



The Rhetorical Triangle

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Secondary School/ Three Days

Introduction:

By understanding the Aristotle's three elements of persuasive speech—the ancient Greek words ethos, pathos and logos—students will be able to analyze the effectiveness of rhetorical strategies and elements in commercials and speeches. This lesson could be used in grades 5-12. In Lesson Activity Two, there are links to resources that allow the teacher to choose appropriate texts for their students.

Learning Objectives:

- Explain the difference between ethos, pathos and logos
- Explain how advertisers use the Rhetorical Triangle to persuade a specific audience
- Define and identify 11 different rhetorical elements

Guiding Questions:

- How do we persuade others to see our point of view?
- Why do we remember certain speeches?
- What techniques do advertisers use to persuade us?
- What techniques do speakers use to make their speeches memorable?

Common Core Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4](#) Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Materials/Requirements:

- Image of Aristotle (<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/highsm.13760/>)
- Class Set of *Rhetorical Triangle and Appeals* Worksheets
- Rhetorical Devices “Puzzle Pieces,” cut up and laminated
- Rhetorical Devices Worksheet
- Sample Speeches
- Effect Worksheet
- Class set of colored pencils in blue, green and red
- Access to YouTube.com
- Optional: Set of class-appropriate advertising images

Procedures:

- Lesson Activity One: Introduction to Aristotle
 - o Using Visual-Thinking Strategies, students are introduced to Aristotle, the father of the Rhetorical Triangle.

- Lesson Activity Two: The Rhetorical Triangle and Ethos, Pathos and Logos as a Class
 - o Working as a class, students identify the use of ethos, pathos and logos in several commercials.
- Lesson Activity Three: The Rhetorical Triangle and Ethos, Pathos and Logos in Groups
 - o Students identify use of ethos, pathos and logos in small groups. There are four different suggested activities to do this.
- Lesson Activity Four: The Rhetorical Triangle and Ethos, Pathos and Logos in Speeches
 - o Students identify the use of ethos, pathos and logos in speeches.
- Lesson Activity Five: Rhetorical Devices
 - o Using a jigsaw, student define additional major rhetorical devices and provide examples of their own.
- Lesson Activity Six: Rhetorical Devices in Speeches
 - o Students find and analyze the effect of rhetorical devices in speeches.

Lesson Activity One: Introduction to Aristotle

Show students the picture of Aristotle linked above, covering Aristotle's name. Ask students who they think he is. What job might he have? Tell students that this is the picture of the door of the National Academy of Sciences, which is a society of scientists that was founded by an Act of Congress and signed into existence by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. More than 500 members of the Academy have been awarded Nobel Prizes. Ask what might qualify a person to be pictured on the door of the National Academy of Science.

After students have inferred what kind of person Aristotle was and how long ago he lived (more than 2000 years ago), let them know that he is still considered one of the leading scholars of persuasion. His book, *Rhetoric*, is still taught in colleges around the world to teach students how to be persuasive. Tell them that they will be learning about Aristotle's theories of persuasion today. These theories include the Rhetorical Triangle and the Rhetorical Appeals of Ethos, Pathos and Logos.

Lesson Activity Two: The Rhetorical Triangle and Ethos, Pathos and Logos as a Class

Pass out The Rhetorical Triangle and Rhetorical Appeals worksheet. Define *Persuasion* as a class. You could have students look it up in a dictionary or have them come up with meanings in groups and then vote for the best definition. They could also combine the different definitions from each group to create a class definition. You should decide on which approach works best for your class, considering time constraints.

Explain to students: To understand how speeches or advertisements persuade, you should consider five questions:

1. Who is the Speaker?
2. What is the Message?
3. Who is the Audience?

4. What Methods is the Speaker employing to Persuade?
5. What is the Desired Result or Action to be Taken?

Review the following as a class: The interaction between message (subject), speaker (communicator, writer) and audience (listener, reader). There is a space to take notes on the front of the Rhetorical Triangle and Rhetorical Appeals Worksheet.

1. The Subject (message):
 - The interaction of these elements determines the structure and language of the argument (the text/image that establishes a position)
 - Skilled communicators first choose a **subject** and then evaluate: what they know about it, what others have said about it, and what evidence/proof will help develop an effective position.
2. The Speaker (communicator/writer):
 - Need to identify the speaker; not as easy as it may sound. The speaker is the person/company who created the text.
 - Often assume a **persona**: the character that the speaker/writer creates, which depends on the context, purpose, subject and audience:
 - Poet
 - Comedian
 - Scholar
 - Expert or novice
 - Critic
 - Concerned citizen
3. The Audience (listener/reader):
 - Each audience requires the writer/speaker to use different information to present their argument effectively.
 - Consider the difference between:
 - Essay for college application
 - Letter to a prospective employer
 - Letter to a newspaper about a newly proposed policy by an elected official
 - Questions to consider:
 - What does the audience know about the subject?
 - What is their attitude toward it?
 - Is there common ground between the audience and speaker’s views on the message?

Have students watch the following advertisements on YouTube to explore how each part of the rhetorical triangle is used.

Upper Elementary and Middle School	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pathos: Original Goldie Blox Commercial or the Crying Indian (Keep American Clean) · Logos: Mac vs PC Commercial on Viruses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pathos: “Daisy Girl” 1964 Lyndon Johnson Presidential Advertisement · Logos: ZzzQuil Commercial Sleep of Vicks · Ethos: Discovery Channel - The

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ethos: Vitamin Water Commercial with David Ortiz and Brian Urlacher · Use of all three methods: Terry Crews Old Spice Power Commercial (16 Hour B.O. Blocker) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World is Just Awesome (Boom De Yada) · Use of all three methods: Sarah McLachlan SPCA Commercial
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After each commercial have students answer the persuasion questions on the worksheet. Make sure you define pathos (appeal to emotion), logos (appeal to logic) and ethos (appeal to credibility) to students before each commercial.

Lesson Activity Three: The Rhetorical Triangle and Ethos, Pathos and Logos in Groups

Have students look at five different advertisements and fill out the persuasion chart included in the Rhetorical Triangle and Rhetorical Appeals Worksheet.

Option One (Student-Directed): Have a stack of magazines for students to look through and fill out the chart after choosing five advertisements.

Option Two (Teacher-Curated): Print out copies of the 10 advertisements, from which students can choose five to analyze.

You can choose a set of ads to focus on a particular time period or issue. Here are a couple recommended resources:

- Modern Advertisements: L’Oreal, Subway, Nike, Beats by Dre, Weight Watchers, PC and Chipotle
- Historical Advertisements:
 - Library of Congress - Yankee Poster Collection: <http://www.loc.gov/collections/yanker-posters/about-this-collection/>
 - This collection includes many advertisements on the Environment, Vietnam War, Women’s Equality, Nuclear Power, Civil Rights and Elections.
 - Library of Congress - WPA Poster Collection: <http://www.loc.gov/collections/works-progress-administration-posters/about-this-collection/>
 - This collection includes Travel and Tourism Advertisements for the early 20th century as well as posters related to World War II.
 - Newseum - Presidential Elections <https://newseumed.org/our-edcollections/>
 - Presidential Campaigns <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>

Option Three (TV Homework): Have students take home the worksheet and fill it out after watching several commercials on TV that night.

Option Four (Internet Ads): Have students search for their own commercials on computers in the classroom.

Lesson Activity Four: The Rhetorical Triangle and Ethos, Pathos and Logos in Speeches

On the board, display the following selections from famous historical speeches:

- “But I am free from American slavery, after wearing the galling chains on my limbs 53 years, nine of which it has been my unhappy lot to be the slave of Henry Clay.”
- Lewis Richardson, “My Grave Shall Be Made in Free Soil,” March 13, 1846
 - o “It is cold, and we have no blankets; the little children are freezing to death.”
- Chief Joseph, “I Will I Fight No More Forever,” October 5, 1877
 - o “There was but one college in the world where women were admitted, and that was in Brazil.”
- Lucy Stone, “A Disappointed Woman,” October 17, 1855

Using random calling strategies, ask students to identify which rhetorical appeal the speaker employs, as well as hypothesize why the speaker might use that strategy.

Pass out the copies of a speech. We’ve provided copies of speeches by Sotomayor, Reagan and Nehru, but this activity would work well with any speech.

Each student should have three pencils, one each of blue, green and red. They should read through their speech (either in small groups or independently) and mark examples of the speaker/writer ethos (green), logos (blue) and pathos (red). There is a question about rhetorical device after the speech. That question is for Lesson Activity Six.

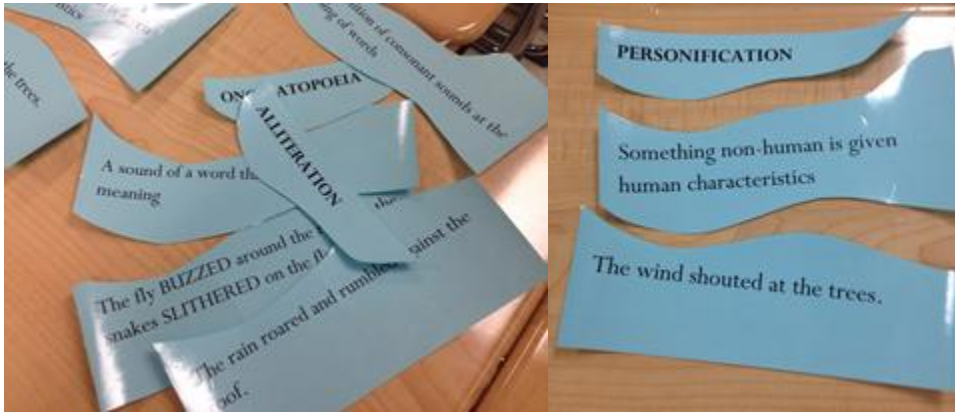
After students have marked up their speeches, have them pick three examples and complete the Effect Worksheet. This can be turned in for assessment or used to start a class discussion.

Lesson Activity Five: Rhetorical Devices

Begin class by asking students what is the most famous speech ever given and justify their answers. Eventually someone will say “I Have a Dream.” Make sure you address why they think it’s so famous. Tell students that rhetorical devices help make a speech memorable and Martin Luther King, Jr. ,was a master at using them in his speeches.

Give each student one or two Rhetorical Device puzzle pieces. It is very important that you cut up each page into three parts. Make sure you cut them differently so only the correct piece fits with each term. You could even print some of them in different colors to make it easier for students to find the matches.

Once students have put together all of the puzzle pieces, they should go around the room and copy down the definitions and examples on their note sheet. After copying down all the definitions and examples, students should come up with their own examples.



Lesson Activity Six: Rhetorical Devices in Speeches

Have students look at the selection of “I Have a Dream” on their Rhetorical Devices note sheet. Have them see how many rhetorical elements they can find. Give students about five minutes to find as many as they can. After the five minutes, use a random calling strategy to call on students. They should share one example they found. Make sure all examples are captured on the board so that students can copy down any they missed. Ask students how these devices helped make this speech memorable. They should also discuss whether or not the example uses ethos, pathos or logos.

Using the speeches that they colored coded in lesson activity four, students should mark any rhetorical elements they find in the speech. You could also have students work in groups and assign different parts of the speech to different students. They should finish by reflecting on how these devices helped make the speech more memorable. This reflection can be done in a Socratic Seminar.

Note: This lesson is an introduction to the Rhetorical Triangle, Rhetorical Appeals and Rhetorical Devices. Students will need to work with them again and again to become masters in the Rhetorical Process.

Assessment:

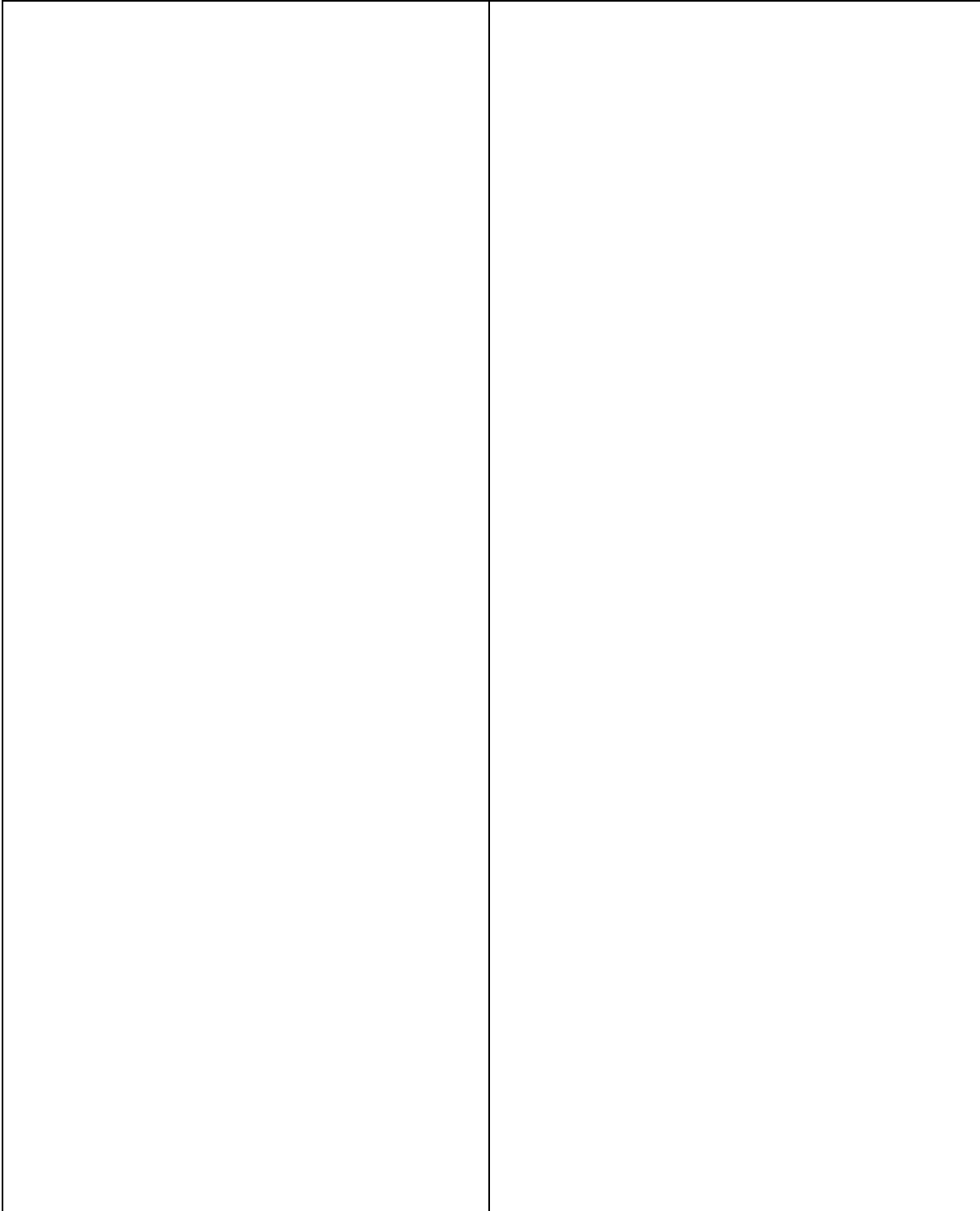
In Lesson Activity Three, students work on their own or in groups to analyze modern advertisements and the persuasion chart can be used as assessment. In Lesson Activity Four, the Effect Worksheet can be used for assessment. In Lesson Activity Six, the final question on the worksheet lets you assess student learning.



Name: _____

Period: _____

Example of Ethos, Pathos, or Logos	What is the effect of including this information?
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Ethos, Pathos, Logos and the Effect



Name: _____

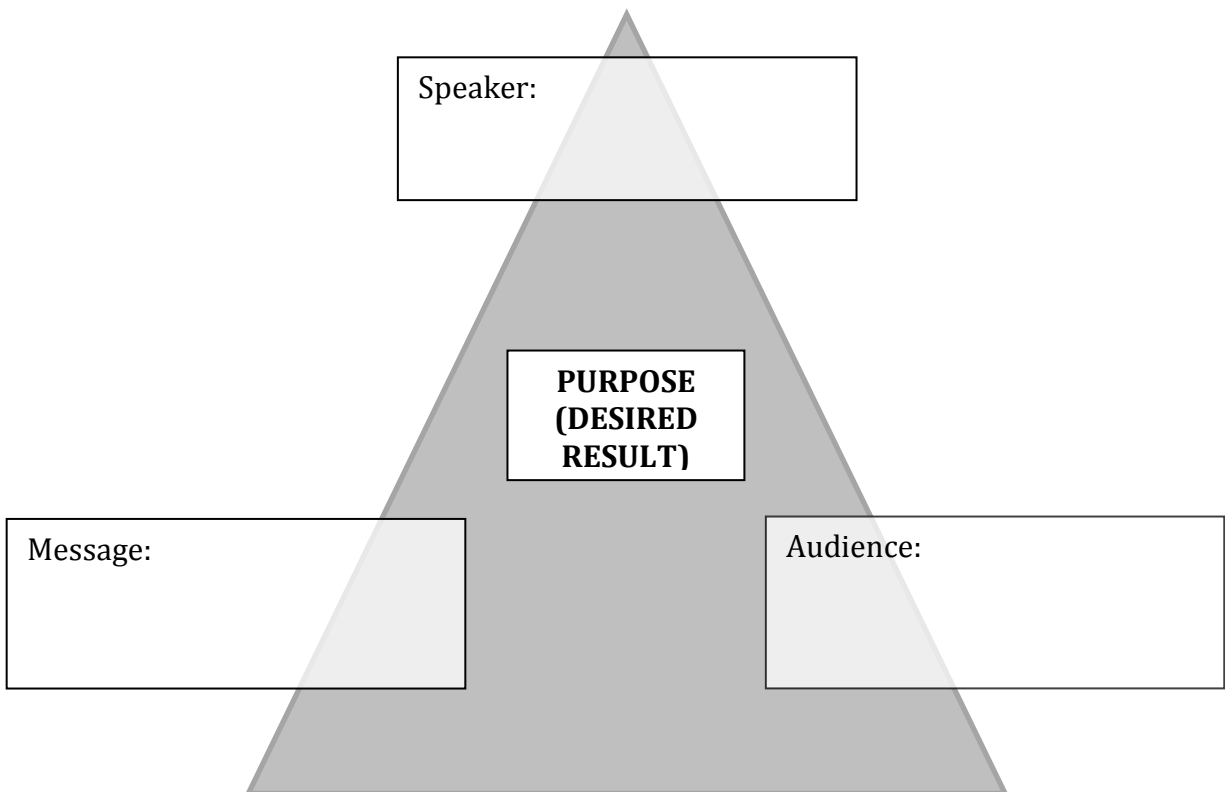
Period: _____

The Rhetorical Triangle and Rhetorical Appeals

Define persuasion: _____

To understand what we are being persuaded to do, we should focus on FIVE questions:

1. Who is the _____?
2. What is the _____?
3. Who is the _____?
4. What _____ are being used to _____?
5. What is the desired _____?



Rhetorical Triangle

Rhetorical Appeals: Three Methods to Persuade:



1. Pathos: Uses emotions to Persuade
 - a. Speaker: _____
 - b. Message: _____
 - c. Audience: _____
 - d. Pathos: _____
 - e. Desired Result: _____
2. Logos: Uses Logic like facts and statistics to Persuade
 - a. Speaker: _____
 - b. Message: _____
 - c. Audience: _____
 - d. Logos: _____
 - e. Desired Result: _____
3. Ethos: Uses a person's credibility and trustworthiness to Persuade
 - a. Speaker: _____
 - b. Message: _____
 - c. Audience: _____
 - d. Ethos: _____
 - e. Desired Result: _____

How does the last commercial use all three techniques?

Pathos: _____

Logos: _____

Ethos: _____

Speaker	Message	Audience	Method	Result
	LOGOS		ETHOS	
		PATHOS		

Name: _____

Period: _____

Rhetorical Appeals in Speeches

Read over the following text. Find and color code any rhetorical appeals you notice.

Excerpt from "A Latina Judge's Voice" by Sonia Sotomayor on May 14, 2009:

Who am I? I am a "Newyorkrican." For those of you on the West Coast who do not know what that term means: I am a born and bred New Yorker of Puerto Rican-born parents who came to the states during World War II.

Like many other immigrants to this great land, my parents came because of poverty and to attempt to find and secure a better life for themselves and the family that they hoped to have. They largely succeeded. For that, my brother and I are very grateful. The story of that success is what made me and what makes me the Latina that I am. The Latina side of my identity was forged and closely nurtured by my family through our shared experiences and traditions...

Being a Latina in America also does not mean speaking Spanish. I happen to speak it fairly well. But my brother, only three years younger, like too many of us educated here, barely speaks it. Most of us born and bred here, speak it very poorly...

America has a deeply confused image of itself that is in perpetual tension. We are a nation that takes pride in our ethnic diversity, recognizing its importance in shaping our society and in adding richness to its existence. Yet, we simultaneously insist that we can and must function and live in a race and color-blind way that ignore these very differences that in other contexts we laud. That tension between "the melting pot and the salad bowl" -- a recently popular metaphor used to describe New York's diversity - is being hotly debated today in national discussions about affirmative action. Many of us struggle with this tension and attempt to maintain and promote our cultural and ethnic identities in a society that is often ambivalent about how to deal with its differences. In this time of great debate we must remember that it is not political struggles that create a Latino or Latina identity. I became a Latina by the way I

love and the way I live my life. My family showed me by their example how wonderful and vibrant life is and how wonderful and magical it is to have a Latina soul. They taught me to love being a Puertorriqueña and to love America and value its lesson that great things could be achieved if one works hard for it...

There are still nearly 37 district courts with no women judges at all. For women of color the statistics are more sobering. As of September 20, 1998, of the then 195 circuit court judges only two were African-American women and two Hispanic women. Of the 641 district court judges only twelve were African-American women and eleven Hispanic women. African-American women comprise only 1.56% of the federal judiciary and Hispanic-American women comprise only 1% ...

I also hope that by raising the question today of what difference having more Latinos and Latinas on the bench will make will start your own evaluation. For people of color and women lawyers, what does and should being an ethnic minority mean in your lawyering? For men lawyers, what ... attitudes do you need to work on to make you capable of reaching those great moments of enlightenment which other men in different circumstances have been able to reach? For all of us, how do change the fact that in every task force study of gender and race bias in the courts...a statistically significant number of women and minority lawyers and judges... have experienced bias in the courtroom?

Look over the rhetorical devices that Sotomayor uses in her speech. What affect do they have in her overall speech? Include specific examples to defend your claim.

Name: _____

Period: _____

Rhetorical Appeals in Speeches

Read over the following text. Find and color code any rhetorical appeals you notice.

Excerpt from "Tear Down This Wall" by Ronald Reagan on June 12, 1987.

General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

I understand the fear of war and the pain of division that afflict this continent-- and I pledge to you my country's efforts to help overcome these burdens. To be sure, we in the West must resist Soviet expansion. So we must maintain defenses of unassailable strength. Yet we seek peace; so we must strive to reduce arms on both sides.

Beginning 10 years ago, the Soviets challenged the Western alliance with a grave new threat, hundreds of new and more deadly SS-20 nuclear missiles, capable of striking every capital in Europe. The Western alliance responded by committing itself to a counter-deployment unless the Soviets agreed to negotiate a better solution; namely, the elimination of such weapons on both sides. For many months, the Soviets refused to bargain in earnestness. As the alliance, in turn, prepared to go forward with its counter-deployment, there were difficult days--days of protests like those during my 1982 visit to this city--and the Soviets later walked away from the table.

But through it all, the alliance held firm. And I invite those who protested then-- I invite those who protest today--to mark this fact: Because we remained strong, the Soviets came back to the table. And because we remained strong, today we have within reach the possibility, not merely of limiting the growth of arms, but of eliminating, for the first time, an entire class of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth....

In the Philippines, in South and Central America, democracy has been given a rebirth. Throughout the Pacific, free markets are working miracle after miracle of economic growth. In the industrialized nations, a technological revolution is taking place--a revolution marked by rapid, dramatic advances in computers and telecommunications...

And I invite Mr. Gorbachev: Let us work to bring the Eastern and Western parts of the city closer together, so that all the inhabitants of all Berlin can enjoy the benefits that come with life in one of the great cities of the world.

To open Berlin still further to all Europe, East and West, let us expand the vital air access to this city, finding ways of making commercial air service to Berlin more convenient, more comfortable, and more economical. We look to the day when West Berlin can become one of the chief aviation hubs in all central Europe...

Look over the rhetorical devices that Reagan uses in his speech. What affect do they have in his overall speech? Include specific examples to defend your claim.

Name: _____

Period: _____

Rhetorical Appeals in Speeches

Read over the following text. Find and color code any rhetorical appeals you notice.

Excerpt from “A Tryst with Destiny” by Jawaharlal Nehru on August 14, 1947:

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.

It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity. At the dawn of history India started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her success and her failures. Through good and ill fortune alike she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again.

The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us. Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?

Freedom and power bring responsibility. The responsibility rests upon this assembly, a sovereign body representing the sovereign people of India. Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labor and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now.

That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfill the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity.

The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

And so we have to labor and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India,

ALLITERATION

Repetition of the beginning sound in words

“Boys have been born since that time and have become voters.”
- Anna Howard Shaw, “The Fundamental Principle of a Republic,” June 21, 1915

ALLUSION

An implied or direct reference to a famous person, event, quotation or piece of literature.

"And I can pledge our nation to a goal: When we see that wounded traveler on the road to **Jericho**, we will not pass to the other side."
- George W. Bush, "2000 Inaugural Address," January 20, 2001

Note: This allusion refers to the story of the Good Samaritan from the Bible, which takes place in Jericho.

ANAPHORA

Repetition of the same words or group of words at the beginning of a phrase or sentence

“...it takes a family; it takes teachers; it takes clergy; it takes business people; it takes community leaders; it takes those who protect our health and safety. It takes all of us.”

- Hillary Clinton, “Speech at the Democratic National Convention,” August 27, 1996

METAPHOR

Comparison of two unlike things - a metaphor says something IS another thing, not just like it.

“And several people wrote to me, we should not be the world’s policeman.”

-Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Syria,” September 10, 2013

SIMILE

Comparison of two unlike things using like or as

“Education is like a diamond with many facets.”

- Ronald Reagan, “Proclamation 5463,” April 19, 1986

HYPERBOLE

An exaggeration to make a point

“So first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “First Inaugural Address,” March 4, 1933

ONOMATOPOEIA

Words that sound like what they mean

“Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments [w]ill hum about mine ears.”

- William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1623

PERSONIFICATION

Giving human qualities to an object or idea

“The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you.”

- Dwight D. Eisenhower, “The Eyes of World Are upon You,”
June 6, 1944

RULE OF THREE

Including three equal elements in a sentence or series of sentences. The speaker can reveal three interesting facts, tell three stories, or ask three questions in a row.

“And so I beg you, I beseech you-oh, I implore you to spell in our simplified forms.”

- Mark Twain, “In Behalf of Simplified Spelling,” September 19, 1906

PARALLELISM

Parts of a sentence are grammatically the same to add rhythm and clarity

“I have done some good, offered some service, shed some light, healed some wounds...

- Jesse Jackson, “1984 Democratic National Convention Address,” July 18, 1984

EPISTROPHE

The repetition of a word at the **end** of successive clauses or sentences

“and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth.

- **Abraham Lincoln, “Gettysburg Address,” November 19, 1863**



Name: _____

Period: ____

Rhetorical Devices

Device	Definition	Example	Your Example
Alliteration			
Allusion			
Anaphora			
Antithesis			
Epistrophe			
Hyperbole			
Metaphor			

Device	Definition	Example	Your Example
Onomatopoeia			
Parallelism			
Personification			
Rule of Three			
Simile			

Mark any rhetorical devices you can find in this excerpt:
 Excerpt from “ I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King, Jr. August 28, 1963

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!