Introduction to Literary Periods and Rhetoric in Writing

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Objectives

- Develop an understanding of literary periods and rhetoric and their connection to related B.E.S.T. English Language Arts (ELA) benchmarks.

- Examine sample instructional activities aligned with R.3.4 Understanding Rhetoric benchmark.

- Analyze student writing samples to determine instructional needs.

Literary Periods

Literary Periods: Grades 9-12

Grades 9-12 begin with the **Classical**, **Medieval** and **Renaissance** literary periods.

Literary Periods

Classical (1200 BCE–455 CE)		Medieval (455 CE–1485 CE)		Renaissance (1300–1660)	
Features	Authors	Features	Authors	Features	Authors
• Focus on balance and form • Emphasis on reason vs. irrationality/ chaos • Incorporation of myth • Direct expression • Emergence of conventions such as the deus ex machina and the chorus • Emphasis on the relationship of man to the gods	• Plato • Socrates • Aristotle • Aesop • Euripides • Aeschylus • Sophocles • Homer • Sappho • Virgil • Ovid	• Starts with a continuation of the focus on the epic hero • "Epics" are written in the vernacular and do not follow all of the features of classical epics • Later in the period, a shift in focus to everyday, common people • Dictated memoirs	• Author Unknown - Beowulf • Author Unknown - Gawain poet • Author Unknown - The Nibelungenlied • Dante Alighieri • Geoffrey Chaucer • Geoffrey of Monmouth • Giovanni Boccaccio • Marco Polo • Margery Kempe • Omar Khayyam • Thomas Malory	• New thinking, innovation and philosophy • A "rebirth" returning to many of the ideas of the Classical period • Focus on philosophy • Humanistic ideals • Greater reproduction and distribution of literature because of invention of the printing press • Recovery of ancient texts	• Ben Johnson • Christopher Marlowe • Edmund Spenser • John Donne • John Milton • Miguel de Cervantes • Moliere • Niccolo Machiavelli • Petrarch • Thomas More • William Shakespeare

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Infusion of Literary Periods

Comparative Reading

ELA.6.R.3.3: Compare and contrast **how authors from different time periods** address the same or **related** topics.

Benchmark Clarifications:

Clarification 1: Texts for this benchmark should be selected from the following literary periods:
- Colonial and Early National Period (1600-1830)
- Romantic Period (1790-1870)
- Realism and Naturalism Period (1870-1930)
- Modernist Period (1910-1945)
- Contemporary Period (1945-present)

Why are literary periods important?

- By reading texts from different literary periods, students build their background knowledge and vocabulary. These are major factors in becoming skilled readers.

- Background knowledge encompasses context, exigence, author's perspective, social issues of the time period and anachronisms.

Literary Periods and Rhetoric – Example

Excerpt from "A Modest Proposal" by Jonathan Swift

"I do therefore humbly offer it to publick consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine, and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore, one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune, through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter." (Paragraph 9)

How might not discussing the time period of this piece impact students' ability to explain the author's use of rhetoric?

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Rhetoric and Rhetorical Appeals

Why is teaching rhetoric important?

- Rhetoric connects purpose to the act of writing.

- Awareness of rhetoric helps to build discernment in the audience.

- Knowledge of the techniques of rhetoric creates more effective communicators.

- Understanding rhetoric gives the reader/listener a more thorough understanding of the levels of meaning within a piece.
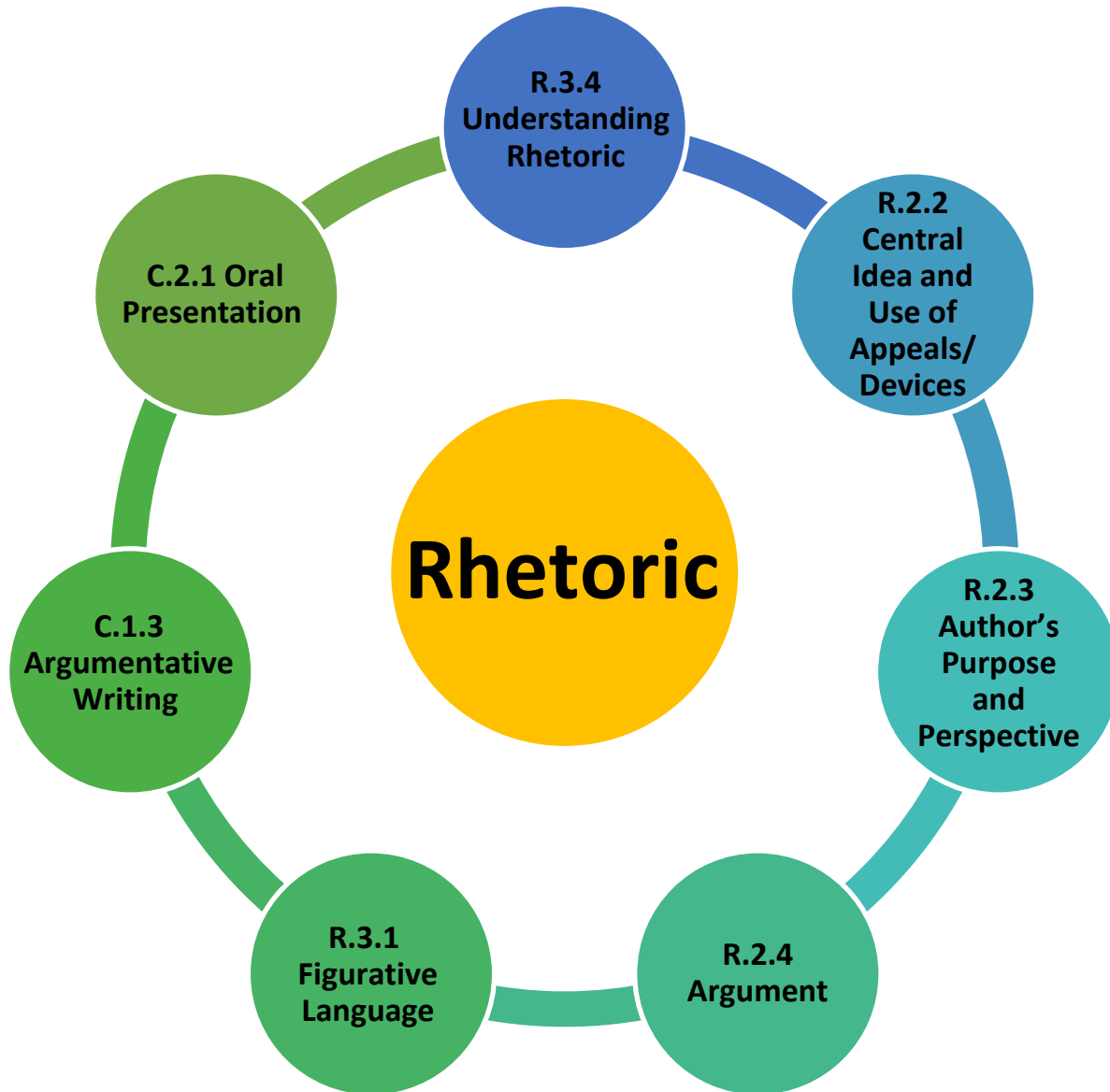
Rhetoric Progression

R.3.4 Understanding Rhetoric	
ELA.12.R.3.4	Evaluate **rhetorical choices across multiple texts.**
ELA.11.R.3.4	**Evaluate** an author's use of rhetoric in text.
ELA.10.R.3.4	**Analyze** an author's use of rhetoric in a text.
ELA.9.R.3.4	Explain **an author's use of rhetoric** in a text.
ELA.8.R.3.4	Explain **how an author uses rhetorical devices to support or advance an appeal.**
ELA.7.R.3.4	**Explain the meaning and/or significance of rhetorical devices** in a text.
ELA.6.R.3.4	**Identify rhetorical appeals in a text.**

| Rhetorical Appeals and Descriptors	Examples
Ethos: an appeal to credibility, ethics or moral principles	A text written to evoke haste in responding to the declining Florida panther population discusses the implication of panther mortality rates.
Pathos: an appeal to emotion	A text incorporates sound reasoning supported by the citation of relevant statistics in order to attract monetary support for legislation proposed to protect endangered species.
Logos: an appeal to logic or reason	A text includes the use of vivid, emotive language, intended to incite intense feeling in a reader regarding the destruction of the Florida panther's natural habitat.
Kairos: an appeal to time or place	A text written to encourage support for the protection of the Florida panther features an interview with a renowned biologist who is an expert on endangered species.
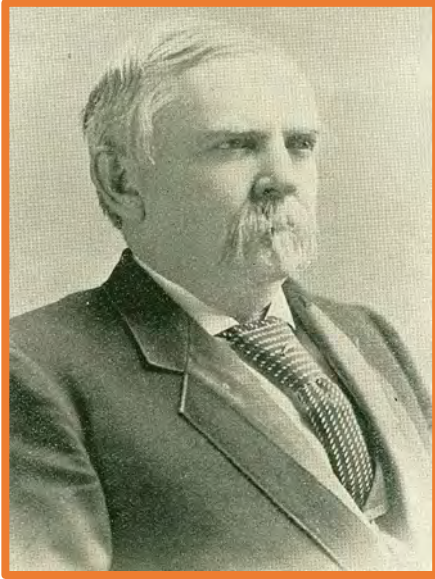
Let's Try It!

Text: "Eulogy of the Dog" by George G. Vest
Benchmark: ELA.6.R.3.4: Identify rhetorical appeals in a text.

Directions: Read through the text. Then highlight examples of ethos, pathos and logos. Be sure to label each highlighted section.

Remember:

Ethos: an appeal to credibility, ethics or moral principles

Pathos: an appeal to emotion

Logos: an appeal to logic or reason

"Eulogy of the Dog" by George G. Vest (c. 1855)

Directions: Read the text. Annotate examples of ethos, pathos and logos.

The one absolutely unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous is his dog. A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer, he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounters with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert, he remains. When riches take wings, and reputation falls to pieces, he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey through the heavens.

If fortune drives the master forth, an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him, to guard him against danger, to fight against his enemies. And when the last scene of all comes, and death takes his master in its embrace and his body is laid away in the cold ground, no matter if all other friends pursue their way, there by the graveside will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad, but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even in death.

> What background knowledge would make this text more accessible to your students?

Logos

Ethos

Pathos

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Rhetorical Devices

Figurative Language – Progression by Grade Level

Introduction Level	Symbol
Figurative Language is introduced.	I
Students begin to apply, explain, analyze, and evaluate figurative language.	R

Figurative Language (R.3.1)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
simile	I	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
idiom	I	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
alliteration	I	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
metaphor	-	I	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
personification	-	I	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
hyperbole	-	I	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
imagery*	-	-	-	I	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
onomatopoeia	-	-	-	-	I	R	R	R	R	R	R
allusion	-	-	-	-	-	I	R	R	R	R	R
symbolism	-	-	-	-	-	-	I	R	R	R	R
meiosis (understatement)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	I	I/R	R	R	R

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Use of Reasoning & Fallacies in Reasoning-Incorporation into Benchmarks

Expectation	Symbol
Explicitly noted in benchmark or clarification.	N
Continued application.	C

Benchmark	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
R.2.4	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
C.1.3	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
C.5.1	–	–	–	–	N	C	C
R.3.3	–	–	–	–	–	N	C

Types of Logical Reasoning
Deductive
Inductive
Abductive
Types of Informal Fallacies in Reasoning
Ad hominem
Ad populum
Hasty Generalization
Red Herring
Slippery Slope
Strawman
False Analogy
Circular Reasoning
Non sequitur

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Grade 10 Example

Text: "For the Equal Rights Amendment" by Shirley Chisholm
Benchmark: ELA.10.R.3.4: Analyze an author's use of rhetoric in a text.

Discussion Question: As we read the speech "For the Equal Rights Amendment," jot down at least one rhetorical device that is used to advance a rhetorical appeal in the speech and analyze the impact of the rhetorical device on the author's purpose or perspective. Discuss your findings with your group.

Possible Answer: Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm uses metaphors to support ethos throughout the text by comparing the advancement in civil rights and the barriers facing the rights of women to establish a significant need for change.

Rhetoric in Student Writing

Student Use of Rhetoric Considerations

Initial Student Response	"Do you like social media? Well, I love it. Everyone should use social media."
Instructional Guidance	The question is attempting to appeal to the reader's emotions, but it falls short of evoking powerful emotions. Using a more pointed question with emotion-evoking language will help the student develop pathos.
Improved Student Response	"Can you imagine the loneliness and heartbreak of not seeing your family or friends each day? Social media provides the much-needed connection at our fingertips."

Student Rhetorical Analysis Considerations

Initial Student Response	"The author uses pathos to achieve his purpose."
Instructional Guidance	Students need to know that using the Greek term does not get to the specificity that is needed to achieve the level of the standards after 6th grade. Teachers would want students to first address either pathos or purpose. The author appeals to the reader's sense of fairness OR the author uses pathos to make them feel sympathy for the hungry child.
Improved Student Response	"The author appeals to the reader's sense of fairness in order to make them feel sympathy for the hungry child."

Student Use of Rhetoric - Let's Try It!

Initial Student Response	"Many people like social media."
Instructional Guidance	How could this writer strengthen the ethos in the sentence?
Improved Student Response	Jot down an improved sentence.

Reflection
Start-Pause-Continue

START

What are strategies you may 'Start' using in the classroom?

PAUSE

What are instructional tasks that you may want to reconsider or 'Pause'?

CONTINUE

What strategies are already in place in your classrooms that you will 'Continue'?

Survey

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