

Write On Wednesday with The Seattle Times

August 31, 2016

Learning Objectives

- Students will analyze newspaper opinion articles in order to assess the types of rhetorical claims being made.
- Students will write their own opinion essay about a current event or issue.

CCSS Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.8

Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above)

Materials

- **“Why students need trigger warnings and safe spaces” on Main, A11 of the Tuesday, August 30th 2016 edition of The Seattle Times**
- **Computers (and/or pencil and paper)**

Warm Up: Listening for Details

There are a number of different ways that writers can try to persuade their reader to agree with them. Three of the most common techniques are through logos, pathos, and ethos.

Logos: Appealing to logic

Pathos: Appealing to emotions

Ethos: Appealing to ethics

All three of these techniques are commonly found in opinion and editorial pieces in newspapers. Determine if each of the following statements from editorials in the Seattle Times qualifies as logos, pathos or ethos:

- Today, only 44 percent of college students are men, and 52 percent are white. Fully 39 percent of undergraduates come from families with incomes low enough to qualify for Pell Grants.
- These nations guard their own borders, a number of which abut Russia, and have stood ready to contribute to mutual causes, as they instantly did after the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., on 9/11.
- Carlyle rightly said the state and region need a coordinated strategy to make both our education and transportation systems world-class.
- This would set a dangerous course, eroding the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of expression.
- Test scores showed students at most of these eight fledgling Washington schools are outperforming similar students at other public schools in the area. The data are preliminary and represent a small number of students, but the report shows these schools are worth watching and learning from.
- Such pursuit can be productive so long as countervailing forces are available and willing to check and criticize what they claim, leaving the ultimate determination of truth and virtue up to we the people.
- Governments must respond by modernizing record-keeping systems, taking advantage of the networked computers they use to create and store records nowadays, and developing workflows that anticipate records requests and minimize the cost to respond

Discuss your answers in a small group, and then as a class. If you are still curious about learning more about logos, pathos, and ethos you might want to conduct more research online.

Reading:

Read the story, “Why students need trigger warnings and safe spaces” on page A11 of the Tuesday, August 30st edition of The Seattle Times. Discuss with your class or with a partner: What is the author’s opinion? How do they support their opinion? Do you agree or disagree with the author’s opinion?

Take three different colors of highlighter or marker. Reread the article and use a different color to label the parts of the article where the author uses logos, pathos, and ethos. Does the author use all three types of persuasion? Do you notice that the author uses some more than the other? Which technique does the author use the most? Which technique do you think is most effective to conveying the author’s point? Why?

Write On:

Pick a current event or issue that you feel strongly about. You might want to skim some past issues of the newspaper to see if there are any current events that you have a strong opinion about. Conduct external research and then write your own opinion article about it. Make sure to include at least one example of logos, one example of pathos, and one example of ethos in your essay.