rebuttals

Closing statement

830:331:H1 Infant and Child Development
Rutgers University
Instructor: Dr. Judith Hudson

Taking Sides Debates

General Format of Debates

Each issue will be debated by a panel of four or six students two or three "pro" and two or three "con." Each team thus has two or three persons, each with a primary responsibility, as follows

   The stater . This person will be primarily responsible for stating the position taken by the group. He or she will bring up, point by point, the issues inherent in each part of the argument. A prepared written outline may be uite helpful, but direct reading of a prepared statement will not be appropriate. A conversational presentation of the position in the stater's own words will be much more acceptable. The stater will also be responsible for watching the flow of the arguments. At the end, the stater will summari e, recap, and state which of the points made can be salvaged to ultimately support the team's position.

   The prover . The prover will be responsible for citing relevant research to back up any of the statements given by the stater. He or she must have intimate knowledge of the empirical content of the positions taken and should understand the research supporting the side chosen. The prover can do well by looking up outside sources in order to strengthen the stater's arguments. He or she can support points by using survey data gathered in class or outside. Any effort (short of murder) is legitimate for generating support for a position. However, the prover will be "attacked" at some length by the opposition so he or she had better be able to back up his or her supporting data. It should be empirical and responsible.

   The attacker . The attacker will be responsible for probing the opposite team for weaknesses in their arguments. He or she may uestion data, disprove, counter, and use any rational method to discredit the opposition's position or data. An appreciation for research design and data analysis may help the attacker. It is also strongly suggested that the attacker be very familiar with the articles and materials being used by the opposing team. Unless role playing is extremely good, personal attacks are considered in poor taste. The uestioner may insult one of the authors but should refrain from attacking the student who has that position.

Note In teams of students the stater role will be split between the prover and the attacker one will provide introductory remarks and the other will provide the concluding statement.

Debate Structure

A given debate will consist of the following se uence

Coin flip to determine sides – 5 minutes preparation time

   ○   Pro the pro stater makes his or her points. (minutes)
   ○   Con the con stater defines his or her counterpoints. (minutes)

- Pro   the pro prover brings on his or her evidence. (minutes)
  - Con   the con prover delivers his or her data. (minutes)
  - Pro   the pro attacker can move in. (minutes)
  - Con   the con attacker can respond in kind. (minutes)

8 minutes preparation/conference time — audience formulates questions

  - Pro   the pro stater salvages all the undamaged arguments he or she has left and makes a summary. (minutes)
  Con   the con stater salvages the intact arguments that are left and makes a concluding statement. (minutes)

Audience questions and discussion

The audience

The students not involved in a debate are still a part of the situation. Two kinds of audience participation can be expected   clarification and   uestion.

Clarification. If a student is uncertain of a point, counterpoint, interpretation of data, a study, or any other portion of a presentation, the students in the audience can ask for clarification. Whoever is explaining the concept or supporting members on the team should clear the problem up for the student as a teacher would do in any class. Clarification   uestions should be asked at any time (interruptions are fine).

uestion. This kind of audience participation can come after a position is clarified and the research is in. It should be reminded that the panel (pro and con) is primarily responsible for this sort of   uestion.   uestions should generally be saved for the discussion after the debate.

Additional Reading and Research

The degree to which you can present a convincing argument and a convincing attack against your opponents depends on whether you can provide empirical support for your position. Each article (both pro and con) generally includes bibliographies that will lead you to relevant articles. The Postscript sections also provide suggested readings. It is assumed that each team will divide up this ob. Therefore, on the day of the debate, each participant will hand in an annotated bibliography of at least   sources. Provide a full citation and a brief paragraph summari ing the gist of the article or the main points that are relevant to the debate topic.

Grading

My philosophy of education says that students learn by applying their own efforts. There are no correct answers   no blacks and no whites. There are only mixtures of grays. The important point of this course is to find out how you view those gray areas.

Grading for all pro ects and activities may be based on the following evaluation criteria

- Use of supporting materials outside of the Taking Sides readings.
- Grasp of the issue and important related points.
- Proper use of supporting empirical evidence.
- Reali ation of points of agreement and points of disagreement.
- The ability to anticipate and counter opposing viewpoints.
- Use of supporting points not suggested by Taking Sides introductions.
- The ability to see and challenge flaws in the opposition's arguments and research as well as one's own flaws.
- Use of constructive criticism and rationales.
- The ability to make the topic relevant to the audience and or opposition (if there is one).
- The ability to anticipate uestions.
- The ability to ask appropriate uestions.

Preparation for Debate

It is vital to learn how to evaluate an argument calmly and ob ectively. Discussing the following uestions will help.
These uestions will enable you to break down an argument into its component parts, thereby avoiding the common
tendency to be swayed by a presenter's delivery techni ues or by one's own set of biases and opinions.

Question: How Empirical Is the Presentation?

The most persuasive argument is the one that supports its thesis by referring to relevant, accurate, and up to date data from the best sources possible. One should investigate the credibility of the author, how recent the material is, the type of research (if any) that supports the position outlined, and the degree of documentation behind any argument. Empiricism implies going to the best source for material. This suggests that original research material is preferable to secondary sources, which in turn are preferable to hearsay.

Question: What Is Fact? What Is Opinion?

A fact is a statement that can be proven. In contrast, an opinion is a statement that expresses how a person feels about an issue or what someone thinks is true. Many authors blend fact and opinion it is the responsibility of the critical thinker to discriminate successfully between the two.

This process of discrimination often ties in with the concept of empiricism. Facts are generally empirically determined from research. They are documented and can be known or observed by other people. Facts can be verified in other sources or can be replicated by other research. Good facts should be most convincing in any issue.

Opinions should carry less weight in evaluating an argument. While the writer may believe them to be true, opinions are a product of the writer's biases and personal system of beliefs. While many opinions make good sense and may win a reader's approval, they must still be classified as mere opinions if there is no factual evidence supporting them. Opinion may, in fact, be entirely correct, but generally it still should be viewed with less trust than facts.

Some statements contain both fact and opinion. For example, research has demonstrated that animals living in crowded cages show more aggressive behavior than those living in less crowded cages. A statement such as "Overcrowding of people in slum areas will foster high levels of aggression, rape, and child abuse in the same way that one sees in caged animals" contains elements of both opinion and fact.

Question: What Propaganda Is Being Used?

Propaganda is information presented in order to influence a reader. It is not necessarily "good" or "bad." Many authors consciously use propaganda techni ues in order to convince their readers of their special point of view. A close look at the author's background or some of the motivations and editorial policies of the source of the publication may provide clues about what types of propaganda techni ues might be used.

Question: What Cause/Effect Relationships Are Proposed?

Much material is written to establish or advance a hypothesis that some circumstances "cause" specific things to happen. Experiments often consist of searching for cause effect relationships. Scientists seem to be linking more and more observations with their antecedent causes. Students should note when an issue has at its heart a disputed cause effect relationship isolating the claim and examining the relationship is the readers' responsibility.

Question: Are These Cause/Effect Relationships Merely Correlations?

Many cause effect statements are flawed because no appropriate research or evidence has isolated a single cause. There may be other hidden factors underlying the relationship. A good example is this statement "Birds fly south in winter because it gets cold in northern areas." This statement is plausible, and many readers would accept it because it "makes sense." Data exist to show a relationship between temperature and bird population density population decreases as temperature decreases. However, no experiment has conclusively established that temperature is a causative factor of bird migration. Alternative hypotheses may very well also explain the behavior. Food supplies may become scarce during low temperature periods, breeding instincts may precipitate migration, or the birds may simply want a change of scenery If sufficiently controlled experiments could rule out these alternative hypotheses, the cause effect statement could be made. As it is, a simple correlation (statement of coincidence) is all that remains "Birds fly south at the same time that the weather turns cold." It would even be possible (although not very plausible) with the observed data to infer the opposite causation "It turns cold in the northern latitudes because the body heat from migrating birds is no longer present "

Students should be made aware that faulty cause effect statements may be a ma or source of confusion and misdirection used by authors to defend their points of view. In some cases, the faulty cause effect proposition is the only rationale used by an author. A good techni ue for analy ing this sort of error is to have the students try

to generate alternative plausible hypotheses for any proposed cause effect relationship.

Question: Is Information Distorted?

Many authors, in an attempt to produce facts to substantiate their positions, uote statistics and research that support their viewpoints. All of these statements of facts may be biased. "Statistics don't lie statisticians do" is a truism. Students should always uestion the bias involved in obtaining and presenting data. If averages are given, ranges and standard deviations should be evaluated critically. One interesting uestion that can be raised is What statistics or data are missing If a simple survey could be done (in lieu of a statement such as "Most Americans believe that . . ."), why was such an easily supportable piece of data not produced

Students should learn not to be too easily impressed by statistical data. Tabulated numbers or graphs may only reflect opinions.

Question: Are Analogies Faulty?

Many authors make much of analogies as they attempt to prove their theses. An analogy is a comparison of a hypothesis (which is unproven) to a known set of causal events. For example, a statement such as "The United States should not be getting involved in Central American politics we will have another fiasco as we did in Vietnam" uses an analogy. However true the second part of the sentence may or may not be, it should not necessarily be accepted as a demonstration of the truth of the first part of the sentence. Analogies usually ignore many differences (in this example, differences in military position, geographic location, political motivation, and other factors) that make the current situation unsuitable for comparison and render the analogy worthless.

Question: Is the Author Oversimplifying the Issue?

Authors generally try to show their theses in the best possible light and to discredit opposing viewpoints. When authors are so single minded as to completely ignore opposite viewpoints, they probably are guilty of oversimplification.

It may be argued, for example, that bilingual education has been shown to be beneficial for students. However. if data are presented without a discussion (even a derogatory discussion) of the many social ramifications of bilingual education programs, the argument has not answered all of the important uestions.

Question: Is the Author Stereotyping?

This sort of logical flaw is similar to the cause effect flaw. The authors may have observed some general behavior they then may attempt to apply this general behavior (which may or may not be true) to a specific individual or situation. For example, if an author asserts that American cars are inferior to foreign cars (which may or may not be true), he or she might not establish that any particular American car is truly inferior. Each point should be analy ed as it is empirically observed, not as it is grouped with other observations.

Question: Are There Faulty Generalizations?

In the case of a faulty generali ation, a udgment is based on inaccurate or incomplete information. For example "Ducks and geese migrate south for the winter therefore, all birds migrate south for the winter."

In presentations, many subtle forms of inappropriate generali ations may occur. The most common form concerns research in one area being applied to other areas (as in a faulty analogy). For example "The brain deals in electric potentials. Computers deal with electric potentials. We can thus say that the brain is a computer."

Another example of a faulty generali ation is when an author observes only one event or cites only one case study and infers that this applies to many other phenomena. Sigmund Freud could be considered guilty of this his theories of behavior are derived from only a few published observations of individual case studies.

Return to class web page

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LESSON PLAN

Propaganda Techniques in Literature and Online Political Ads

Grades	9 – 12
Lesson Plan Type	Standard Lesson
Estimated Time	Four 50-minute sessions
Lesson Author	**Junius Wright** Charleston, South Carolina
Publisher	**NCTE** National Council of Teachers of English

PREVIEW

OVERVIEW

After reading or viewing a text, students are introduced to propaganda techniques and then identify examples in the text. Students discuss these examples, and then explore the use of propaganda in popular culture by looking at examples in the media. Students identify examples of propaganda techniques used in clips of online political advertisements and explain how the techniques are used to persuade voters. Next, students explore the similarities of the propaganda techniques used in the literary text and in the online political ads to explain the commentary the text is making about contemporary society. Finally, students write a persuasive essay in support of a given statement.

In this lesson, some specific references are made to *Brave New World* as examples. A text list suggests additional novels, short stories, plays, and movies that will also work for this activity.

FEATURED RESOURCES

■ **Literature Featuring Propaganda Techniques and Themes:** This booklist provides lists of novels, short stories, plays, and movies that can be used in lessons about propaganda.

■ **Persuasion Map:** Use this online tool to map out and print your persuasive argument. Included are spaces to map out your thesis, three reasons, and supporting details.

■ **Persuasive Writing Scoring Guide:** Use this reproducible rubric to assess the focus; organization; sentence fluency and word choice; and conventions of persuasive writing assignments.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

In the NCTE publication *Lesson Plans for Creating Media-Rich Classrooms*, editor Scott Sullivan notes that by "making students aware of the ways information is used and manipulated, we allow them to begin making wiser, more informed choices" (176). Students benefit doubly, then, by studying the concept of propaganda in a traditional literary context and in real-world applications pulled from multimedia sources. Their understanding of the literary text is enriched and enhanced and they are encouraged to "become more informed and conscientious citizens" (174). In this lesson, which encourages students to explore "the intrinsic relationships between content, product [or candidate], and profit [or power], they begin to see that what may once have seemed an objective enterprise [a political campaign] is, in fact, subject to a variety of influences, some subtle, some not" (175).

Further Reading

Christel, Mary, and Scott Sullivan, eds. 2007. *Lesson Plans for Creating Media-Rich Classrooms*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Read more about this resource ▶

STANDARDS

NCTE/IRA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

RESOURCES & PREPARATION

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

■ A literary text featuring propaganda techniques (see booklist for ideas)

STUDENT INTERACTIVES

Grades **3 – 12** | Student Interactive | Organizing & Summarizing
Persuasion Map

The Persuasion Map is an interactive graphic organizer that enables students to map out their arguments for a persuasive essay or debate.

PRINTOUTS

■ Propaganda Techniques Used in Literature
■ Analyzing Propaganda in Print Ads and Commercials
■ Background Information before Examining Online Political Ads
■ Propaganda Techniques Used in Online Political Ads
■ Persuasive Essay Assignment
■ Persuasive Writing Scoring Guide

WEBSITES

- Political Websites
- Propaganda Critic
- Buyers Beware!
- The Living Room Candidate
- Center for the Study of Political Graphics

PREPARATION

1. Students should have read or viewed the text that you've chosen for this lesson. Several of the books on the list (and some appropriate Young Adult novels) are featured in the Text Messages podcast episode Teen Time Travel.

2. Make copies of the handouts: Propaganda Techniques Used in Literature, Analyzing Propaganda in Print Ads and Commercials, Propaganda Techniques Used in Online Political Ads , and Persuasive Writing Scoring Guide.

3. If desired, make copies or an overhead transparency of the Persuasive Essay Assignment.

4. Read the background information related to online political advertisements.

5. Test the Persuasion Map on your computers to familiarize yourself with the tools and ensure that you have the Flash plug-in installed. You can download the plug-in from the technical support page.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- analyze texts to identify different types of propaganda techniques.
- identify and explain the goal of propaganda techniques used in a work of literature and an example of non-print media.
- compare and contrast examples of propaganda techniques used in a work of literature and visual media.
- identify and gather evidence from a secondary source.
- use visual literacy skills to analyze, interpret, and explain non-print media.
- participate in a class discussion, gather information, and write a persuasive essay that synthesizes information from their explorations of propaganda.

SESSION ONE

1. In this session, students will move toward a definition of propaganda by responding in writing or verbally to the question, "What is propaganda?"

2. Have students discuss their thoughts and opinions of propaganda as you share information from the Wikipedia definition of propaganda and/or the What is Propaganda? definition with the class.

3. Ask students if they have ever seen or heard propaganda used. If so, have students share what they saw or heard and what effect it had on them. Depending on their knowledge of propaganda, the effect may have been the same as or different from what the propagandist intended. Ask them to think about the reasons leaders and organizations often employ propaganda.

4. Discuss how propaganda is a powerful tool when combined with mass media.

5. Review examples of propaganda and discuss the ideas and examples with the students.

6. In pairs or small groups, have the students fill out the Propaganda Techniques Used in Literature chart.
   - Identify an example of each type of propaganda technique used in the text you've chosen.
   - Explain what goal each technique is trying to accomplish.
   - Consider why the propaganda in the text is not challenged by most people in the society.

■ Identify any characters who seem to question the propaganda in the text (e.g., John the Savage, Helmholtz, and Bernard in *Brave New World*) and explore the possible reasons for their questioning.

SESSION TWO

1. As you move to a discussion of propaganda in literature in this session, have the students share the types of propaganda they have found in the text they examined in the first session.

2. As students present their ideas, draw attention to whether students identify the same propaganda techniques. If there are any differences among the examples or techniques, ask students to consider whether more than one applies.

3. Using the answers from the Propaganda Techniques Used in Literature chart, invite the students to discuss the following questions:
   ■ Why is the propaganda in the text not challenged by most people in the society?
   ■ Which characters do question the propaganda and what causes their questioning?

4. To provide students the opportunity to make connections to propaganda in their own lives, assign Analyzing Propaganda in Print Ads and Commercials for homework. This activity asks students to look for examples of propaganda in their world. Online video clip sites such as YouTube are useful resources for students to explore. Invite students also to bring in the ads they use for their assignment or video clips from television or movies.

5. Before the next session, select two or three political election advertisements from the Internet to show to students during the next session. If you cannot easily project the ads, students can also view the advertisements at home or at a public computer. If students will explore the advertisements on their own, be sure to allow enough time between this and the following session for students to complete the viewing.

SESSION THREE

1. Begin this session, focusing on identifying propaganda in cotemporary and historical political advertisements, by reviewing the Analyzing Propaganda in Print Ads and Commercials sheet that students completed for homework. Allow students to share any examples they brought with them.

2. Show students the two political advertisements you've chosen for the session.

3. Use the Propaganda Techniques Used in Online Political Ads handout to help students respond to the following questions, using the two selected political advertisements:
   ■ Who are the members of the target audience—women, men, young voters, baby boomers, senior citizens?
   ■ Is the political ad trying to sell a message (tough/soft on crime, cut/raise taxes, strong/weak defense, clean up the mess in Washington) or the candidate (has experience, creates new ideas, tells the truth, tells lies, is a loving family member)?
   ■ How does the political ad use production elements (sound effects, music, camera angles and movement, black and white or in color, special effects, graphics) to sell the message?
   ■ What kind of propaganda techniques are used in the advertisement?
   ■ What facts are being used in the ads? Who's providing the facts and where did they get them?
   ■ Is the political advertising effective? Did it get the message across? Will voters vote for the candidate? Are you convinced? Explain each of your answers.
   ■ Explain the connections between propaganda used in the political ad and propaganda used in the literary text you explored in earlier sessions.

4. Using links to Websites from the online political campaign sites or from historical sites (see **Resources** section), assign the students the task of evaluating online political advertisements, using the Propaganda Techniques Used in Online Political Ads sheet as a guide.

5. After completing their work with online ads, invite students to discuss the following questions:
   ■ What facts are being used in the ads?
   ■ Who is providing the facts and where did they get them?
   ■ Is the political advertising effective? Did it get the message across? Will voters vote for the candidate? Are you convinced? Explain each of your answers.

■ Explain any connections between the propaganda used in the political ad and propaganda used in the literary text you explored in earlier sessions.

SESSION FOUR

1. After students have completed their investigation of propaganda techniques in the various texts, ask them to apply their new learning by writing a persuasive essay:

> Using specific examples of propaganda techniques from the piece of literature you've explored and the online political advertisements, write a well-organized essay that argues in support or against the following statement:

> "It is essential in a democratic society that young people and adults learn how to think, learn how to make up their minds. They must learn how to think independently, and they must learn how to think together. They must come to conclusions, but at the same time they must recognize the right of other men to come to opposite conclusions. So far as individuals are concerned, the art of democracy is the art of thinking and discussing independently together." (Institute for Propaganda Analysis. *The Fine Art of Propaganda*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939)

2. In their persuasive essay, students should
   - structure ideas and arguments in a sustained and logical fashion.
   - use specific rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., appeal to logic through reasoning; appeal to emotion or ethical belief; personal anecdote, case study, or analogy).
   - clarify and defend positions with precise and relevant evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations, and/or expressions of commonly accepted beliefs and logical reasoning.
   - address readers' concerns, counterclaims, biases, and/or expectations.

3. Share the Persuasive Writing Scoring Guide to explore the requirements of the assignment in more detail.
4. Demonstrate the Persuasion Map and work through a sample topic to show students how to use the tool to structure their essays.
5. Allow students the remainder of class to work with the Persuasion Map as a brainstorming tool and to guide them through work on their papers.
6. Encourage students to share their thoughts and drafts with the class as they work for feedback and support.

EXTENSIONS

■ See the ReadWriteThink lessons Argument, Persuasion, or Propaganda? Analyzing World War II Posters and Analyzing the Stylistic Choices of Political Cartoonists to extend or enrich your study of propaganda and political messages.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT/REFLECTIONS

■ As students discuss propaganda and the issues in text, listen for specific evidence from the story that connects to the information students have researched. The connections they make between the details in the novel and the details they choose as the supporting reasons for their position will reveal their understanding and engagement with the text.
■ Monitor student interaction and progress during group work to assess social skills and assist any students having problems with the project.
■ Use the Persuasive Writing Scoring Guide to assess students' papers.
■ In addition to the specific feedback on the persuasive essay that students write, you can pay attention to the following indications of student involvement in the project:
   - Student participation in all activities and completion of homework assignments
   - Quality of student responses to in-class and homework activities

RELATED RESOURCES

LESSON PLANS

Grades **6 – 12** | Lesson Plan | Standard Lesson
Vote for Me! Making Presidential Commercials Using Avatars

After researching political platforms of past presidents through primary sources and other resources, students create commercials for these presidents using Voki, an online web tool that produces speaking avatars.

STUDENT INTERACTIVES

Grades **3 – 12** | Student Interactive | Organizing & Summarizing
Persuasion Map

The Persuasion Map is an interactive graphic organizer that enables students to map out their arguments for a persuasive essay or debate.

CALENDAR ACTIVITIES

Grades **7 – 12** | Calendar Activity | August 22
Science-fiction author Ray Bradbury was born in 1920.

Students do a Bradbury author study and then create flyers to advertise their favorite story using the ReadWriteThink Printing Press.

Grades **3 – 12** | Calendar Activity | November 5
November 6 is Election Day.

Election Day is held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

Grades **3 – 12** | Calendar Activity | January 22
The "1984" Macintosh commercial aired today during Super Bowl XVIII.

Original advertisements are created after students review advertising techniques they've studied.

STRATEGY GUIDES

Grades **6 – 12** | Strategy Guide
Reading Online

In this Strategy Guide you will learn how online reading differs from offline reading and strategies to build and reinforce the skills that online reading requires.

PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY

Grades **7 – 12** | Professional Library | Book
Lesson Plans for Creating Media-Rich Classrooms

This volume offers a collection of media literacy lessons for the secondary English classroom, including a CD of student handouts, teacher resources, and sample media files.

COMMENTS

■ **Published Comments**

| **Lauricia Matuska**
June 26, 2011 | This is the second unit plan written by Junius Wright that I have used, and both work excellently. Each lesson holds the interest of the students and presents its objectives in |

a way that students can relate to and understand. Additionally, neither lesson is not too long - they are not projects that take weeks. Rather, they teach their respective points and drive them home in a manner of days. In the future, I plan to begin my searches for lesson plans and story-related materials among the other lessons developed by Mr. Wright.

Legal | International Reading Association | National Council of Teachers of English

Thinkfinity | **verizon**foundation

Literature Featuring Propaganda Techniques and Themes

Novels

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*
Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*
Bonnie Burnard's *A Good House*
Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*
Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*
George Orwell's *1984* or *Animal Farm*
Frederik Pohl's *The Space Merchants*
Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother Night*

Short Stories

James Agee's "A Mother's Tale"
Isaac Asimov's "Strikebreaker"
Isaac Asimov's stories from *I, Robot*
Alfred Bester's "Fondly Fahrenheit"
Ray Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder"
Ray Bradbury's "There Will Come Soft Rains"
Arthur C. Clarke's "The Star"
James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues"
Robert Heinlein's "No Bands Playing, No Flags Flying" (from *Expanded Universe*)
Ring Lardner's "Haircut"
Ursula LeGuin's "Sur" or "The Ones Who Walked Away from Omelas"
George Saunder's stories in *Pastoralia* or *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline*
Mark Twain's "The War Prayer"
A.E. Van Vogt's "The Weapon Shop"
Kurt Vonnegut's "Harrison Bergeron" (from *Welcome to the Monkey House*)

Plays

The Crucible by Arthur Miller
Major Barbara or *Heartbreak House* by George Bernard Shaw
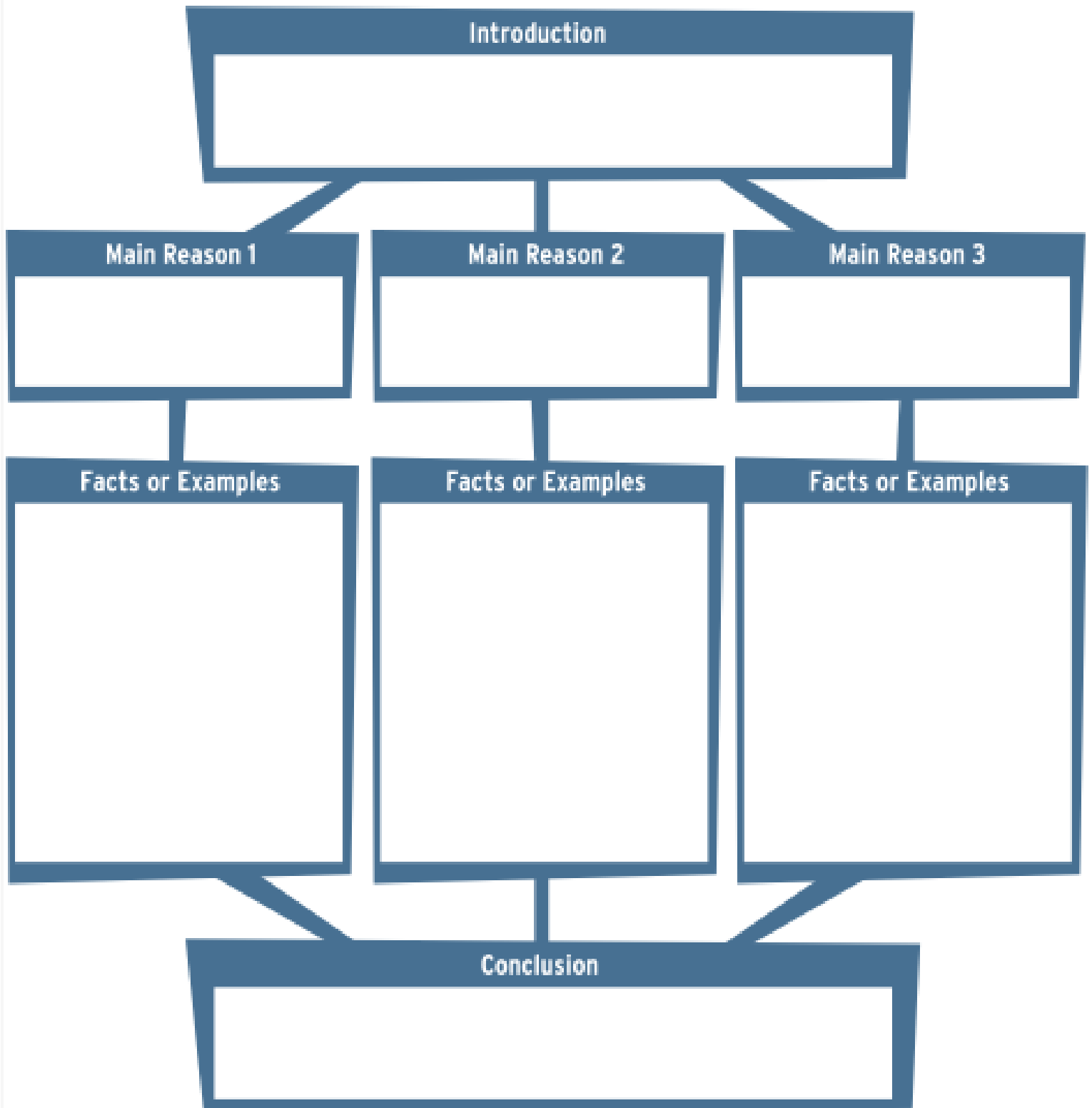Mass Murder by the Office for Emergency Management

Movies

Casablanca
Blade Runner
Dr. Strangelove
Enemy at the Gates
Fahrenheit 9/11
Fail-Safe
Gentleman's Agreement

PERSUASION MAP

by: _____

topic: _____

Introduction

Main Reason 1	Main Reason 2	Main Reason 3

Facts or Examples	Facts or Examples	Facts or Examples

Conclusion

Persuasive Writing Scoring Guide

COMPONENT	6	5	4	3	2	1
Focus	Takes a clear position and supports it consistently with well chosen reasons and or examples may use persuasive strategy to convey an argument.	Takes a clear position and supports it with relevant reasons and or examples through much of the essay.	Takes a clear position and supports it with some relevant reasons and or examples there is some development of the essay.	Takes a position and provides uneven support may lack development in parts or be repetitive OR essay is no more than a well written beginning.	Takes a position, but essay is underdeveloped.	Attempts to take a position (addresses topic), but position is very unclear OR takes a position, but provides minimal or no support may only paraphrase the prompt.
Organization	Is focused and well organi ed, with effective use of transitions.	Is well organi ed, but may lack some transitions.	Is generally organi ed, but has few or no transitions among sections.	Is organi ed in parts of the essay other parts are dis ointed and or lack transitions.	Is disorgani ed or unfocused in much of the essay OR is clear, but too brief.	Exhibits little or no apparent organi ation.
Sentence Fluency and Word Choice	Consistently exhibits variety in sentence structure and word choice.	Exhibits some variety in sentence structure and uses good word choice occasionally, words may be used inaccurately.	Most sentences are well constructed but have similar structure word choice lacks variety or flair.	Sentence structure may be simple and unvaried word choice is mostly accurate.	Sentences lack formal structure word choice may often be inaccurate.	Sentences run on and appear incomplete or rambling word choice may be inaccurate in much or the entire essay.
Conventions	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation are few and do not interfere with understanding.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation do not interfere with understanding.	More fre uent errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, but they do not interfere with understanding.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation sometimes interfere with understanding.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation interfere with understanding in much of the essay.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation prevent reader from fully understanding essay.

Propaganda Techniques Used in Literature

Complete the chart below to help you draw conclusions about the propaganda techni ues used in the novel that we've read. The example here is from Huxley's *Brave New World.*

Example of Propaganda technique used in *Brave New World*	Type of Propaganda technique	Goal the propaganda technique is trying to accomplish
Example *"Cleanliness is next to Fordliness" page 111*	*Transference*	*This slogan connects respect for Ford with the saying traditionally associated with the Christian church, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness". This helps establish Ford as a divine power in the minds of the people in the society of* <u>Brave New World</u>.

Analyzing Propaganda in Print Ads and Commercials

TYPE OF PROPAGANDA	SUMMARY	AD SOURCE
Bandwagon		
Euphemism		
Fear		
Glittering Generalities		
Logical Fallacies		
Name-Calling		
Plain Folks		
Rewards		
Testimonial		
Transfer		

Background Information before Examining Online Political Ads

Looking at online political advertisements re uires students to use visual literacy skills to identify and explain the goal of propaganda techni ues used in political advertisements posted on the Internet. These advertisements use an overabundance of propaganda techni ues that can be easily identified and compared to the propaganda techni ues used in the novel you've chosen to accompany this lesson. This comparison will help students gain a better understanding of the connection between their own society and the society depicted in novel. These activities will also help students become better evaluators of visual media and in turn become a better informed participant in the democratic process.

The PBS election guide Web site "By The People" makes the following argument for why political advertisements should be looked at more carefully

> "The bottom line, then, is that it's important for citi ens to look carefully at political ads. Certainly the truth or falsity and, regardless of truth', the deceptiveness of ad content is important to examine. Many newspapers and television analysis programs provide the citi en a good opportunity to learn more about the uality of the verbal content of political commercials. Although a ma ority of Americans are not aware of this, government closely controls the truth value of national product advertising on television. But because of the principle of free speech, a principle protected by the U.S. Constitution, there is no control whatsoever on the content of a political commercial. Basically, a politician can say anything she or he wishes in a political ad. The only control' over content in a political ad is media and public response to that content."

Propaganda Techniques Used in Online Political Ads

Complete the chart below to help you draw conclusions about the propaganda techni ues used in online political election ads.

	Target audience	What is the ad trying to "sell"?	Production elements used to sell the message	Propaganda elements used to sell the message
Political ad title				
Political ad title				

Persuasive Essay Assignment

Using specific examples of propaganda techniques from the literary text we explored and the online political advertisements, write a well-organized essay that argues in support or against the following statement:

"It is essential in a democratic society that young people and adults learn how to think, learn how to make up their minds. They must learn how to think independently, and they must learn how to think together. They must come to conclusions, but at the same time they must recognize the right of other men to come to opposite conclusions. So far as individuals are concerned, the art of democracy is the art of thinking and discussing independently together."

(Institute for Propaganda Analysis. *The Fine Art of Propaganda*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939)

In your essay, be sure to

- communicate a clear position on the statements above
- develop your position with paragraphs that include clear examples
- explain fully how your examples support of illustrate your points in relation to your overall position
- organize your ideas purposefully, using transitions to show relationships among ideas at the sentence, paragraph, and essay level
- use variety in sentence structure and word choice

As you edit and revise, be sure clean up any errors in grammar, spelling, or usage that would detract from your argument or confuse the reader.