

TEACHER GUIDE

SELMA

VOTING RIGHTS

Video Lessons, Teacher Guide, and Student-Led Activities

Created with the Ron Clark Academy (Atlanta, GA)

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THE ART OF PERSUASION

TEACHER GUIDE

THE ART OF PERSUASION

DEAR TEACHER,

In this lesson, the participant(s) will examine modes of persuasion to learn how these techniques are used to change the behaviors and actions of others.

OBJECTIVES:

- The participant will learn how persuasion affects the behaviors and actions of others.
- The participant will identify and differentiate between persuasion modes – logos, pathos, ethos.

PROCEDURES:

1. Play Part I of the video. Review the meaning of logos, pathos and ethos. During the paused portion of the lesson, participants will discuss the prompt provided on the video. The facilitator will guide participants to support their responses and identify which modes of persuasion are being used in their decision-making. Answers will vary.

2. Play Part II of the video. Participants will reflect upon their previous discussion as possible answers are given. Afterward, students will be shown a scene from Selma, a historical chronicle of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s campaign to secure equal voting rights and the monumental march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. In the scene, actors portraying President Lyndon B. Johnson and Dr. King use various modes of persuasion (i.e. ethos, logos, and pathos) to convince an audience to change an attitude or behavior.

3. Student-Led Activity. Participants will use the transcript to make notes of the specific phrases used in the movie clip and identify which mode of persuasion they follow. Be sure to answer the following questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What claims are being made?

Which modes of persuasion are being used to support these claims?

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DEFINITIONS

Persuasion – the action or process of convincing someone to do or believe something.

Ethos – a mode of persuasion which relies on ethical appeal
(e.g. good moral character or trustworthiness)

Logos – a mode of persuasion which relies on logical appeal (e.g. facts, statistics)

Pathos – a mode of persuasion which relies on emotional appeal (e.g. sadness, anger)

Claim – an arguable statement; an idea that a speaker or writer attempts to persuade an audience to accept

VIDEO CLIP REVIEW

- In the video, you may notice that Dr. King and President Johnson had different claims. King made it clear that he wanted federal legislation to grant Blacks the right to vote unencumbered while Johnson felt that it wasn't necessary at that time.
 - President Johnson began his conversation by referencing the "64 Act" of desegregation. While this is a fact, the way he is using it makes the method follow the mode of ethos rather than logos. The purpose was to get Dr. King to trust him. President Johnson wanted him to see him as a person who lacked racial prejudice.
 - President Johnson deflects by mentioning another project entitled "The War on Poverty," one of the many policy initiatives of the Great Society. By asking King if poverty matters to him, President Johnson is attempting to evoke an internal emotional reaction (pathos).
 - Because ending poverty is considered a moral and ethical stance by most people, mentioning it may also be an attempt to gain trust (ethos).
 - Dr. King continues the debate with a logical argument referencing several historical events of racial prejudice explaining why Blacks needed fair voting rights. He used facts and statistical data which is a characteristic of logos.
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STUDENT ACTIVITY



Watch the scene of Dr. King meeting with President Johnson. Highlight the specific phrases used in the movie clips and which modes of persuasion they follow.

Transcript of Scene: Dr. King meeting with President Johnson

ASSISTANT: Mr. President, Dr. King.

KING: Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Dr. King.

PRESIDENT: Well, I'll tell you. I'm a tall son-of-a-*****, but this close to the new Nobel Laureate and with all those other trinkets you've been collecting lately, I feel tits-high to a puppy dog.

KING: Well, thank you, Mr. President. Mr. White.

MR. WHITE: Dr. King.

KING: All right.

PRESIDENT: I'll tell you, ending segregation, proudest moment of my life when I signed that '64 Act. Proudest moment of my life, I tell you. Now civil rights is a priority – of this administration as you know.

KING: Thank you.

PRESIDENT: We're gonna face the challenge, or this country is storing up a heap of trouble for itself. Now, seeing as I can't convince you to work with my administration in an official capacity inside the White House, I feel damn fortunate to have someone as statesmanlike as you leading the movement. And I want you to go on leading it. No one else. Not one of these militant Malcolm X types. So... I wanna help. Tell me how.

KING: Well, Mr. President, I'm here to speak specifically about the denial of a basic American right for the Negro citizen. The right to vote.

PRESIDENT: Well... Technically...

KING: Technically, we already have it. Yes, Mr. President. But, we both know in the South Black voters are kept off the rolls and out of the voting booths by systematic intimidation and fear, Mr. President. Now, you asked how you can help. We want federal legislation granting Negroes the right to vote unencumbered. And we want federal protocol eliminating the decades-long dismissal and illegal denial of Blacks seeking to vote. And we want robust enforcement of that protocol.

(continued)

PRESIDENT: Well... That's fine. But... Most of the South is still not desegregating. Let's not start another battle when we haven't even won the first. And you know what the next battle should be?

The eradication of poverty. I'm calling it "The War on Poverty." It's a matter of political priorities. Poverty is going to be my focus at home, and I want you to help me with this. We can make big changes in these things for people of all colors. And I know that matters to you, doesn't it? This voting thing is just gonna have to wait.

KING: It... It can't wait, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Well, why not?

KING: Because there have been thousands of racially motivated murders in the South, including those four girls.

PRESIDENT: Well, I know that...

KING: And you know the astounding fact that not one of these criminals who murder us when and why they want has ever been convicted.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, I know we have a lot of work to do down there.

KING: Not one conviction because they are protected by white officials chosen by an all-white electorate. And on the rare occasions that they face trial, they are freed by all-white juries. All-white because you can't serve on a jury unless you are registered to vote.

PRESIDENT: Well, Dr. King, you've certainly given me something to think about. But this administration is going to set this aside for a while. Just for a while, you understand.

KING: Yes, Mr. President, I... I understand.

(Walks out of the meeting room.)

Selma it is.

THE ART OF PERSUASION

DIVE DEEPER

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

**If you can't fly, then run,
If you can't run, then walk,
If you can't walk, then crawl,
but whatever you do,
you have to keep moving forward.**

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Read Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* and King's *I Have a Dream* speech. Identify the claim being made, and highlight phrases that use ethos, logos and pathos.

- Write a persuasive speech by which you state your claim and use all three modes of persuasion to convince the audience to support your belief.

- Watch political commercials from each political party, making note of the modes of persuasion used in each commercial. Afterwards, create a commercial or visual advertisement using a chosen method of persuasion.

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The Ron Clark Academy (RCA) is a highly-acclaimed, nonprofit middle school located in Southeast Atlanta. The Academy has received both national and international recognition for its success for creating a loving, dynamic learning environment that promotes academic excellence and fosters leadership.

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