

Rhetoric and Argument: Volodymyr Zelensky's Rhetoric and the War in Ukraine

Focus Standards: Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills, ELAR

1. Developing and sustaining foundational language skills: listening, speaking, discussion, and thinking--oral language. The student develops oral language through listening, speaking, and discussion. The student is expected to:
 - A. engage in meaningful and respectful discourse when evaluating the clarity and coherence of a speaker's message and critiquing the impact of a speaker's use of diction and syntax;
5. Response skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student responds to an increasingly challenging variety of sources that are read, heard, or viewed. The student is expected to:
 - A. describe personal connections to a variety of sources, including self-selected texts;
 - B. write responses that demonstrate analysis of texts, including comparing texts within and across genres;
 - C. use text evidence and original commentary to support an analytic response;
 - D. paraphrase and summarize texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order;
 - E. interact with sources in meaningful ways such as notetaking, annotating, freewriting, or illustrating;
 - F. respond using acquired content and academic vocabulary as appropriate;

Focus STEM Mindsets:

Research-based STEM Thinking:

- D. Apply systems thinking to analyze and explain the interaction and influence of related parts on each other, and on outcomes, supporting the analysis with evidence.

Communication:

- B. Use evidence and logic to draw conclusions and support them purposefully in communication.

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

- B. Frame questions, make predictions,

Essential Question:

How can rhetoric change history? How can rhetoric affect imbalances of power?

Summative Assessment:

Analysis performed individually on President Volodymyr Zelensky's address to Congress on March 16, 2022, in comparison with another speech.

- Students will complete a comparative analysis of two speeches, one by President Zelensky and one by another leader speaking during war or conflict.
- [Assignment Sheet](#) with Links to Speeches
- [Graphic Organizer](#) for Comparative Analysis

Questions:

Contact Great Schools Partnership Senior Associates, [Kate Gardoqui](#) or [Don Weafer](#)

DAY 1

Learning Target	Activity	Formative Assessment/ Feedback
<p>5(A) Describe personal connections to a variety of sources, including self-selected texts</p> <p>5(E) interact with sources in meaningful ways such as note-taking, annotating, free-writing, or illustrating</p> <p>Critical Thinking & Problem Solving B. Frame questions</p>	<p>Bellringer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discussion - What do you know about this war? What questions do you have? Have students work together in pairs to list questions.2. Have students use the Question Formulation Technique to help each other improve their questions.3. Post the questions somewhere in the classroom. <p>Lesson - Building background</p> <p>Scroll to the bottom of this page and watch the 8-minute video called "Putin's War On Ukraine, Explained" with students. There are a few ads but it is the best short explanation of the war that I have found.</p> <p>Print copies of this note-taking guide so that students can take notes as they watch. Pause the video frequently to discuss how students are answering the questions on the note taking sheet. Encourage students to ask questions about what they are seeing; it is ok if you don't have the answers. Encourage students to discuss the meaning in what is happening.</p>	<p>Students receive feedback on their questions & work to improve questions</p> <p>Note-taking guide could serve as exit ticket</p>

DAY 2

Learning Target	Activity	Formative Assessment/ Feedback
5(E) interact with sources in meaningful ways such as note-taking, annotating, free-writing, or illustrating	<p>Bellringer</p> <p>Use this activity to begin class.</p> <p>Lesson - Building background</p> <p>Give students paper copies of this article:How To Think About Ukraine in Maps and Charts</p> <p>Then have them use this guide to engage in reading and note-taking. I recommend printing the note-taking sheet and having them fill it out by hand, but you could also make a copy and have them fill it out online.</p>	Students receive feedback on whether they have understood and accurately summarized these sources.

DAY 3

Learning Target	Activity	Formative Assessment/ Feedback
<p>5(E) interact with sources in meaningful ways such as note-taking, annotating, free-writing, or illustrating;</p> <p>Apply systems thinking to analyze and explain the interaction and influence of related parts on each other, and on outcomes, supporting the analysis with evidence.</p> <p>Critical Thinking & Problem Solving</p> <p>B. Frame questions</p>	<p>Bellringer</p> <p>Have students watch this video on Americans who have traveled to Ukraine to help fight against the Russians.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have them respond by thinking of two questions about what they learn in the video, and making one connection between these volunteer fighters and anything that they have ever learned about in history, seen in a movie, read in a book, or experienced themselves. 2. Have students use the Question Formulation Technique to help each other improve their questions. Then make space for discussion of what they think about the video. <p>Lesson: Effects of the War:</p> <p>Split students into groups of 4 or 5 and give each group one article.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effect of The War in Ukraine on Texas Oil Exports 2. Effects of the War In Ukraine on Food Prices 3. Effect of the war in Ukraine on Gas Prices 4. Effect of the war in Ukraine on Ukrainian civilians 5. Effect of the war on the world's poorest people <p>Students will have 20 minutes to create a short set of slides for the class. In their slides, they need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize the most important points from the article • Use a diagram to explain how factors related to the war are leading to effects • Teach the class three vocabulary words from their article. <p>Each student in the group should create and present at least one slide</p> <p>Students present slides to the class. Collect the vocabulary words and add them to a list with the words from the video on Day One</p>	<p>Students receive feedback on their summaries of sources and their explanations of unfamiliar vocabulary words.</p>

DAY 4

Learning Target	Activity	Formative Assessment/ Feedback
<p>5(F) respond using acquired content and academic vocabulary as appropriate</p>	<p>The vocabulary of rhetorical analysis Bellringer: Introduction to Word Choice</p> <p>(If you can go to a hardware store and get a bunch of paint sample cards, you could have students do the final exercise by writing words on the cards, which would be more fun.) As students think of these word spectrums, remind them that they are not necessarily creating spectrums from one opposite to another: the word “devious” and the word “wise” are BOTH used to convey that someone is intelligent, but they have very different connotations.</p> <p>Lesson & Do Now:</p> <p>Explain to students that one of the most powerful tools that Ukraine has had to use in order to fight back against Russia has been rhetoric - the art of making powerful arguments. Russia has more soldiers, more guns, more tanks, more missiles, more planes, more wealth. It may seem crazy that rhetoric could help you fight against a huge and well-supplied army. But the rhetoric of Ukraine’s president, along with other leaders, has inspired countries and individuals all over the world to come to Ukraine’s support.</p> <p>In our next few classes, we will be analyzing President Zelenky’s speeches to see what rhetorical tools he is using in order to make his words powerful.</p> <p>To get ready, we need to make sure that we know the language of rhetorical analysis (studying what an author did in a speech). Hand out the Glossary either online or on paper and give students a chance to ask questions about any of the words.</p> <p>Give students time to study and practice these words using this Rhetorical Terms Quizlet</p> <p>Homework/Classwork (depending on time) Challenge students to find an example of each of these devices in song lyrics, a book they enjoy, a comic or magazine article, or in any other kind of text or media they enjoy. (Remind the students that if there are inappropriate words in a song, they need to leave those out.)</p>	<p>Through the Quizlet, students get immediate feedback on their word knowledge.</p> <p>The song lyrics challenge enables them to get valuable feedback on whether they understand these devices well enough to recognize them.</p>

DAY 5

Learning Target	Activity	Formative Assessment/ Feedback
<p>5(F) respond using acquired content and academic vocabulary as appropriate</p>	<p>Tone Words Bellringer:</p> <p>Have students do quizlet games with the Rhetorical Terms Quizlet.</p> <p>Lesson (We Do):</p> <p>Tell students that when we are analyzing rhetoric, one of the most important things that we can do is to describe the tone or attitude that the author is communicating about their subject. This will be conveyed through many rhetorical devices - imagery, metaphors, etc. — but most of all through the author’s word choices.</p> <p>Read out loud this excerpt from Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have A Dream” speech: <i>“And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that, let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.”</i></p> <p>Point out to students that King names or describes lofty mountains in every state, until he gets to Mississippi, where he chooses the words “hill and molehill.” Ask them, what tone or attitude towards Mississippi does he create through that word choice? (Have them look at the list on page 2 of this document to find a good word to describe it.)</p> <p>Another good question to ask: List on the board all the adjectives that King uses for mountains in the Northern states. What tone does he convey by using those adjectives? What subtle shift in tone happens when he does not use any adjectives for mountains in formerly slaveholding states?</p> <p>Do Now: Give all students a printed copy of page 2 of this document. Working in groups of three or four, have them cut the words & definitions into strips, so each word & definition is on its own little rectangle of paper. Give each group a poster board and tape or glue, and have them organize these tone words into at least three (or more) labeled categories. For example, “words that are positive” or “words about anger.” When they are done, each group explains its organization system to the class.</p>	<p>Through the Quizlet, students get immediate feedback on their word knowledge.;</p> <p>In the categorization exercise, students will get feedback from peers and the teacher about whether their categories make sense.</p>

Do Now: Ask students how many of them have seen the famous Will Smith slap at the Oscars. Do NOT play the video, there is no need, as almost every student, if not every student, will have already seen it many times. Have a student describe the incident for anyone who has not viewed it; then ask students to list as many words as they can think of to describe the tone of Will's action and the word he shouted from the audience. Then have them read and analyze [the speech he gave later that night](#). (If this does not fit in Day 5, you could use it as a Bellringer on Day 6.)

DAY 6

Learning Target	Activity	Formative Assessment/ Feedback
<p>Evaluate the clarity and coherence of a speaker's message and critiquing the impact of a speaker's use of diction and syntax;</p> <p>(B) write responses that demonstrate analysis of texts, including comparing texts within and across genres;</p> <p>(C) use text evidence and original commentary to support an analytic response;</p> <p>Communication:</p> <p>B. Use evidence and logic to draw conclusions and support them purposefully in communication.</p>	<p>Bellringer:</p> <p>Have students choose one of the tone words and create an illustration of it. The illustration should include a speech bubble in which someone is saying something that actually has the tone they have chosen to illustrate. (It would be good to draw an example on the board.)</p> <p>Or have students practice the words using this Quizlet.</p> <p>Lesson & Do Now:</p> <p>Today we will be using our terms for rhetorical and literary devices to analyze how Zelensky and other speakers have tried to make their speeches compelling. We will begin with a short speech Zelensky made at the Grammys. Use this link to play the video of the speech for students, while having them follow along with the transcript:</p> <p>Volodymyr Zelensky's speech at the Grammy Awards</p> <p>After students have listened to and read the speech, have them use this organizer to identify tools that Zelensky is using:</p> <p>Zelensky Speech Analysis</p>	<p>Zelensky Speech Analysis</p> <p>Performed with support from the teacher if needed on the Grammys speech. As students work, circulate and give them feedback on their analysis.</p>

DAY 7

Learning Target	Activity	Formative Assessment/ Feedback
[same as Day 6]	<p>Analysis performed individually on address to Congress on March 16, 2022 in comparison with another speech.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will take the next day or two days (depending on how much time is available) to complete a comparative analysis of two speeches, one by President Zelensky and one by another leader speaking during war or conflict.• Assignment Sheet with Links to Speeches• Graphic Organizer for Comparative Analysis	Summative Assessment

DAY 8/9

Learning Target	Activity	Formative Assessment/ Feedback
[same as Day 6]	[continuation of Day 7]	Summative Assessment
	<p>Google Form feedback for students at the end of the unit.</p> <p>Suggested questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What will you remember from this unit?• What did you find interesting?• How could we make this unit better for students next year?	

Resources

1. **New York Times:** [Teaching Resources to Help Students Make Sense of the War in Ukraine: Articles, maps, photos, videos, podcasts and more, as well as suggestions for using them in your classroom.](#)
2. [Volodymyr Zelensky's speech](#) at the Grammy Awards
3. [Graphic Organizer](#) for reading/analyzing rhetoric.
4. [Website](#) with all of Zelensky's speeches: [Full text of Zelensky's speech to Congress](#) on March 16; [Video with translator](#)
5. [I have a Dream](#), Martin Luther King Jr., full text
6. [Resources for teaching about the war in Ukraine](#) - Illinois Civics hub
7. **BBC** - [Why has Russia Invaded Ukraine and What Does Putin Want?](#)

Possible Additional Lessons

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

B. Frame questions

Have students read the first two sections, "What Was Putin's Goal?" and "Has Putin Changed His Aims?" from this BBC article - [Why has Russia Invaded Ukraine and What Does Putin Want?](#)

Response: Have students work in small groups and list at least 6 questions about each section. They should include 3 simple identification questions (like "Where is Moldova?") and 3 more open-ended questions ("What would happen if...?")

Have groups share their questions; note on the board the questions that come up more than once (or questions that you think are excellent questions). For homework, have each student choose one or two of these questions to research or learn about.