

Eighth Grade English/Persuasion Lesson Plan on Conscientious Objection

Lesson Plan Title: Persuasion: Conscientious Objector Documents and Military Recruitment Documents

Concept/Topic To Teach: Persuasion. Text analysis of proposition and argument. Identification of Argument. Identification of bias. Propaganda techniques. Moral decision making/non-violence.

Standards Addressed: California Eighth Grade Language Arts Standards R 2.2, R. 2.7, W 2.4, LS 1.8. This also fulfills LAUSD Language Arts Curriculum, Instructional Component 4: Persuasion.

General Goal(s): To compare, analyze, and dissect contrasting texts for logic, accuracy and coherence. To identify propositional arguments. To write a five paragraph essay with a clear thesis that addresses Conscientious Objection to war and offers a clear argument for or against persuasion techniques generated by the military towards K-12 students.

Specific Objectives: To move students from dependence to independence in making important moral, ethical and sociopolitical decisions based on their feeling of justice, religion, and peaceful coexistence. To allow students to recognize tactics and techniques of persuasive argument and contrast those to propaganda. To introduce the concept of non-violence to students.

Required Materials:

- 1) Military Recruiting information (from Recruiting stations/personnel/web/magazines/Channel One). Pro-war speech.
- 2) Basic Draft and Registration Information Packet. Video of *Arlington West*. Anti-War articles from recent media.
- 3) Handouts on Military Recruitment and OpEds and news articles
- 4) Anti-war Sonnets
- 5) *Basic Draft and Registration Information* packet from Center on Conscience and War

Anticipatory Set (Lead-In): Handouts on Military Recruitment and news articles; Questionnaire on students prior knowledge of military recruiting techniques. Instructional Conversations on geopolitical concerns and free expression.

Time Line: Five weeks from March 7 – April 18 allowing time for CAT-6 testing.

Step-By-Step Procedures:

Week One: Build vocabulary and introduce literary concepts--Unity; coherence; logic; and internal consistency. Check for understanding: bias and propaganda.

Week Two: Go over the importance of lesson using Tony Wagner's Seven Questions:

1. What is the purpose of this lesson?
2. Why is this important to learn?
3. In what ways am I challenged to think in this lesson?
4. How will I apply, assess, or communicate what I've
5. How will I know how good my work is and how
6. Do I feel respected by other students in this class?
7. Do I feel respected by the teacher in this class

Review Anti-war sonnets. Text analysis of proposition and argument. Ongoing vocabulary development.

Review Military Recruitment literature. Text analysis of proposition and argument.

Introduce framework of Persuasion Instructional Component:

Analyzing Proposition and Argument

Writers of essays, advertisements and speeches often make a *proposition*—a subject or statement to be discussed or debated. The proposition is the main point of the writer's text. In order for a proposition to effectively persuade the reader or listener, it is necessary to present sufficient support:

- ◇ logical arguments
- ◇ facts
- ◇ expert opinions

◇personal observations

First identify the speaker's proposition or main point. Then look for the details that support the proposition. Finally, you should evaluate the speech by looking at your own response. Were you influenced by the speaker to believe in his or her argument?

Speakers Proposition:::::What does the speaker want me to believe?

Supporting Details:::::How does the speaker support his or her argument?

Your response:::::Did you 'buy' the argument? Why or why not?
(from Prentice Hall Literature :8th grade: p.404)

Week Three: Introduce concepts of morality and ethical decision-making. Students will need to differentiate between morals that originate with family and religious practices and ethics that originate from students own intellectual and emotional growth.

Review anti-war music and lyrics.

Introduce *Basic Draft And Registration Information* packet from Center on Conscience and War and introduce concept of students starting to build a Conscientious Objector Packet for future verification and documentation of peace activities in the event of a Military Draft.

Continue analysis of opinion pieces and propaganda techniques. Analysis of graphic/visual information delivery devices (brochures/videogames/graphic novel/music/videos/film/speech). Utilize Thinking Maps to compare and contrast pro-military vs. anti-war literature/media. Show the video Arlington West.

Week Four: How will student apply what has been learned? Write a five paragraph statement on war and violence with a clear Thesis Statement. Edit and correct for final draft. This will be the assessment.

Week Five: Place Final Draft in an envelope. Have students self-address envelopes. Mail to students with admonition that the envelopes are not to be opened except by the Draft Counselor in the event of a Military Draft. The Post Offices postmarked date can serve as a record of draftee's views of war and violence. Conduct Instructional Conversations.

Alternative Assessment:

Write a five paragraph essay with a clear Thesis Statement on the pros and cons of student dress policy.

Plan For Independent Practice:

Create an Important Documents Folder to house antiwar writings and other Important Documents such as receipts, passport, medical records, grades, certificates, etc.

Write an OpEd piece or letter to the editor. Start a local peace club. Research Central American wars of the 1980s.

Closure (Reflect Anticipatory Set):

Follow-up questionnaire; Starting a Peace Club; Social Justice Academy at Belmont HS (presentation?).

Assessment Based On Objectives:

Write a five paragraph statement on war and violence with a clear Thesis Statement or Alternative assessment.

Adaptations (For Students With Learning Disabilities):

Graphic novels/visual presentations using multimedia sources.

Extensions (For Gifted Students):

Oral presentation/debates. Investigative journalism piece with interviews. Poetry/Songwriting on war. Connections to immigration issues.

Possible Connections To Other Subjects:

History/Social Studies, Art, Music

Attachments:

Common Persuasive Arguments Techniques (LAUSD Persuasion Component)

Anti-war Sonnets (check PDF page
<http://www.militaryfreeschools.org/pdffiles.htm>)

Basic Draft and Registration Information packet from Center on Conscience and War (check PDF page
<http://www.militaryfreeschools.org/pdffiles.htm>)

Anti-war Music Lyrics (check PDF page
<http://www.militaryfreeschools.org/pdffiles.htm>)

Important Documents Folder Information handout (check PDF page
<http://www.militaryfreeschools.org/pdffiles.htm>)

Inspiration:

How confident would you be of getting a fair trial if the members of your jury had merely met the intellectual standards of our college-prep courses as they exist today? Certainly they would know how to memorize information and perform on multiple-choice and short-answer tests. But would your jurors know how to analyze an argument, weigh evidence, recognize bias (their own and others'), distinguish fact from opinion, and be able to balance the sometimes competing principles of justice and mercy? Could they listen with both a critical mind and a compassionate heart and communicate clearly what they understand? Would they know how to work with others to seek the truth?

What would it mean to graduate all of our high school students both college-ready and "jury-ready"? Might these turn out to be one and the same goal? Increasingly in our schools, what gets taught is only what gets tested. Shouldn't we, then, start designing rigorous tests for citizenship as well as for college? Many politicians will ask again, as they did in the 1990s, whether we can afford to develop these more expensive, qualitative assessments. But perhaps the real question is, can we afford not to?

Tony Wagner
Rigor on Trial