

LESSON 3: Spicing Up a Speech

Overview:

This lesson introduces various rhetorical devices for students to employ as they develop their speeches.

Student Objectives:

- Write an attention grabber and a closer
- Listen to speeches and evaluate rhetorical devices
- Apply one or more rhetorical devices in their own speech writing

Materials:

- LCD projector, computer with Internet, and speakers
- Attention Grabbers/Closers handout
- Rhetorical Devices table
- Rhetorical Devices overhead
- Overhead projector

Assessment:

- Attention Grabber/Closer handout

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.D

Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.



BELL-RINGER: Journal entry (5 minutes)

Students respond in their journals to the following questions: *“What catches your attention at the beginning of a speech? How should a good speech end? After a good speech, how should the audience feel?”*



BEFORE: Attention grabber/closers (5–10 minutes)

Have a few students share from their bell-ringer. Ask the class how it would sound if a speech started with “In this speech I will explain to you why drugs are a big problem in our community and why you should stop this problem.” Students should recognize that an opener like that would be very boring. Then ask them how it would sound if a speech ended with “And those are the problems with drugs. I’m done.” Again, they should recognize that a closer like that would not be effective. Distribute the Attention Grabbers/Closers handout and read together. Have students jot down notes for their own speeches.

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DURING: Using rhetorical devices (30–35 minutes)

Explain that today we will examine the ways to spice up a speech with tricks of the trade. Those tricks are called rhetorical devices.

RHETORICAL DEVICE: strategies used to get a particular response from an audience

Have students think about what types of emotions they might want to tap into—anger? fear? excitement? hope?

Distribute the Rhetorical Devices table and read aloud together. Encourage students to think of their own examples. Remind students that today’s lesson is focused on how a speech is written, not how it is delivered. Distribute the Great Speeches: Rhetorical Devices and Appeal handout. Have students read and/or listen to one of the speeches below and complete the handout.

- Barack Obama’s “Yes We Can” speech, New Hampshire
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fe751kMBwms
repetition, imagery
- Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop”
www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm
metaphors, repetition, imagery, hyperbole
- Ronald Reagan’s “Evil Empire” speech
www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/ronaldreaganevilempire.htm
storytelling, appeal to values, imagery



AFTER: Using rhetorical devices in your speech (5 minutes and homework)

Have students go back to their rough drafts and add rhetorical devices to their speeches, and continue for homework. They should pay specific attention to writing a good attention grabber to open their speeches and a compelling closer.

Student Handout: **Attention Grabbers/Closers**

ATTENTION GRABBER

A good speech grabs the audience's attention right at the very beginning. There are a number of ways you can do that:

- Use a quote (e.g., As Gene Tunney said, "Exercise should be regarded as tribute to the heart.")
- Make a strong statement (e.g., Our schools are failing young people.)
- Use a statistic (e.g., 80% of students report being bullied.)
- Tell a story (e.g., I will never forget the day my grandmother died of cancer.)
- Ask a rhetorical question that relates to your topic (e.g., Have you ever felt so scared and unsafe that you would not get out of bed?)
- Pose a hypothetical situation (e.g., Imagine being sent to a country where you don't speak the language or know a single person.)

Think about an original and interesting attention grabber that would work well with your speech and describe it below.

CLOSER

The last thing you say to your audience should stick with them. That is why a good closer is so important. Some powerful ways to end a speech are:

- Summarize the main speech topics or main points
- Refer back to your opener
- Call them to act and offer them how-to-do-it steps (e.g., If everyone in this room called their congressperson...)
- Visualize the outcome of what would happen if the assets you describe were used to address this problem (e.g., Imagine a world where...)
- Transform your central idea into an easy to remember slogan (e.g., The more we share, the more we care.)
- Finish with a clinching personal anecdote (e.g., My neighbor told me of a time...)
- Provide a statistic or fact (e.g., 100 more teens will try to commit suicide by tomorrow...)

Think about how you can end your speech to leave a lasting impression on your audience and write it below.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Rhetorical Devices

Below are some common devices used by speech writers in their appeals:

Rhetorical Device	Definition	Example
Metaphor or Simile	comparison of two unlike things	“... freedom is like a beautiful kite that can go higher and higher with the breeze.” —George Bush, Inaugural Address, 1989
Imagery	sensory details that paint a vivid picture in the audience’s mind	“In the year of America’s birth, in the coldest of months, a small band of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shores of an icy river.” —Barack Obama, Inaugural Address, 2009
Alliteration	repetition of the beginning consonant sounds of a series of words	“All for which America stands is safe today because brave men and women have been ready to face the fire at freedom’s front.” —Ronald Reagan, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Address
Repetition	continued use of certain words or phrases	“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed...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 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.” —Martin Luther King, “I Have a Dream”
Hyperbole	deliberate exaggeration or overstatement	“Why you got scars and knots on your head from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet. And every one of those scars is evidence against the American white man.” —Malcolm X

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Student Handout: Great Speeches: Rhetorical Devices and Appeal

Speaker:

Speech title:

Give examples, if any, of how the speech appeals to the audience's intellect/logical appeals.

Give examples, if any, of how the speech appeals to the audience's emotions.

Give examples of any of the following rhetorical devices used in the speech:

• **metaphor or simile:**

• **imagery:**

• **alliteration:**

• **repetition:**

• **hyperbole:**