

Rhetoric of Rebellion in America—The Sixties

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INTRODUCTION

The power of language propels people. “Words walking without masters” (Hurston) can topple an empire or build a nation. While Mark Twain once said that the function of language was “merely to convey ideas and emotions” (133), the power of language contains more than mere ideas of feelings. More than a conveyance, language can inspire ideas, emotions, and *actions* in an audience. In America, a tradition of language has inspired actions since before the American Revolution. In this study of the Rhetoric of Rebellion, I want my students to grasp the power of rhetoric, to decode persuasive strategies, and to analyze how language creates power to motivate and move men and women.

I teach the Advanced Placement (AP) Language Course instead of American literature for eleventh-graders. While the AP course does not subscribe to a specific curriculum or reading list, it does demand challenging nonfiction reading, a study of logic, analysis of the manipulation of language, and an ability to apply elements of style to effectively communicate in writing. In the American literature course, students need to understand the common themes in American literature and recognize how historical events shape philosophies and creative works, as well as shape the American identity. To ensure that my AP students do not miss this exposure to American literature, I continue to teach American fiction and nonfiction. I follow a loose chronological order, but often insert works out of chronology and include the historical background of the work. A study of the rhetoric of the 1960’s fits in perfectly with our study of the rhetoric of the American Revolution. A study of the rhetoric of the 1960’s will help my AP students understand the historical, political and emotional aspects of this era, as well as gain a greater understanding of persuasive communication.

BACKGROUND

Postwar America offered optimism for all Americans. Uncle Sam was victorious. The American economy flourished. Home ownership increased. Employment was up—especially for African Americans who had moved to northern and Western urban areas to work in wartime industries (Borland 301). Despite blatant racism in the South (Jim Crow) and *de facto* discrimination in the North, opportunities for minorities increased and raised anticipations. The juxtaposition of black soldiers fighting for democracy abroad and the public lynching of black—still wearing their uniforms and medals—tainted minority optimism with a disappointingly violent and gruesome reality which resulted in more vocal assertions for the US government to provide true democracy at home.

The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) began in the 1950’s as a nonviolent protest against Jim Crow laws in the South. Led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the

movement had its foundation in the religious community and wanted to achieve legal gains through lawful methods. However, when the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) met violent opposition to peaceful attempts to register voters, people began to question nonviolence as a means of achieving real democracy in America. “For while many had adapted nonviolence as an effective tool, they did not share the deep moral and religious commitment to it held by King, and others” (Borland 302). The public debate over how to attain equal rights for minorities (Chicanos, Native Americans, and other groups adopted the CRM procedures) was voiced by religious and community leaders, students, and politicians.

The debate over “By any means necessary” ironically led the way for the second largest public controversy over violence: the Vietnam War. WWII had instilled a fear of the domino effect—that “unchecked aggression” (Borland 315) would result in horrific, global consequences. The fear of communism dominated American foreign policy and resulted in American involvement in warfare. Conflict in Vietnam and Cuba received varying measures of support or protest from Americans; however, the American voices were heard and the rebellion against the “majority” got louder.

The voice of American protest expanded beyond civil rights and foreign policy. The 1960’s voiced objections against environmental pollution, deterioration of public parks, gender stereotyping, and anti-homosexual laws. And all of the rhetoric—from King’s “Let freedom ring” to Malcolm X’s “by any means necessary”—echoes the echoes the voices of the Continental Congress and the founders of this country. The voices, like Andrew Hamilton, who believed “Wise men who value freedom, use our utmost care to support liberty” (8) or like Patrick Henry who believed “There is no retreat but in submission or slavery...The war is inevitable” (20).

Because of the space constraints of this curriculum unit, I present her synopses, samples and comparison of rhetoric from the American Revolution and various causes and movements of the 1960’s. The “Resources” section, however, includes suggested essays on other topics, some of which my students will research and explore as independent readings.

Study of American rhetoric is a study of American democratic experience. After the 1960’s public protest to change government or corporate policy became commonplace. The era of the 60s was the beginning of a nerve-ending voice of protest, but the American Revolution started it all. Study of the speeches and documents of both eras provides students with an understanding of the disparate opinions about what the movements should entail and how those goals would be accomplished.

OBJECTIVES

In AP English Literature and the student is asked to present his or her own analysis of the use of language within a given text. The goal is to help the students be consciously aware of their own processes as readers and as writers. “Rhetoric is the study of context, and that study forms the basis of many writing tasks in the composition class, with assignments such as ones that ask students to use language from a speech or

story to characterize a writer’s purpose or persona, or to consider the variety of effects of an essay on various readers” (College Board 2). The final goal is student awareness of the “linguistic power and expository effectiveness of various writers and prose pieces” (College Board 19).

1. The student will understand and apply the modes of persuasion.
2. The student will understand and apply the modes of organization.
3. The student will analyze rhetorical strategies.
4. The student will recognize fallacies in logic.
5. The student will apply guidelines for effective writing.
6. The student will organize information from reading and research to construct a coherent logical progression of/and support for ideas about civil protest of the 1960’s.

STRATEGIES

Close reading is fundamental in the AP program. Close reading involves dissection of reading passages to gain an overall meaning of the text through attention to details such as structure, patterns, word choice, figurative language, metaphors and imagery, tone, syntax, and manipulation of language (see DIDLS charts in “Classroom Activities”). Students must analyze the effectiveness of rhetorical devices, identify specific rhetorical elements, and develop their own writing by effectively using such devices. Special attention to diction and syntax is imperative. Students must respond to texts in multiple-paragraph essay format. Shorter student writing (such as paragraphs and outlines) provides valid writing practice and offers variety in assignments. Also, shorter pieces offer the opportunity for focusing on specific tasks like syntax diversity or thesis development.

1. Style Analysis (DIDLS)
2. Rhetorical Analysis (including SOAPP, structure and strategies)
3. Large Group Discussions
4. Small Group Practice
5. Independent Reading
6. Oral Recitation
7. Oral Presentation

We begin with a brief overview of the study of rhetoric: methods of persuasion, methods of organization, and elements of style (handouts). Then we read several essays together in class, analyzing style and argument, and devising thesis statements about the rhetorical strategies of the essays. Next, students practice independent reading and analysis, taking copious notes, which they bring to class for discussion. In class discussions, I provide focus questions for discussion. Then, students continue independent reading and devise AP style questions for the essay questions. Finally, students respond to an AP prompt in class for a new essay from the reading list. The final student project will be a presentation in which the students choose a focus and discuss the issue of civil disobedience in the United States in the 1960s including a recitation of a speech or writing, a visual, and an analysis of the

rhetoric of that movement. Possible foci include: Labor-Rights Movement, Desegregation of Public Schools, Women’s Equal Rights Movement, Civil Rights Movement, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, Project Apollo (and the Race to Space), The Cold War, The Green Movement, etc.

Rhetoric of Rebellion– the American Revolution

A legal argument is a perfect starting place for a discussion of rhetoric. A review of Aristotle’s Modes of Persuasion offers beginning terminology to discuss arguments. In large group discussion, I ask students how we persuade people: they will suggest anything from dishonesty to bribery. I guide the discussion to a recognition of Aristotle’s Modes, but in student lingo: practical arguments “good reasons” (Logos); feelings or emotions “make them feel guilty or sympathetic” (Pathos); and personality or character “tell them someone famous or reliable is involved, someone my mom likes” (Ethos). As time goes on, a more detailed discussion of the types of definitions or Logos can be discussed (see “Classroom Activities” below).

Together, we read aloud a brief legal argument and try to identify the Modes of Persuasion utilized. We use the SOAPP chart with the purpose incorporating the speaker’s main thesis. (See “Classroom Activities”.)

“Defense of Freedom of the Press” (1735) by Andrew Hamilton

By recognizing the speaker-audience relationship, we can see that Hamilton’s reference to freedom of religion (7) is an analogy designed to connect his audience to the issue of freedom of speech and, therefore, the innocence of his client, John Zenger. In other words, he argues, in the past, men have broken with tradition and uncovered a new Truth. Since most Northern colonists practiced a Luther-based religion, this is an analogy to which they could relate. Later in his argument, he cites Biblical references to demonstrate the validity of his client’s actions and the necessity of freedom of speech—again, consideration of his audience provides Hamilton with persuasive strategies. His manipulation of asides, shown in print as parentheses, is a clever method of using irony to persuade his audience to disagree with the prosecuting attorney (*innuendo*, the enemy).

Hamilton also uses literary and historical allusions to persuade his audience. In doing so, he assumes they will recognize his references. Of particular strength is a quote from Brutus: “...remember, that you are assisting Caesar to forge those very chains which one day he will make yourselves wear” (8). With those words echoing in the ears of the jury, he makes the famous assertion: “The loss of liberty to a generous mind is worse than death” (8). And the jury agreed, acquitting Zenger of libel, and providing a victory for freedom of the press. [See SOAPP model in “Classroom Activities.”]

Keeping the Modes of Persuasion in mind, we move on to using the two-column note taking procedure (see DIDLS chart in “Classroom Activities”) to itemize

significant words, details, and structures from several persuasive pieces. I have provided brief discussions of the pieces, highlighting the significant rhetorical strategies used in each. As students become comfortable with the process, we add strategies to our procedure: First, group DIDLS; second, group thesis statements; third, group paragraph summaries identifying strategies and effects; fourth, move to partners completing above steps; and finally, individuals complete above steps.

**It is important that discussion is not simply a re-statement of the author's message, but an analysis of HOW the author conveys that message. The hardest part of this process is for students to convey analytical commentary.

“Liberty and Knowledge” (1765) by John Adams

The American privilege of complaining (protesting) began almost three hundred years ago; after two internal wars and three hundred years of rhetoric, it still instigates changes to ensure freedoms. In fact, the founding fathers encouraged protest and viewed education as a requisite for successful protest. Before he became President, John Adams published powerful persuasive pieces in the Boston Gazette. In “Liberty and Knowledge” he uses the anaphora of “Let us,” reiterating the importance of Americans asserting the privilege of protest. Adams encourages knowledge of British, Greek, and Roman history—and our own history and the oppression that led people to leave their homes for a strange land. “Let us dare to read, think, speak, and write...Let us read and recollect and impress upon our souls the views and ends of our own more immediate forefathers in exchanging their native country for a dreary, inhospitable wilderness. Let us examine in to the nature of that power, and the cruelty of that oppression, which drove them from their homes” (13). Adams insists that his audience remember that liberty inspired early settlers to overcome obstacles and persevere. His repetition of “Let us recollect” stresses the importance of remembering previous wrongs, but also emphasizes the success of those who came before, those who fought oppression before; such recollection suggests that the same success is possible for those who fight oppression now. Adams successfully suggests that fighting oppression is an American heritage.

To propagate this success, Adams encourages Americans to embrace religious, civil, and political liberty: Let the church, the law, the colleges, and the public protest (14). Most importantly, Adams asserts *how* Americans should protest: “Let the dialogues, and all the exercises, become the instruments of impressing on the tender mind, and of spreading and distributing far and wide, the ideas of right and the sensations of freedom” (14).

The voice of American protest was clear—Americans embraced and would continue to embrace a rebellion based first on rhetoric, but ultimately on blood.

Common Sense (01/10/1776) by Thomas Paine

The emotional appeals for the American Revolution echoed for years in print, public venues, pulpits, and government meetings. In his fifty-page pamphlet Common Sense, Thomas Paine, arguing against unfair taxation and for colonial independence, urged Americans to fight: “O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth!” Again, the persuasiveness of metaphor—America as a child prospering on the nurture of mother Britain—adds an emotional connotation to the argument by personifying Britain as a self-serving, cannibalistic parent who devours her young. Again, a lengthy delineation of the wrongs done by Britain on Americans justifies the need for independence. Again, rhetorical questions lead to the inevitable dilemma: How can anyone—except a coward—allow atrocities to go unpunished? And, if anyone has been fortunate enough to escape Britain’s monstrosity, then “you are not a judge of those who have” (26). The use of second person seems condemning of anyone who would side with Britain, including Britain.

But Paine provides logical arguments as well as emotional ones. His analogy compares America to a satellite planet and argues it is unnatural for the satellite to be larger than the primary planet and, therefore, America and England should be separate. This natural order, Paine explains, reflects the “natural right” America has for independence.

“Speech to the Second Virginia Convention” (03/23/1775) by Patrick Henry

The rhetorical techniques to prove this “natural right” are endless, but imagery remains one of the most powerful, and rhetorical questions continue to show the obvious answer to any audience. Patrick Henry earned eternal fame for both techniques in his “Speech to the Second Virginia Convention” in 1775. Using the metaphor of light as the truth and temptation as “the song of the siren,” Henry argued for support of the Virginia Militia to fight against the British. An open act of rebellion (or treason), Henry’s rhetoric personifies Great Britain as a villain with an “insidious smile” (18) who betrays America with a kiss. After delineating the wrongs done by the British, Henry provides the current dilemma: “There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending—if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained, we must fight!” (20).

After this treasonous appeal, Henry incites his audience through a series of incendiary emotional exclamatory statements: “Our chains are forged!...The war is actually begun!...give me liberty or give me death!” (20).

The Declaration of Independence (07/04/1776) by Thomas Jefferson

The violence inherent in a war requires a mighty mandate. The Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, was revised by the Continental Congress. As is evident in speeches and documents prior to July 4, 1776, the ideas in The Declaration were not new. (Several arguments, like the denunciation of slavery, and phrasings were revised or omitted by the Congress.) Jefferson culls from taxation protests, abolitionist dogma, and Henry's idea of the "natural order" of freedom. Jefferson's rhetorical techniques, however, remained unchanged. The dilemma which opens the document goes beyond the small geographical conflict of 1776 and establishes a weighty battle for mankind, approved by God: "When in the Course of human events...among the Powers of the earth...the Law of Nature and of Nature's God..." (21). The universality and holiness of his assertion has allowed the document to be plastic and applicable to protest over the ages.

Similar to Patrick Henry's list of wrongs, Jefferson's delineation of King George's evils justifies the rebellion. The repetition ("He has...He has...") places fault with King George, *not* with Britain itself. 75% of the document places blame on the King; the remainder explains the reaction of the United Colonies, now named the "United States of America." The reaction in the document is not one of violence but an assertion of independence of the "Free and Independent States, that they have full Power to levy War..." which establishes the formal threat of violence. Thus, the United States' reliance on rhetorical justification and the possibility of martial action is cemented in the founding principles that insist "All men are created equal" and guaranteed "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

The American Crisis (12/23/1776) by Thomas Paine

Once officially embroiled in the rebellion, Revolutionary rhetoric focused on the trials of war. In December of 1776, Paine published a pamphlet that lamented the now famous line, "These are the times that try men's souls" (28). In an effort to encourage the war and those embittered in it, Paine's emotional propaganda denounces as cowards, the "summer soldier and the sunshine patriot" (28). The Revolution, he asserts, must be arduous and painful because "What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; 'tis dearness only that gives every thing its value" (28).

Again, the rhetoric ensures the approval of God because Americans did attempt to avoid war, but were given no choice by England. Paine repeats violent diction to identify England: "ravaging, ravishment, villain, devils, brutish, murderous, violence." To justify the war, Paine's imagery is brutal: England is a thief who burns homes and kills, an army of villains, a maker of orphans and widows, a cunning fox, a murderous wolf. Against such hostile aggression, goes his argument, the common man has no choice but to rebel, no choice but to resist an immoral aggressor. For the common man, it is common sense. Paine offers a dilemma to his audience: Choose to fight or allow the land to be ravaged, the cities depopulated, homes unsafe, all turned

into slaves, homes as barracks and bowdy houses (29). What choice is there but to weep or weep and fight?

The Sixties and the Rhetoric of Rebellion

There lies the foundation for America's Civil Disobedience—a rhetoric of rebellion. While Americans have always represented a diversity of disparate ideologies and backgrounds, the tradition of protest against unfair subjugation of the basic “unalienable rights” has persevered. American history is rife with protest against slavery, for seceding from the Union, for voting rights, against Jim Crow, for war, against war, against Hitler, for neutrality, for opportunities, against opportunities.

Although at times threatened, Hamilton's argument for a free press and free speech, survived the Cold War and the Red Scare. After the King George-like oppression of the McCarthy era, Americans in the 1960s refused to “suffer it [oppression] unlamented” as Paine had rallied almost 200 years before.

The Civil Disobedience of the 1960s encompassed a multitude of protests: civil rights for minorities, equal rights for women, fair representation for migrant workers, civilian rights to refuse participation in a war on foreign soil. From sit-ins to flag burnings, Americans practiced Civil Disobedience as their forefathers did. However, because Americans were not—for the most part—advocates for severing their relationship with the United States, the protest only rarely relied on violence. Unfortunately, the reaction to such protest was at times more violent and more brutal than the devilish oppression of King George. As a result, Americans involved in protest often fulfilled Thomas Paine's cry that “'Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death” (American Crisis 29).

The Civil Rights Movement (CRM)

“Inaugural Address” (1961) by John F. Kennedy

While John F. Kennedy's “Inaugural Address” in 1961 was not a persuasive *protest*, it was a powerful piece of rhetoric, designed to persuade. The famous line (a great example of the repetition structure known as “chiasmus”), “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country” (317) mirrored the belief that Americans had that they could influence their events in their country. The speech echoed in the ears of millions of young Americans who did indeed believe that they could make their country a better place. In this manner, Kennedy's address provided a pivotal platform for much of the protest soon to follow.

One fundamental aspect of American philosophy in the 1960s was the belief that individuals could make a difference. Also, the American icon of Lady Justice and “liberty for all” permeated the hopeful, post-WWII society of the United States. Kennedy used this optimistic patriotism in his speech: “the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans.” He relied on the American history of fighting

oppression: “We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution” (315). However, Kennedy spoke to a global audience and global concerns of power: “Let every nation know” and “To that world assembly” (315). In speaking of freedom to the world, Kennedy condemned oppression in the form of communism; however, his words echoed in his own land—whether he intended them to or not. Kennedy relies on history (“Our ancient heritage”) and God (“in the trumpet summons”) and on patriotism (“graves of young Americans”) and on bravery (“I do not shrink from this responsibility”) to carry his message against “the common enemies of man: “tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself” (316).

While intended as a diatribe against communism, Kennedy’s global appeal for a “good conscience” (317) found intense response at home. The 1960s would ask America to prove the veracity of her tenets and individuals would try to see what they “can do for your country...for the freedom of man” (317).

Only during pivotal moments in American history like the American Revolution and the Anti-Slavery Movement in the mid-1800’s had America witnessed the level of protest and rebellion as was evident in the 1960s. From song lyrics, to poems, to speeches, to manifestos, Americans clamored for realization of equitable liberty for all people.

“The Port Huron Statement” (1962) by Tom Hayden

A manifesto for the Students for a Democratic Society, “The Port Huron Statement” was written by graduate student Tom Hayden (who later became a politician). “The Port Huron statement was a wide-ranging critique of American society—of racial injustice, the dangers of nuclear war, the failure to develop peaceful atomic energy, the Cold War, the maldistribution of wealth, the political apathy of students, and the exhaustion of liberal ideology” (Ravitch 321). (See questions in “Classroom Activities.”)

(Because the next two pieces are so commonly taught and anthologized, I did not include analyses here in order to save space. Both are excellent and interesting examples of rhetoric. The discussion questions provided should help to focus student analysis.)

“Letter from Birmingham Jail” (1963) by Martin Luther King Jr.

See Discussion Questions in “Classroom Activities.”

“Malcolm X to His Followers” from Autobiography of Malcolm X (1964) by Malcolm X and Alex Haley

Most notably in this excerpt, Malcolm X uses italics to convey his belief that not all white men are devils. He begins by positioning himself as a holy man who has recently been exposed to the heartland of Allah. His description of the Holy Land establishes his sincere tone with legitimate authority from a religious perspective,

especially since he was a minister of Islam. Next, he describes the diversity of participants in religious activities and the brotherhood “that my experience in American had led me to believe could never exist between the white and the non-white” (417).

With his position and purpose established, Malcolm X utilizes italics to portray Words of Truth, his truth, a religious truth. These Words of Truth, like “sincere, spiritual, and true, same God” are applied to the white man whom Malcolm encountered in the Holy Land. These white men were able to be not white but human: they were able to accept the “*reality*, the Oneness of Man” (418).

An elaborated anecdote about a white prince who honored Malcolm X by providing hospitality fit for “a King—not a Negro” (419) reinforces the assertion that Malcolm X has had to “*re-arrange*” and “toss aside” some of his ideas (such as hating all whites and believing that no peaceful co-existence was possible).

At the end, Malcolm X mirrors the beginning of this excerpt by returning the focus to Allah, thus validating his position based on religious grounds.

More on Malcolm X

This tone and attitude contrasts greatly to the speeches Malcolm X had become famous for, rhetoric that mocked King’s nonviolent approach. In an interview, Malcolm X was quoted as saying, “I have no idea [but] I can capsule how I feel—I’m for the freedom of the 22 million Afro-Americans in the United States, by any means necessary.” Advocating or implying violence was not unusual in the rhetoric of Malcolm X or in the Nation of Islam, and as the 1960s neared an end, with only more violence and still unrealized equality, the rhetoric of violence became more popular and more public.

from Black Power (1967) by Stokely Carmichael

(See two-column DIDLS analysis of this section of Black Power in activities.)

In this portion of the manifesto, Carmichael makes four major assertions: First, the nonviolent Civil Rights Movement (CRM) is a tool of the white-middle class; it does not serve young blacks. Second, integration devalues the black community and only serves the black middle-class. Third, race will always be a consideration in public affairs (and the blacks will be negatively affected). Fourth, integration is based on complete acceptance of the fact that in order to have a decent house or education, black people must move into white neighborhoods.

The main thesis is that integration does not serve the needs of most black Americans; instead, it serves the black and white middle-class and belittles the value of the black community.

Carmichael uses several rhetorical fallacies to convey his message. First, he begins with a negative appeal to tradition, arguing that the past is filled with oppression, and therefore, should not be relied upon. He connects the nonviolent CRM with that negative tradition: “old slogan...meaningless rhetoric...irrelevant” (313).

Second, the imagery describes the nonviolent CRM as useless. The simile of a “buffer zone” connotes a place where nothing happens, therefore, a useless place. . In sharp contrast is the imagery of the white populace: “rampaging white mobs...white night-riders” (313).

Carmichael offers valid examples of reasons for the black populace to be angry about the image of MLK being slapped (an interesting use of irony) and little black girls being bombed. Carmichael effectively portrays the nonviolent movement as a weak opposition to the violent white foes. The leadership is “so-called” and “bow[s] its head and get[s] whipped” (313), a false dilemma because the only result of nonviolence, according to Carmichael, is that the protester becomes a victim to be beaten; therefore, passivity is futile.

Finally, the simple declarative statement: “Black people should and must fight back” (313) juxtaposed with images of white violence, seems logical and valid. The sudden switch to the second-person pronoun “you” makes the reader, respond affirmatively to Carmichael’s plea. “Nothing more quickly reels someone bent on destroying you” (313) justifies a violent reaction. whether the audience is black or white—how can anyone be expected to *not* defend himself from ‘rampaging mobs’ who bomb little girls and slap respected ministers in the face?

Is Violence Necessary? — A Controlled Debate

Comparing King’s nonviolence advocacy to Carmichael’s argument for fighting violence with violence can elicit stimulating class discussion. However, because of the sensitive nature of such discussion, teachers should create firmly established ground rules of respect. To prepare for such a discussion, I would have students free-write pro and con, advocating the perspective of each position. Then, assign the sides as if it were a debate. Students must discuss the issue from the side assigned; then, we switch sides, and continue the discussion. Remind the students that heated debate is not healthy discussion. Our purpose in this activity is to explore ideas, to try to understand other perspectives, not to mandate ideology.

“On the Death of MLK” (4/4/1968) by Robert Kennedy

Through several anaphoras and consideration of audience, Robert Kennedy presents a compassionate attitude and an insistence on peace. Speaking in an impoverished black area of Indianapolis on the night of King’s assassination, Kennedy was the one to inform the crowd of MLK’s death. In consideration of the volatile circumstance, Kennedy reminds the audience they are people “who love peace” before he announces the assassination. Second, he reminds the audience of MLK’s devotion “to love and to justice”—parallelism which establishes the equality of the two goals and the importance of respecting King’s desires. Next, Kennedy uses his first anaphora

citing the time as “In this difficult day, in this difficult time” (347). The repetition connected with the asyndeton establishes equality of burdens—during this trying time which now includes King’s death, the audience is reminded to uphold King’s mandate for peace. Kennedy’s fourth strategy uses the repetition of “what”: “What kind of nation we are and what direction we want to move in” to establish that definition is required—what will the audience do in response to King’s death is a conscious decision.

Great length is given to description of the two choices facing the audience which basically presents a simple dilemma: bitter hatred (and implied violence) or understanding “with compassion and love” (347). The second choice is the desire of the fallen leader “as MLK did” which appeals to the authority of the now-dead leader. This tactic should encourage the audience *not* to be violent because King’s life was opposed to violence; therefore, violence now would dishonor his life.

Kennedy repeats the phrase “For those of you who are black” twice which acknowledges that his audience is different from him and experiences a different perspective but then he asserts that he shares this same feeling because he too lost a beloved leader, his brother, at the hands of an assassin. Thus, the emotional appeal is validated as sincere.

Repetition provides reinforcement of Kennedy’s major ideas. Repeating “we have to make an effort,” Kennedy emphasizes the need existing in order to accomplish the goals of equality. Kennedy relies on anaphoras to present the message of non-violence: “what we need..” (348). The repetition of “a prayer” reinforces the message of a peace and love so necessary at such a crucial time. Toward the end of the speech, Kennedy repeats “We” as proof that although different, the black and white citizens of this country face the “difficult time” together. Racial inequity and violence are the nation’s problem, not just the problem of one group.

Kennedy uses an anaphoric tri-colon to assert the difficulty of times to follow: “It is not the end of violence; it is not the end of lawlessness; it is not the end of disorder” (348). Yet, Kennedy asserts hope for the future, repeating what both blacks and whites want: “to live together...to improve the quality of life...” and to provide “justice for all” (348).

Finally, Kennedy uses an anaphora reminiscent of John Adams’ argument in “Liberty and Knowledge.” Like Adams, Kennedy encourages his audience to collectively embrace an ideal and to attempt a unified goal: “Let us dedicate ourselves...to tame the savageness of man and to make gentle the life of this world” (348). Concluding his persuasive appeal for peaceful protest in changing the nation in mourning the fallen King, Kennedy repeats the universal appeal for prayer.

from Custer Died for Your Sins (1969) by Vine Deloria, Jr.

Deloria begins with an oxymoron that provides the structure for the rest of the excerpt. “One of the finest things about being an Indian is that people are always

interested in you and your “plight.” The oxymoron provides the bitter irony evident throughout the piece. The “finest” thing is to have a “plight.” Deloria provides a list of words that represent negative situations for other groups; thus, the negative tone of the article is set. Using the first person plural pronoun “we,” Deloria appears to speak for a group, asserting that the problems he presents are epidemic, and not just his own personal experience. The word “transparency” creates an ironic tone because the perspective conveyed is not Deloria’s or the Indians’ but the outsider identified as “the white man” (67). The blatant inaccuracy of this perspective is comical and yet tragic because of its affects on the Indian community.

Another example of Deloria’s bitter tone is the irony created by his imagery. The stereotypes of Indians with face paint who wear feathers and grunt is so obvious a misrepresentation as to be humorous and yet not at all funny. It’s funny because we all know it’s not true, but it’s not funny because not everyone understands this—especially in 1969. Deloria uses anecdotes to make the strange become familiar. He talks of singing the national anthem and realizing the irony of the lyrics when sung by Native Americans. The irony is bitter because the patriotism of the Indians is loyalty to a nation whose government decimated the Indian ancestors.

Using an extended analogy, Deloria contrasts the Black CRM to the Indian movement, again, each instance creates irony. The process of degradation and the journey for equality has been different for Blacks and Indians, but each experience has been horrific. Unlike the Blacks, who were treated like “field animals” (68), the Indian was treated like a “wild animal [who] was made into a household pet whether or not he wanted to become one” (68).

Deloria’s persuasive purpose is clear: America has a long, ugly history of racial inequity, which must be recognized and addressed.

“Cesar Chavez to E.L. Barr Jr., President of the California Grape and Tree Fruit League” (1969) by Cesar Chavez

Inspired by the nonviolence of King’s CRM, Cesar Chavez organized the United Farmworkers Union to put an end to unfair labor practices, substandard wages, and unhealthy working conditions (228). In this letter, the speaker is Chavez, the occasion is a successful boycott against the grape industry, during which the industry accused the union of using violence. The audience for the letter is the grape industry’s official organizing board and probably the general public (certainly the letter was provided to news organizations). The purpose of the letter is two-fold: to get the industry to admit no violence was used by the workers, but more importantly, to persuade the industry to bargain with the union.

Chavez portrays an attitude of righteous humility. Words like “sad,” “I appeal” and “in my heart” portray Chavez as nonviolent and humble. He admits that if the union used violence, then Chavez himself is “a failure” and would resign; however, if the industry is lying, God will know. In fact, Chavez uses several references to God and morality as a means to persuade the audience, not only of Chavez’ innocence and righteousness, but also of the industry’s injustices. References to King and Gandhi also reinforce Chavez’s own positioning as a nonviolent leader. Such positioning places the

industry as an evil entity that opposes nonviolent men like King and Gandhi (and Chavez). However, Chavez skillfully provides an outlet for the industry to ‘save face’ when he sympathizes with the demands of public relations and the success of the boycott. The reference to public relations reminds the reader that opposition to the union is not publicly popular.

When Chavez quotes King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” that “Injustice must be exposed,” he also provides evidence of injustice by the agriculture industry. Using a polysyndeton which makes the list seem never-ending, he cites violence and injustice: “kicked and beaten and herded by dogs...and sprayed with poisons” (230). The continued use of repetition in the union’s response to such violence reinforces the good will of the union: “To resist not with retaliation but to overcome with love and compassion, with ingenuity and creativity, with hard work and longer hours...” (230).

Finally, Chavez implies that violence may still result from the prolonged struggle, but he himself never suggests or embraces such violence. Instead, he says, “men are not angels, and time and tide wait for no man” (231). Considering the time frame of this letter—1969— and the violence seen in the nation during that time, such implied threats were very real. However, Chavez’s previous positioning detracts from the sense of threat and creates instead a friendly warning. To reinforce his positioning, Chavez reverts to humble diction in the last paragraph and reasserts his nonviolent mission.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Aristotle’s 3 Modes of Persuasion

- 1. Appeal to Reason (Logos)**
- 2. Appeal to emotions (Pathos)**
- 3. Appeal to personality or character (Ethos)**

SOAPP

S = identify **SPEAKER**; O = identify **OCCASION**; A = identify **AUDIENCE**; P = identify **PURPOSE**; P = modes of **PERSUASION**

SOAPP technique is an important first strategy when beginning to read a passage. It is also a convenient mnemonic for structuring introductions. Considering speaker, occasion, audience, and purpose is imperative when analyzing rhetorical strategies of persuasive pieces.

	identify	explain importance or effect
S		
O		
A		
P		
P		

DIDLS

The DIDLS mnemonic, provided by the College Board AP program, is a useful tool to aid in style analysis for prose and poetry. In my class, DIDLS becomes a daily task in most reading from editorials in the newspaper to novels, to nonfiction essays, to poetry. By separating the literary work into its parts and analyzing the effects of individual pieces, the student can ascertain how a holistic sense (like a message or theme) is achieved and how arguments are bolstered or weakened.

D = DICTION (author's word choice); I = IMAGERY; D = DETAILS;
 L = LANGUAGE (FORMAL, INFORMAL, SLANG, SCHOLARLY, ETC.);
 S = SYNTAX (SENTENCE STRUCTURE, ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN)

Text Detail	Commentary
LIST SPECIFIC QUOTE OR EXAMPLE	Explain how item contributes to significance of overall message.
p. #	
DICTION:	How does the word choice contribute to the author's tone, the mood of the reader, the impact of the message?
IMAGERY	How does a specific image or description contribute to the overall effect of the passage? Does the image allude to a specific experience?
DETAILS	Details include descriptions, repetitions, statistics, sources of authority, examples, anecdotes, or other kinds of elaboration. How do the details affect the tone, shape the mood, and construct the argument? Memories might provide a nostalgic mood while statistics might produce a scientific tone.
LANGUAGE	Is the language formal, informal, scholastic, slang, complicated, or simple...and how does the type of language effect the tone, theme, etc.
SYNTAX	Syntax refers to structure of sentences. Short sentences can create discomfort or attract attention. Comma splices can create a sense of panic or disorientation.

SOAPP practice for “Defense of Freedom of the Press”

	identify	explain importance or effect
S	lawyer Andrew Hamilton	students may or may not recognize significance of Hamilton as an early American leader and on the weight of his authority
O	pre-American Revolution, court argument	the validity and persuasive nature of the argument is universal, beyond the time period; however, the time frame can help students recognize the weight of the argument (AP does often provide brief introductions or dates of pieces)
A	jury, judges, assumed to contain both members loyal to the English Crown and members frustrated with Crown limitations	the diversity of the audience requires that Hamilton truly persuade the validity of his argument—the students shouldn’t assume an argument is a good one because it validates their own opinions
P	argue validity of a free press in order to absolve client—the liberty to complain is freedom; without it one is a slave: “The loss of liberty to a generous mind is worse than death” (7)	equating free press, free speech, to freedom itself, is powerful; he argues that without the ability to speak one’s mind, there is no true freedom
P	Pathos (slavery analogy) and Logos (reasons enumerated) and Ethos (continued reference to God and biblical support for said freedom)	While the logos is strong, the pathos is the strongest: without free speech there is no freedom and all men are slaves. That is a powerful, moving argument.

AP Language Sample Prompts

- 1) Read the following passage...In a well-organized essay, analyze the language and the rhetorical devices that the author uses to convey his/her point of view.
- 2) Read the following passage...In a well-organized essay, analyze how the author's presentation of events in the passage suggests his/her attitude toward _____. You might consider such elements as narrative structure, selection of detail, manipulation of language, and tone.
- 3) Read the following passage...In a well-organized essay, write a carefully reasoned, persuasive essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies this assertion. Use evidence from your observation, experience, or reading to develop your position. (This type of prompt does not require reference to the prompt other than the thesis or point of view established. The student should establish a unique argument using outside evidence.)
- 4) Read the following passage...In a well-organized essay, define the author's attitude toward _____ and analyze how the author conveys that attitude.
- 5) Read the following passage...Then write a carefully reasoned essay evaluating the author's argument.
- 6) **"Defense of Freedom of the Press"**: Then write a carefully reasoned essay evaluating Hamilton's argument.
- 7) **"Kennedy's Inaugural Address"**: In a well-organized essay, define the Kennedy's purpose and analyze how he conveys that purpose.
- 8) **"The Port Huron Statement"**: In a well-organized essay, analyze Haydon's attitude toward the established American society and analyze how he conveys that attitude.
- 9) **"Letter from Birmingham Jail"**: In a well-organized essay, define King's attitude toward violent protest and analyze how he conveys that attitude.
- 10) **"March on Washington/I Have a Dream"**: Analyze King's rhetorical strategies including metaphor and repetition to convey his optimistic message.
- 11) **from Black Power** : In a well-organized essay, write a carefully reasoned, persuasive essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Carmichael's assertion that race will always be a consideration in public affairs. Use evidence from your observation, experience, or reading to develop your position. (This type of prompt does not require reference to the prompt other than the thesis or point of view established. The student should establish a unique argument using outside evidence.)

12) **“On the Death of MLK”**: In a well-organized essay, analyze the language and the rhetorical devices that the Kennedy uses to convey his/her point of view.

13) **from Custer Died for Your Sins**: In a well-organized essay, analyze how the author’s presentation of events in the passage suggests his position on what white people expect Indians to be and who/what Indians really are. You might consider such elements as narrative structure, selection of detail, manipulation of language, and tone.

“The Port Huron Statement” (1962) by Tom Hayden Discussion Questions:

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph?
2. What authority is implied in the second paragraph?
3. What is the purpose of the third paragraph?
4. How does the fourth paragraph utilize the Pathos of Ad Populum (appeal to the crowd—appealing to irrational fears and prejudices)?
5. Paragraph five utilizes what modes of persuasion? Cite examples.
6. What is the effect of the anaphora “not only did” in paragraph 6?
7. In the sixth paragraph, find contrasting diction that vividly represents the two views of the United States. Explain each.
8. What is the effect of the anaphora “beneath the” in paragraph seven?
9. Examine the verbs in paragraph seven. What dominant mood is set by those verbs?
10. Examine the imageries produced by “glaze” and “spark” in paragraph eight. What analogy is created through these images?
11. The overriding purpose is stated in the last line of paragraph eight. Paraphrase it in your own words.
12. How does the last line make an appeal to tradition?

“Letter from a Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King Discussion Questions

1. Who is the speaker? Identify his profession and his background.
2. Who is the audience? (Student should recognize that King is speaking to clergymen as well as a general audience.)

3. What is the occasion? How does that affect his persuasive position? (Help students connect to Thoreau's writing of On Civil Disobedience.)
4. What is King's purpose in this letter?
5. What persuasive modes does King utilize?
6. Outline the steps of the argument.
7. Identify his four components of a nonviolent campaign and give his examples of each step.
8. Identify his definitions of "just" and "unjust" laws and explain why King asserts we must obey "unjust" laws.
9. What obstacles (to justice for blacks) does King identify?
10. Find stylistic features (including figurative language and put them on a DIDLS chart with appropriate analysis in the CM column as to *how* the style provides persuasion.
11. On a DIDLS chart, identify the historical allusions and analyze their rhetorical impact. Look them up in an encyclopedia if necessary.
12. Find one quotation in the letter that is significant or interesting to you (for example, "Groups tend to be more immoral than individuals"). Do a 20-minute speed-write on this topic. Write about the issue in general, not in King's speech. Use specific evidence to support your discussion (other than King's speech). Follow the SAT 2 20-minute essay format.

from Black Power by Stokely Carmichael (1967) sample DIDLS

<u>Text Detail</u>	<u>Commentary</u>
<p>p. 313</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “old slogan” 2. “meaningless rhetoric” “Language of yesterday is irrelevant” list: progress, non-violence, integration 3. buffer zone 4. “speak...” 5. “so-called leaders” 6. MLK slapped, little black girls bombed 7. “We” 8. “old language” 9. “bow its head & get whipped into a meaningful position of power” 10. “they” 11. “admonitions” 12. “rampaging white mobs” & “white night-riders” 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. asserts modern progressive stature of Black Power movement 2. makes the non-violent movement seem out-of-date & ineffective -become passive & ineffectual terms 3. simile-shows non-violent CRM as a place where nothing happens 4. the calm voice of CRM doesn’t represent most young, angry blacks 5. blatant disrespect for CRM leaders 6. examples offer valid reasons for blacks to be angry 7. authors include themselves in past “blame”—by doing so, the assertion of what must <u>now</u> be done, comes readily 8. continued assertion of ineffectual steps of past 9. asserts futility of passivity because the victim is beaten 10. refers to blacks but seems to denote the ‘deserving’ black populous 11. connected to the ineffectual “language”—supports critical view of the non-violent CRM 12. connotes all white racism as violent which requires violent response (also generalizes all whites as racist)

READING LIST

Borland, ed. "Liberty for All." America Through the Eyes of Its People. 2nd edition..

Carmichael, Stokely, from Black Power. Borland, ed. "Liberty for All." America Through the Eyes of Its People. 2nd edition

Carson, Rachel. "Silent Spring." 323-325 (1962) The American Reader Words That Moved a Nation. ed. Ravitch, Diane, New York: 1991. Rachel Carson was the first environmentalist to create a public outcry about environmental deterioration. If taken in small pieces, students can negotiate this material.

Chavez, Cesar. "Letter to E.L. Barr, Jr." (1969) Letters of a Nation Carroll, Andrew, ed. New York: Kodansha International, 1997, 228-232. Chavez urges the agri-business to negotiate with his labor union.

Deloria, Vine, Jr. "Custer Died for Your Sins." Diverse Identities Classic Multicultural Essays. ed. Lester, James D. Illinois: NTC Publishing Group, 1996, 65-68. An excerpt from his book by the same name, Deloria was one of the first Native Americans to publish rhetorical protest against the United States for its treatment of Native Americans. The anthology is a wonderful collection of essays organized by theme and is perfect for the high school classroom.

Hayden, Tom. "The Port Huron Statement." 321-322 (1962) The American Reader Words That Moved a Nation. ed. Ravitch, Diane, New York: 1991. This is a rhetorical announcement that symbolizes the nonviolent attitude of movements during the 1960's.

Kennedy, John F. "Inaugural Address." 315-317 (1963) The American Reader Words That Moved a Nation. ed. Ravitch, Diane, New York: 1991. This is the famous speech that includes, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." This speech had a profound influence on young people, who embraced its idealism.

Kennedy, John F. "Speech at the Berlin Wall." (1963) The American Reader Words That Moved a Nation. ed. Ravitch, Diane, New York: 1991, 330-331. A short but moving speech, Kennedy famous line was 'I, too am a Berliner.'

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." (1963) 325-329. This famous piece of rhetoric provides an excellent example of "civil disobedience," the idea of how protest against the law, publicly disobeying the law, can evoke positive change. Paired with Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience," these two essays should help students discuss when breaking the law is foolish and when it is a valid means to achieving change.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "The March on Washington Address." (1963) The American Reader Words That Moved a Nation. ed. Ravitch, Diane, New York: 1991, 331-334. Famous for the repetition of "I Have a Dream," the speech is much longer than most students realize (usually it is excerpted). The rhetorical strategies are brilliant and should provide an excellent model for student writing.

Malcolm X. "To His Followers." (1965) from The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Alex Haley. New York: Ballantine Nooks, 1973. Excerpted from the autobiographical novel, this piece of narrative expresses Malcolm X's point of view toward the end of his life. The entire book is a wonderful read and students will enjoy it.

Minow, Newton. "Address to the Broadcasting Industry." 318-320 (1961) The American Reader Words That Moved a Nation. ed. Ravitch, Diane, New York: 1991. Minow criticizes the quality of television and the amount of television viewed by children. This essay provides a wonderful stepping stone to a discussion of this issue today. Finding sample shows and commercials from then and now would be a wonderful student project.

Ravitch, Diane, ed. The American Reader Words That Moved a Nation. New York: 1991. This anthology includes speeches, letters, essays, poems and songs in chronological order. An excellent guide to American ideas. The book definitely provides a positive outlook on American history. This is a wonderful tool for student research.

Stegner, Wallace. "The Wilderness Idea." (1969) The American Reader Words That Moved a Nation. ed. Ravitch, Diane, New York: 1991, 349-350. Following the lead of Edward Abbey, Stegner protests the over-utilization of American wilderness, including national parks and forests.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR TEACHERS

“A Guide for Advanced Placement English Vertical Teams.” The College Board
Advanced Placement Program.

Ayres, Alex, ed. *The Wit and Wisdom of Mark Twain*. New York: Harper & Row,
1987. Organized by theme, this book provides witty and insightful Twain
quotes about almost any topic

Corbett, Edward P. J. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. New York: Oxford
University Press, 1999. This is a serious college text that provides an
introduction to a formal study of rhetoric.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing With Power*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press,
1998. Peter Elbow is famous as an inspirational teacher of writing and teacher
to teachers of writing. This book is full of helpful hopeful thoughts about the
writing process.

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. This novel is a wonderful
story, and Hurston’s control of style is an excellent example of the
manipulation of language in fiction.

Lunsford, Andrea. *The New St. Martin’s Handbook*. New York: St. Martin’s press,
1998. An introductory text for freshmen in college, this text is a fabulous guide
for the teaching of rhetoric. Organized in an easy to use style, the book offers
practical lessons and examples. Also, Lunsford includes valuable internet web
site addresses and examples of how to document internet sources. This is a
great source that both high school students and teachers will love.