



HOUSTON
SHAKESPEARE
FESTIVAL

ONE ROLE, TWO ACTORS: *Cassius & Brutus*

Recognizing Shakespeare's Use of Logic and Rhetoric

Curriculum Authors: Laura B. Turchi, Abbey Bachmann, and Cori Stevenson

Approximate timeline: 50 minutes – see sequence

TEKS:

4. Comprehension skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing using multiple texts. The student uses metacognitive skills to comprehend text with increasing depth and complexity. The student is expected to: (A) establish purpose for reading assigned and self-selected texts; (B) generate questions about text before, during, and after reading to deepen understanding and gain information; (C) make, correct, or confirm predictions using text features, characteristics of genre, and structures; (D) create mental images to deepen understanding; (E) make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and the larger community; (F) make inferences and use evidence to support understanding; (G) evaluate information read to determine what is most important; (H) synthesize information to create new understanding; and (I) monitor comprehension and make adjustments when understanding breaks down.

(5) Response skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing using multiple texts. The student responds to an increasingly challenging variety of sources that are read, heard, or viewed. The student is expected to: (A) describe the personal and emotional connections to a variety of sources, including self-selected texts; (B) write a response with accurate and relevant text evidence and commentary to compare texts within and across genres; (C) use text evidence to support an appropriate response; (D) paraphrase and summarize texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order; (E) interact with sources in meaningful ways such as notetaking, annotating, freewriting, or illustrating; (F) respond using acquired content and academic vocabulary as appropriate; (G) discuss and write about the explicit or implicit meanings of text; (H) respond orally or in writing with appropriate register, vocabulary, tone, and voice; (I) reflect on and adjust responses as new evidence is presented; and (J) defend or challenge authors' claims using relevant text evidence.

(7) Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, and writing using multiple texts--genres. The student recognizes and analyzes genre-specific characteristics, structures, and purposes within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse texts. The student is expected to: (A) demonstrate knowledge of American, British, and world literature across literary periods; (B) analyze the effects of metrics; rhyme schemes such as end, internal, slant, and eye; and other conventions in poetry; (C) identify and explain the function of archetypes and motifs; (D) analyze characteristics and structural elements of informational texts such as: (i) clear thesis, relevant supporting evidence, pertinent examples, and conclusion; and (ii) the relationship between organizational design and thesis; and (E) analyze characteristics and structural elements of argumentative texts such as: (i) clear arguable claim, appeals, and convincing conclusion; (ii) counter arguments, types of evidence, concessions, and call to action; and (iii) identifiable audience or reader

(8) Author's craft: listening, speaking, reading, and writing using multiple texts. The student uses critical inquiry to analyze the authors' choices and how they influence and communicate meaning within a variety of texts. The student analyzes and applies author's craft purposefully in order to develop his or her own products and performances. The student is expected to: (A) identify and analyze the use of allusions and motif; (B) identify and analyze how the author's diction and syntax contribute to the mood, voice, and tone of a text; and (C) identify and analyze the use of rhetorical devices, including appeals, understatement, overstatement, parallelism, and shifts.

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Teacher Notes/Background Information:

Thinking about persuasive appeals . One goal for this lesson (in addition to diving deeper into Shakespeare's text) is to explore the use of rhetorical appeals in Shakespeare's text. The lesson outlined is created under the understanding that students have some background knowledge on the various rhetorical appeals – ethos, pathos, and logos. If students have not been introduced to these concepts, the teacher may want to consider an introductory lesson on these appeals before proceeding with this lesson.

What are these scenes about?

Cassius Video - Cassius speaks the aria in this scene (Act 1, Scene 2) as a way to plant the seed of doubt in Brutus's mind regarding Caesar's power and therefore, ability to rule Rome. Cassius believes that if Caesar is granted too much power, then he will be too far disconnected from his citizens. Cassius hopes that Brutus too see the logical reason behind why Caesar can't gain this level of power and control.

Brutus Video - Brutus speaks the aria in this scene (Act 2, Scene 1) as a way of stating the realization that he has that Caesar cannot be granted the power that comes along with being crowned king. He appeals to his logical thought process that if Caesar gains too much power, it could be to the detriment of the citizens of Rome as Caesar's power could go to his head. Brutus concludes that he must kill Caesar before he becomes too powerful for his own good.

If you are teaching the whole play,

Both scenes are crucial to the plot of the play. Cassius plants the seeds of doubt that eventually lead to Brutus's agreement to the plot of killing Caesar. Both scenes demonstrate Cassius and Brutus's characters and what motivates each of them to join the plot to kill Caesar. The actors portraying Cassius and Brutus in each video do a great job of explaining each respective character's thought process when speaking the arias examined in the videos. The decision that each of the characters comes to in these scenes affects what happens in the rest of the play. Which scene do your students think is the most crucial in influencing Caesar's fate and the outcome of the play as a whole?

If you are teaching just this excerpt,

Both videos include the actors providing the viewers with lead up to the pivotal scenes on which each video focuses. Use the video timeline to see where to start the video to give students the background needed for the speech to make sense. However, these speeches are great to use on their own to analyze rhetorical analysis in persuasive texts/speeches even if you aren't reading the play in its entirety. Shakespeare has both Brutus and Cassius using logic as their appeal, so students need only understand that Cassius is attempting to convince Brutus that Caesar must be killed, and that Brutus agrees, in order to analyze these scenes.

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Key Vocabulary:

Adder (line 14) is a type of snake or viper. Brutus uses this as a metaphor for Caesar. This imagery is carried throughout the rest of Brutus's speech.

Because this lesson is based on dramatic performance, this is a great opportunity to start a conversation – or even a collaboration – with a drama teacher.

And here's a music connection: theater people call this speech an aria because, like in an opera or oratorio in classical music, it is a formal expressive piece for one performer. The Metropolitan Opera explains that, "arias mostly appear during a pause in dramatic action when a character is reflecting on their emotions."¹ This video enables students to hear two actors talk about how they understand the speech, and to see how each performs it as a result.

¹ <https://www.metopera.org/discover/education/educator-guides-content/agrippina/10-essential-musical-terms/>

Objectives:

Students will be able to identify and analyze Shakespeare's use of rhetorical appeals in Julius Caesar.

Students will be able to articulate the use, purpose, and impact of rhetorical appeals in selected speeches from Julius Caesar.

Materials Needed:

Script for 2 scene selections – 1 per student (front/back)

- Act 1, Scene 2: Cassius lines 136-162
 - Act 2, Scene 1: Brutus soliloquy 10-34
- 2 Actors, 1 Role Videos – Cassius & Brutus

Lesson Activities:

Warm-Up/Activate Prior Knowledge (5-10 Minutes)

In order to review previously taught rhetorical appeals, ask students to quickly write on what they can recall about ethos, pathos, and logos. When would each be used? Can you think of an example of each? Teachers may choose to have students view a quick video to review the 3 main appeals.

Video Suggestion - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUpiy67_nt4

Have students think, pair, share to recap appeals. Share out whole class to ensure all students have a general grasp of the 3 appeals before moving on with the next section of the lesson plan.

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Lesson Activities: *(Continued)*

Whole Class Text Focus Instruction *(20 Minutes)*

- Direct students to Cassius's speech in Act 1, Scene 2 of Julius Caesar. Students should have a copy of the lines in front of them to make notes as teacher discusses and models.
- Read through lines 136-162 once for exposure, not stopping to discuss meaning or implications.
- **Optional:** Listen to actors in "2 Actors, 1 Role – Cassius" video set up the lines for discussion.
 - ◇ Time: 6:50 – 10:00
- Listen to Cassius's lines read by both actors in "2 Actors, 1 Role – Cassius" video.
 - ◇ Time: 12:15 - 15:22 (about 3 minutes)
 - ◇ Ask students to notice and note any places in the text that they think use ethos, pathos, or logos. (Students aren't likely to find all 3 appeals in this excerpt. Logos is most heavily relied upon). **Scaffold – Teachers may need to listen to the lines and stop to discuss meaning before moving on to discuss rhetorical appeals. Differentiate based on student readiness.*
- Think-pair-share: Ask students to turn to a partner to discuss what they noted/noticed in the lines regarding Shakespeare's use of rhetorical appeals. **Complete this process to discuss meaning of the lines first if students need to do so.*
- Whole class discussion – where do you notice ethos, pathos, and logos? Students are likely to notice more use of logos than ethos or pathos.
 - ◇ Key lines to discuss appealing to Brutus's logical side.
 - *Brutus and Caesar – what should be in that "Caesar"?/Why should that name be sounded more than yours?/Write them together, yours is as fair a name.*
 - *Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,/When there is in it but one only man/Oh, you and I have heard our fathers say,/There was a Brutus once that would have brooked/Th' eternal devil to keep his state in Rome/As easily as a king.*

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Lesson Activities: *(Continued)*

Small Group/Partner Text Focus Practice *(15-20 Minutes)*

- Direct students to Brutus's speech in Act 2, Scene 1 of Julius Caesar. Students should have a copy of the lines in front of them to make notes as they discuss with small groups/partners.
- Students should complete the following in their small groups/with partners.
 - ⇒ Read through lines 10 – 34 once for exposure. Students can discuss the meaning of this soliloquy in their small groups/with partners.
 - ⇒ Listen to Brutus's lines read by both actors in "2 Actors, 1 Role :Brutus" video.
 - ◆ Time: 19:10 – 23:35 (4 minutes)
Optional: Time for lines lead up (Brutus's motivation): 11:25 – 19:05
 - ◆ Students should notice, note, and discuss meaning of the text and Shakespeare's use of appeals (specifically logos) in Brutus's lines.
 - ⇒ Have students discuss the following in their small groups/partners: What effect does Shakespeare's use of logic in Cassius and Brutus's lines have on the plot of the drama? What does this mean for Caesar's fate? What does this foreshadow about Brutus and Cassius's relationship? Students can write a response to this as an exit ticket or formative assessment if the teacher chooses.

Independent Practice/Writing Extension

- For students to extend their thinking regarding Shakespeare's use of rhetorical appeals, students can be given (or can choose their own) section of text to identify ethos, pathos, or logos or other rhetorical techniques.
- Suggestions for excerpts:
 - ⇒ Act 3, Scene 2 – Brutus's speech to the crowd at Caesar's funeral
 - ◆ Look for repetition and pathos. Antony also speaks at Caesar's funeral in this scene. His rhetoric could easily be compared to Brutus here.
 - ⇒ Act 1, Scene 2 – Murellus's speech to the commoners for celebrating Caesar's win over Pompey's sons (former leaders of Rome)
 - ◆ Look for pathos – Murellus is attempting to shame the commoners.

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Video(s) Timeline(s):

Cassius

- **Beginning–2:30:** Both actors discussing the production location & implications
- **2:33-4:40:** Both actors discuss the production details including costumes, lighting effects, transitions, sets, etc.
- **4:48-6:49:** The lead up to the aria is discussed by both actors. What has built up to this moment? What happened in the play before this moment?
- **6:55-9:55:** Both actors discuss why is this moment included in the play, Cassius's motivations and thought process, and the importance of this scene to the rest of the action that follows. This is where the actors first discuss Cassius's use of logic to appeal to Brutus.
- **9:59-12:21:** Both actors discuss the aftermath of the aria. What effect does this have on Cassius and Brutus's relationship and the plot that follows? Discussion through the end of the scene (Act 1, Scene 2).
 - ⇒ **10:58** – Tim discusses that this is the last moment that Brutus ever listens to Cassius and heeds his advice for the remainder of the play.
- **12:29-15:22:** Both actors alternate the performance of the aria (Act 1, Scene 2) *Why, man, he doth bstride the narrow world like a Colossus...*
 - ⇒ **12:29-13:48:** David as Cassius
 - ⇒ **13:49-15:20:** Tim as Cassius
- **15:30-19:52:** Mutual Admiration Society: Both actors alternate to create a discussion of each respective actors' choices in performing then speech/aria. Many comments on physical portrayal of Cassius (gestures, muscularity, David's costume etc.)
 - ⇒ David mentions the desire to see Tim perform the speech as Cassius with Brutus in the scene as well. Possible discussion point for students or good place to compare this performance with one where Brutus is also portrayed.
- **19:52** - Still shot of both actors on stage portraying Cassius (in costume)

Brutus

- **Beginning-0:39:** Both actors introduce themselves and the role they played in their respective performances of Brutus.
- **0:45-4:20:** Both actors discuss the differences in the venue in which their production was performed. Jacob discusses the intimacy of the venue while Andrew discusses navigating the expansive outdoor space of Miller Outdoor Theater.
 - ⇒ Andrew – Miller Outdoor Theater
 - ⇒ Jacob – Quintero Theater (Black Box style theater)

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Video(s) Timeline(s): *continued*

Brutus

- **4:26-11:20:** Setting and production is discussed by both actors in detail. This includes costumes, props (or lack of), the set, music, pacing, etc. The performances and level of production discussed are a direct contrast to one another.
- **11:27-16:38:** The lead up to the aria is discussed. What causes Brutus to speak these lines? Andrew provides great background for students who may not be viewing the play in its entirety. Jacob discusses the emotional state that Brutus is in during this scene and leading up to it. Andrew discusses the background and the impending storm (about 15:45).
- **16:45-19:05:** Jacob discusses Brutus's thought process during the aria (Act 2, Scene 1).
- **19:13-23:35:** Both actors alternate the reading of Brutus's aria (Act 2, Scene 1) *It must be by his death, and for my part I know no personal cause to spurn at him...*
 - ⇒ **19:13-21:07:** Andrew as Brutus
 - ⇒ **21:09-23:35:** Jacob as Brutus
- **23:44-30:38:** Andrew discusses/comments on Jacob's performance of Brutus. He comments on the level of intimacy with the audience and the clear contemplative nature of the speech that Jacob displays. There's a clear focus on Brutus's thought process and that is made clear to the audience in Jacob's performance.

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ONE ROLE, TWO ACTORS: *Cassius*

Act 1, Scene 2

CASSIUS

Why, man, he doth bstride the narrow world

136

Like a Colossus, and we petty men

Walk under his huge legs and peep about

To find ourselves dishonorable graves.

Men at some time are masters of their fates.

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,

But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

“Brutus” and “Caesar”—what should be in that
“Caesar”?

Why should that name be sounded more than
yours?

Write them together, yours is as fair a name;

Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;

Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,

“Brutus” will start a spirit as soon as “Caesar.”

Now, in the names of all the gods at once,

Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed

That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed!

Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!

When went there by an age, since the great flood,

But it was famed with more than with one man?

When could they say, till now, that talked of Rome,

That her wide walks encompassed but one man?

Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough

When there is in it but one only man.

O, you and I have heard our fathers say

There was a Brutus once that would have brooked

Th' eternal devil to keep his state in Rome

As easily as a king.

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ONE ROLE, TWO ACTORS: *Brutus*

Act 2, Scene 1

BRUTUS:

It must be by his death, and for my part 10
I know no personal cause to spurn at him
But for the general. He would be crowned.
How that might change his nature, there's the question.
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder
And that craves wary walking. Crown him that,
And then I grant we put a sting in him
That at his will he may do danger with.
Th' abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
Remorse from power. And, to speak truth of Caesar,
I have not known when his affections swayed
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber upward turns his face.
But when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend. So Caesar may.
Then, lest he may, prevent. And since the quarrel
Will bear no color for the thing he his,
Fashion it thus: That what he is, augmented,
Would run to these and these extremities.
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg-
Which, hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous -
And kill him in the shell.

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