

Lesson Plan: Quality of Evidence

1. *The Trial of Lizzie Borden.*
 - a. The actors:
 - i. Lizzie: “I am going to *keel* you.”
 - ii. The murdered man: “Please don’t *keel* me!”
 - iii. The murdered woman: “Alas is me!”
 - iv. The eye-witness: “Eeeek!”
 - v. A secondary witness, who does not see the murder take place: “Look at her run!”
 - vi. The first police officer: “Stop in the name of the law!”
 - vii. The second police officer: “I have you now!”
 - viii. The jailer: “I’m throwing away the key!”
 - ix. The District attorney.
 - x. The jury: a thumb’s up with “Set the poor girl free!” if you don’t accept the evidence, or a thumb’s down with “Fry her!” if you do.
 - b. Enact the murder. Lizzie kills the mother, then the father, and drops the axe. Lizzie flees with the first officer in chase. The second officer captures Lizzie and puts her in jail. The trial begins.
 - c. *Case #1*
 - i. “Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I submit this bloody axe as Exhibit A. The prosecution rests.” What is your verdict?
 - ii. What questions should come to your mind?
 1. Is this Lizzie’s axe?
 2. Is that human blood or chicken blood?
 3. Is this the axe found at the murder scene?
 4. *I must present evidence in support of my claim, or no one should believe it.*
 - d. *Case #2*
 - i. “Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I submit this bloody axe as Exhibit A, and the testimony of this witness (the secondary witness), who heard someone scream and saw Lizzie Borden run by. The prosecution rests.” What is your verdict?
 - ii. What questions should come to your mind?
 1. How does the witness know who screamed?
 2. How does the witness know why the person who was screaming was screaming?
 3. Is this witness reliable enough to form a basis for conviction?
 4. What connection is there between the woman running away and the bloody axe?
 5. *Secondary sources without direct knowledge of the topic being argued for or against can be unreliable. Primary sources are always best.*
 - e. *Case #3*
 - i. “Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I submit this bloody axe as Exhibit A. A medical examiner has established that the murder occurred at exactly 1:34 am, that Lizzie Borden owns this axe, and that the blood on the axe belongs to the murder victim. This witness (the secondary witness) claims to have seen Lizzie Borden running away from the crime scene at 1:38 am. The prosecution rests.” What is your verdict?
 - ii. What questions should come to your mind?
 1. How does this evidence point, specifically, to Lizzie Borden as the murderer? Does any of it?

2. Just because Lizzie Borden owns the axe, does that mean that she killed someone with it?
 3. *All evidence, whether primary or secondary, must directly support the claim.*
- f. *Case #4*
- i. Now let's say I present as my case the following: "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I submit this bloody axe as Exhibit A. Forensic evidence shows that the axe in question indeed did kill the victim and that Lizzie's fingerprints are all over it. Lizzie also had the blood of her mother and father on her hands when law enforcement apprehended her. This eye-witness saw Lizzie Borden murder her mother and father. A medical examiner has established that the murder occurred at exactly 1:34 am, and that a second witness saw Lizzie Borden fleeing the scene of the crime at 1:38 am. The prosecution rests." What is your verdict?
 - ii. *In this case, the evidence I have presented all points directly to my claim—that Lizzie Borden is Lizzie.*
2. So, as you analyze an argument, the evidence the author uses to support it is strongest when:
 - a. The author actually provides some—in other words, the author should build her argument on assumptions.
 - b. The author should always favor primary sources over secondary sources. A secondary source might be an encyclopedia article. A primary source might be a peer reviewed study that supports the author's claim.
 - c. All of the author's sources need to be related directly to the topic at hand. In other words, the author shouldn't pad up her writing with sources that don't contribute to her argument, just because they seem to be authoritative.
 - d. Effective support for an argument, then, will involve primary sources directly related to it.

Lesson Plan: Visual Rhetoric

3. Definition of Rhetoric, according to the *Panther Guide to First-Year Writing*:
 - i. The systematic study and intentional practice of effective symbolic expression.
 - ii. What that means is that rhetoric provides the tools, concepts, and terms you need to understand how others make texts effective, and how you can make texts effective yourself.
4. Rhetoric has the following characteristics:
 - a. *It is always planned.* Rhetoric is never haphazard. Arguments are carefully considered, as are the best ways to get those arguments across.
 - b. *It is adapted to an audience.* This audience is kept in mind as the rhetorical situation is planned and carried out.
 - c. *It is responsive.* If the situation changes, then rhetoric adapts to it.
 - d. *It addresses contingent issues.* Things that are important in the moment.
5. Rhetoric functions within Rhetorical Situations, and Rhetoric Situations have the following characteristics:
 - a. *Exigence*: what turns the situation into one that needs to be discussed.
 - i. Example: the shooting of Michael Brown.
 - b. *A rhetor*: the speaker. This can be an individual or a group.
 - i. Example: It can be an individual, like a lawyer in a courtroom, or a group, like the NRA arguing for first amendment rights.
 - c. *An audience*: this needs to be identified in order to be approached effectively.
 - i. Example: how would you argue for the importance of hip-hop to American culture to a young audience? To an audience in a nursing home?
 - d. *A Purpose*: what message the rhetor seeks to convey.
 - i. Example: The recent presidential debate: Trump argued for “Making America again.”
 - e. *A Context*: the social, cultural, and political conditions surrounding the rhetorical situation.
 - i. Example: Abraham Lincoln delivering the Gettysburg Address.
6. What this all boils down to is that effective rhetoric understands what needs to be said in a given situation, the audience to which what needs to be said is spoken, and the moment in which it is spoken. This is *Kairos*: saying the right thing in the right way at the right time.
7. The best example of the effective use of a rhetorical situation: Martin Luther King, [“I Have a Dream”](#).
 - a. The exigence: the rise of violence in America, especially the south, in the push for African-American civil rights.
 - b. The rhetor: Martin Luther King
 - c. An audience: what he expected, and what he got.
 - d. A Purpose: to inspire people to carry on in their push for civil rights
 - e. A Context: Washington D.C., when the need for effective civil rights legislation was being discussed.
 - f. *King’s responsiveness to the crowd*: saying the right thing in the right place at the right time.

8. But rhetorical situations need not be as noble as Dr. King's, or as rare as once in a lifetime; you are confronted by rhetorical situations every day. And rhetorical situations are not limited to words. Magazines, for example, always take advantage of Kairos, and they do it with both language and visual images.
9. Discussion of the Vanity Fair cover of Katy Perry.
 - a. The exigence: the supposed need for glamor.
 - b. The rhetor: a magazine that is the proponent of that glamor.
 - c. An audience: whoever it is who glances at the cover of this magazine. This might be a subscriber, or not.
 - d. A Purpose: to get the audience interested in the magazine.
 - e. A Context: modern, materialistic America. Would this same cover had worked among the Pilgrims in 1621?
 - f. Analysis of the cover
 - i. Focal Point.
 1. What is the focal point: as with most people we first see, it is the eyes: her eyes are looking right out of the cover for that reason.
 2. People, in looking at other people, tend to look at the face first, then scan down the body, eventually coming to rest, if only momentarily, on the crotch before traveling again to whatever might be of most interest. Where is the main cover line—the line associated with Katy Perry—placed? At crotch level, because that is where the eye always strays to. The text itself: her first name is in italics, and you will notice when you look at other cover lines that when they are associated with women they are usually in italics, because italics is associated with femininity. Masculinity tends to be associated with bold print and capital letters. Her first name is in black, the same color of her hair. Her second name is in red, a color associated with sexuality, and it matches the color of her lips, which are unnaturally red for the same reason.
 - ii. Viewpoint and Vectors
 1. Straight on, and eye to eye. This suggests both boldness and honesty, but, at the same time,
 2. Vector: Her head placement, with her head tilted forward, suggests that she is looking down at the viewer. This suggests that she is above, and superior to, the viewer.
 - iii. Font.
 1. The Masthead Font: In Vanity Fair's own characteristic font. San serif, which denotes a lack of classical formality, and bold letters in capitals.
 2. They place her first name in italics. What does this signify? What would be the most likely font for a man?
 3. Her last name is in red, and with serif letters. What does this signify?
 - iv. Color and Patterning
 1. The Masthead color: black. This contrasts strongly with the neutral colors behind it. It matches the color of Katy Perry's hair.

2. The Background: A floral pattern which goes against the typical conventions of magazine covers, which tend to be in a block color. Why use a floral pattern here? Because it suggests both nature and femininity.
 3. Contrast of hair and skin. Contrast of lips and hair. White and black offers the highest possible contrast. What does the color red suggest?
 4. What does the color of her outfit suggest? Nakedness.
 - v. Clothing
 1. Her outfit is a retro-swimsuit, suggesting identification with the time of classical movies, as does the style of her hair.
 - vi. Posture.
 - a. The placement of her hands emphasizes her thinness.
 - b. A classic movie pose for leading ladies, dating back to the 1930s.
 - vii. So what, overall, do you think the publishers of Vanity Fair are trying to achieve, rhetorically, with this cover?
10. In-class writing, rhetorically analyzing the *Mona Lisa*.
- a. The slightly protective position of her arms, as well as the armrest, creates a sense of distance between sitter and spectator.
 - b. The background landscape uses atmospheric perspective, with its smoky blues. It gives the composition significant depth.
 - c. The background details reveal a clear imbalance between the (higher) rocky horizon to the right, compared to the (lower) flatlands stretching away on the left. This imbalance adds to the slightly surreal atmosphere of the picture.
 - d. Another slightly surreal feature of the *Mona Lisa* is her lack of eyebrows and eyelashes. Scans indicate that originally she had both.
 - e. Lack of clear lines. This is the technique of *sfumato*. This painterly technique involves the smooth, almost imperceptible, transition from one color to another, by means of ultra-subtle tonal gradations. This is particularly visible in the soft contouring around the eyes and mouth.
 - f. What was DaVinci after with these rhetorical techniques?
 - i. The general impression created by the *Mona Lisa* portrait is one of great serenity, enriched by a definite air of mystery.
 - ii. The harmony created by the sitter's pyramid-shaped pose and understated drapery. The mystery stems from a number of factors: first, her enigmatic half-smile; second, her gaze, which is directed to the right of the viewer; her hands which have a slightly unreal, lifeless quality - almost as if they belonged to a different body.