

1 Lesson

Unit: Persuasion Across Time and Space:
Analyzing and Producing Complex Texts

Lesson: Advertising in the Contemporary World:
An Introduction to Persuasive Texts

OVERVIEW

In the first lesson in this unit, students are introduced to the use of persuasion in visual, print, and multimodal advertisements. Many advertisements, particularly video, embed persuasive techniques in the familiar genre of narrative first to inform, engage, and interest readers and viewers emotionally, and then to persuade them to take some form of action. This action may be to buy a product, sign a petition, attend an event, or change their behavior. Sometimes the purpose is to raise awareness of an issue –the action or response required is not always made explicit. This lesson explores how the use of persuasive techniques within the narrative of advertisements accomplishes these goals. Students are introduced to the use of modality in persuasion and begin to use this important technique to analyze and create texts.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Informational Text

- RI.7.1/8.1 Cite textual evidence that supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences from the text
- RI.8.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text
- RI.8.7 Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different media to present a particular topic or idea

Language

- L.7.6/8.6 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Lesson: Advertising in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Persuasive Texts

Audience

Middle School (grades 7th and 8th)

Classroom time frame

4 days (four 45 minute class periods)

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Key text

- Video: Evolution Commercial
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hibyAJOSW8U>
- Video: Australian Vision Commercial - *Can You Live with Dirty Water?*
http://www.worldvision.com.au/issues/WaterSanitationHygiene/WhatsOurResponse/Can_you_live_with_dirty_water_.aspx
- Optional Video: Digital Art Alliance.mp4

Instructional Sequence*

Preparing Learners

Day One

- Quick Write with Round Robin
- Extended Anticipatory Guide with Dyad Share
- Viewing with a Focus (without sound): *Can you Live with Dirty Water?*

Day Two

- Viewing with a Focus (with sound): *Can you Live with Dirty Water?*

Interacting with Texts

Day Two

- Viewing with a Focus with Small and Large Group Round Robin: Evolution
- *Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions*

Day Three

- Narrative Construction with Rubric

Extending Understanding

Days Three-Four

- Constructing and Deconstructing Modality in Text
- Advertisement Analysis
- Individual Writing

* For further information about the tasks comprising the Instructional Sequence see the task descriptions at the end of the lesson. Each task is described and includes information about its purpose, requirements for use, structure and steps for implementation, as well as suggestions for additional scaffolding.

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Preparing Learners

- Quick Write with Round Robin
- Extended Anticipatory Guide with Dyad Share
- Viewing with a Focus (without and with sound)

Purpose

Quick Write

The Quick Write prompt is meant to activate students' prior knowledge about an advertisement they like and to reflect on what makes it persuasive. The Round Robin helps the team build schema about the persuasive elements used in advertisements.

Quick Write with Round Robin

Students sit in small groups of four. Explain to students that the lesson they will engage in focuses on advertising in the contemporary world. Ask students to take five minutes to write down their ideas to the following questions:

- What is your favorite advertisement? What makes it particularly effective or persuasive?

Convey to students that a quick write is a way for them to jot down their ideas and get them ready for further exploration. They need not worry about spelling or grammar in a quick write.

Round Robin

Ask students to share their responses in groups of four. Remind students that in a Round Robin, all students must take their turn to share, and others may not interrupt or comment until all students have expressed their ideas.

Extended Anticipatory Guide with Dyad Share

Distribute Handout #1: *Extended Anticipatory Guide: Advertising in the Contemporary World* and Handout #2: *Dyad Share* and ask students to work in pairs to write their individual decisions in the section labeled "Before Lesson."

Explain to students that they will revisit the guide at the end of the unit to see whether their original opinions have changed based on new learning.

Purpose

Extended Anticipatory Guide

The statements in the Extended Anticipatory Guide focus students' attention on key ideas and concepts that will be developed in the unit.

Purpose

Viewing with a Focus

This series of tasks guides students in increasingly complex analysis of the video *Can you Live with Dirty Water?* Students learn to “read” and analyze the narrative videos with a critical lens.

Viewing without sound during the first part of the analysis allows students, particularly English Language Learners, to focus on content without the added dimension of a contrapuntal soundtrack.

Viewing with a Focus (without sound): *Can you Live with Dirty Water?*

Explain to students that they will be watching a video commercial called *Can you Live with Dirty Water?*, first without sound and then with sound. Distribute Handout #3: *Video Response*. Tell students that the first time they watch the video they should view it with the following focus:

- What are the positive and negative emotions the advertisement aims to provoke?

Give students a few minutes to jot down their responses in the corresponding box.

Play the video again, asking students to focus on the following questions:

- What is the problem that needs a solution?
- Is there a “call to action” in this advertisement—what might the advertiser want responders to think and do after watching?

Again, provide students with a few minutes to write down their responses on their handout. Ask them to share their responses with a partner, adding any new and interesting responses to their own handout.

Tell students they will view the video with the soundtrack the next day.

Purpose

The tasks in this part of the lesson apprentice students into analyzing the message or claim, tone, and mood of a visual text and in representing these elements in a written text.

Interacting with Texts

Video: Evolution

- Viewing with a Focus with Small and Large Group Round Robin
- *Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions*
- Narrative Construction with Rubric

Viewing with a Focus with Small and Large Group Round Robin

If possible compose groups of four with a balance of males and females. Explain to students that they are going to construct the narrative for a video that is composed of a series of images. The first time they see the video, groups of four should try to construct a response to the following questions:

- What is happening in this video?
- What is the message?
- Why do you suppose the maker of the video decided not to use words?

Small Group Round Robin

Invite students to share their individual responses to the questions using a Round Robin format. Remind them that though they may agree or disagree with a peer's response, they cannot comment until everyone has expressed their ideas. After everyone has shared, the group should decide on a consensus response to the questions.

Large Group Round Robin

Ask a student in each group to share the team's consensus responses with the whole class. As groups share, write their responses down on chart paper. At the end of the sharing, ask students to consider, based on the responses, what the class narrative of the video might be.

Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions

Ask students to jot down the feelings they have after seeing the video *Evolution*. Distribute Handout #4: *Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions* and ask students to write down where their emotions about the video would fit on the wheel. Invite students to share their wheel with a partner.

Purpose

Narrative Construction with Rubric

This task provides teachers with a formative assessment of students' mastery of standard RI.8.2: Determine the central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. Students participate in the formative assessment process when they use the task rubric to assess their group's collective mastery of the standard.

Ask students to consider the emotions evoked by their favorite advertisement. Discuss why advertisers would choose to elicit different emotions from their responders.

Narrative Construction with Rubric

Explain to students that small groups will work together to write a narrative for the video. Review the components of a narrative if needed: orientation, complication, climax, and resolution.

Distribute Handout #5: *Narrative Construction Rubric* and review the performance indicators for content, emphasizing that students' narratives should communicate the video's message or central idea and its development over the course of narrative

Play the video again. Ask students to revisit their responses to the earlier question about the message of the video, adding to or revising their original consensus based on a second viewing. Invite groups to discuss the video using the following questions as a guide:

1. When does the viewer become aware of what is happening in the video?
2. What are the key events in the video? What is the complication, climax, and resolution?
3. How do these elements develop the message?

Groups then write the narrative that communicates understanding of the video's message and its unfolding in images. Everyone should have the narrative written down. Invite groups to volunteer to read their narratives. Discuss differences in interpretation and in narrative construction.

Extending Understanding

- Constructing and Deconstructing Modality in Text
- Advertisement Analysis
- Individual Writing

Constructing and Deconstructing Modality

Distribute Handout # 6: *Soft Sells and Hard Sells*

Ask small groups to take turns reading the advertising slogans on the handout aloud. Once they have read a slogan, they should decide whether it is a soft sell of a product or a hard sell of a product. The group should be prepared to share the words that made them decide on placement within a category.

Distribute Handout #7: *Modality in Advertising*.

Explain the categories of high, medium, and low modality, and review words and phrases that signal each category. Ask for examples of their use in everyday life. Tell students the adjectives high, medium, and low are used to describe modality in most persuasive texts, except for advertising. Advertising uses hard sell, medium sell, and soft sell to describe different types of persuasion in ads. Now give each group a product that they must sell three times: once with a soft sell, once with a medium sell, and once with a hard sell. Explain that students will write their selling slogans using words from each category. (They may also create a visual if that will help them.) As students present their products, other groups should determine what type of sell is being made. After conferring they raise a card that indicates Hard, Medium or Soft Sell.

Discuss the activity by using different types of modality to create persuasive statements about events and issues that matter to students. Be sure to write statements using high, medium, and low modality. Discuss how modality can make a writer sound like an authority or more like a peer.

Advertisement Analysis

In preparation for this activity, ask students to bring in a favorite advertisement or one they dislike. It may be print or video, but should include text. Explain that they will apply what they've learned in this lesson by analyzing their advertisement.

Formative Assessment

This writing is intended to help students synthesize what they have learned in preparation for reading a complex persuasive text in the next lesson. It also provides you, the teacher, with valuable information about what students understood, misunderstood, or missed from this lesson. Rather than “reteaching” the lesson in advertising, use this information to hone your instruction in the next lesson.

Distribute Handout #8: *Advertisement Analysis* to each student. Ask students to analyze their advertisement using the focus questions in the handout.

Individual Writing

Invite students to write about what they learned about persuasion in this lesson by responding to the following prompt:

Describe what you have learned about persuasion in this lesson. In your response consider the importance of a central message, ways to communicate your message, and specific uses of language and visuals make a reader feel or think a certain way.

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Handout #1: Extended Anticipatory Guide

Work with your partner to decide whether you agree or disagree with the statements below. Use the language on Handout #2: *Dyad Share* to guide your discussion.

Statement	Opinion Before Lesson		Findings After Lesson		Evidence
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	
1. The purpose of advertisements is to persuade you to buy something.					
2. Changing one word in an advertising slogan can change the meaning of the ad.					
3. Persuasive texts –essays, speeches, or advertisements– always follow the same format.					
4. Modern writers of persuasive texts, including advertisements, use techniques that were used more than two thousand years ago.					
5. The most effective persuasive texts use complex words and sentences.					

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Handout #2: Dyad Share

Work with your partner using the following language to discuss and determine whether you agree or disagree with the statements in the Extended Anticipatory Guide:

S1: *Ok, I will begin by reading statement 1. "..."* Based on what I know, I would say this statement is true/not true, so I will agree/disagree. One reason for my opinion is that ...

S2: *I agree/disagree with you. The reason for my agreement/disagreement is that I know that ...* Now I will read statement 2. "..."
Based on what I know I would say this statement is true/not true, so I will agree/disagree.

Frame II

S1: *Ok, I will begin by reading statement 1. "..."* Based on what I know, I would say I agree/disagree with this statement. One reason for my opinion is that...

S2: *I agree/disagree with you. The reason for my agreement/disagreement is that I know that ...* Now I will read statement 2. "..."
Based on what I know about...I would say agree/disagree.

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Handout #3: Video Response: *Can You Live with Dirty Water?*

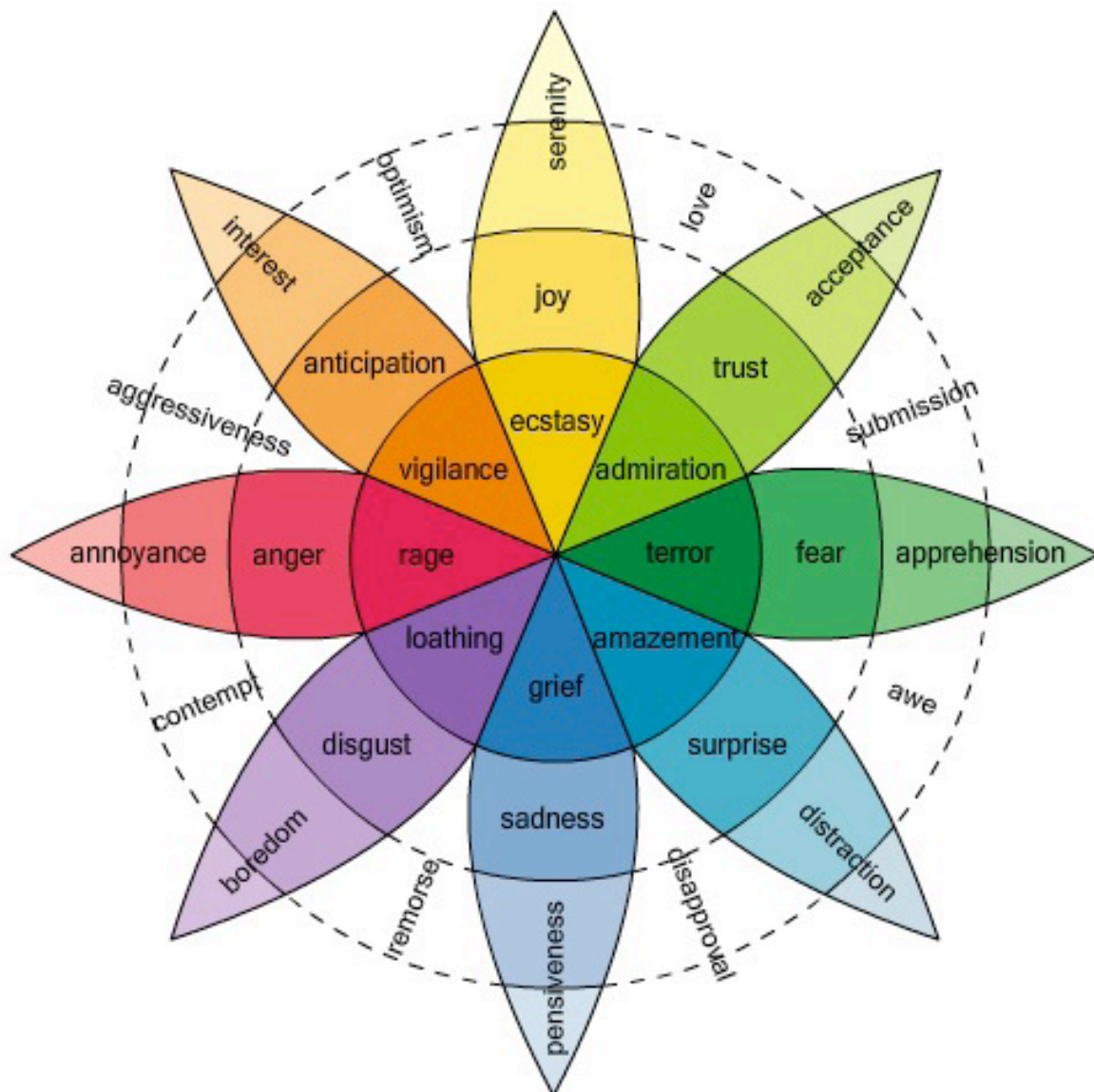
Use the questions on this handout to guide your responses to the video advertisement *Can You Live with Dirty Water?*

	Positive	Negative
Focus: First Viewing What are the positive and negative emotions the advertisement aims to provoke?		
What is the problem that needs a solution?		
Focus: Second Viewing Is there a "call to action" in this advertisement?		
What might the advertiser want responders to think and do after watching?		
Focus: Viewing with Sound How is the central idea developing? How does sound contribute to this development?		

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Handout #4: Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions

Locate the three emotions you had after watching the video *Evolution* by placing an "x" in the corresponding areas of the color wheel.



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Handout #5: Narrative Construction Rubric

Performance Indicators	Outstanding	Passing	Needs Revision
Content	Narrative communicates understanding of the video's message and the unfolding of the message in images.	Narrative communicates understanding of ideas and events expressed in the video.	Narrative communicates partial or no understanding of the ideas and events expressed in the video.
Collaboration with Peers	During planning of the narrative, each student is actively involved and contributes ideas. All group members encourage peers' participation and work to incorporate their ideas into the narrative for the video.	During planning, each group member pays attention and contributes. All group members respond to each other's ideas.	During planning, one or more group members fails to pay attention or contribute. One or more group members does not collaborate with peers, either by dominating the group or by refusing to acknowledge the ideas of others.



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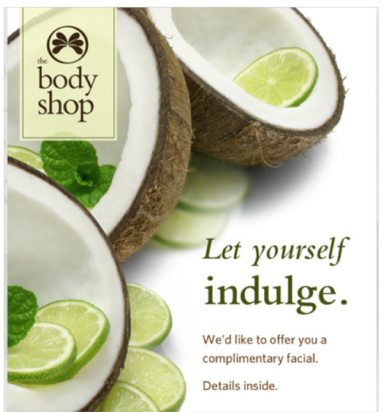
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Handout #6: Soft and Hard Sells

One student in your group reads the first slogan aloud. Your group discusses the slogan and decides whether the advertiser is giving the product a “soft sell” or a “hard sell,” and identifies the words that made you decide on your choice. A second student reads the second advertisement and the process continues until all advertisements and slogans have been analyzed.

Advertisement	Slogan	Is the advertiser giving the product a soft or hard sell?	What Words Made You Decide?
	<p>All we're asking for is half your face</p>		
	<p>Is Your Teen in Trouble?</p> <p>Click Here Now, We Can Help!</p>		
	<p>Don't Waste The Park</p> <p>Do The Right Thing</p>		

Advertisement	Slogan	Is the advertiser giving the product a soft or hard sell?	What Words Made You Decide?
 <p>YOU'LL NEVER LOOK AT DINNER THE SAME WAY</p> <p>FOOD, INC.</p>	<p>You Will Never Look At Food the Same Way</p>		
 <p>the body shop</p> <p><i>Let yourself indulge.</i></p> <p>We'd like to offer you a complimentary facial. Details inside.</p>	<p>Let yourself indulge. We would like to offer you a complimentary facial.</p>		

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Handout #7: Modality in Advertising

Your group will be given a product to sell. Your job is to sell it in three different ways, with three different slogans. One slogan needs to communicate a hard sell of your product, another a medium sell and a third a soft sell. For each type of slogan choose words that communicate your attitude and opinions about your product from the corresponding list. You may use visuals if that will help you. Your group will present the three slogan (in any order) to the class, and other groups will decide, based on your language, what type of sell you are making.

Type of Sell	Type of Modality	Modality: Words that Communicate Attitude and Opinions	Slogan
Hard Sell	High	<i>Must, ought to, has to, definitely, certainly, always, never</i>	
Medium Sell	Medium	<i>Will, should, can, need to, I think, probably, apparently, often, usually</i>	
Soft Sell	Low	<i>May, might, could, would, possibly, perhaps, seems, appears, maybe, sometimes</i>	

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Handout #8: Advertising Analysis

Analyze your advertisement using the questions on the handout. Be prepared to share your analysis with others.

1. Why did you choose this advertisement? What makes it effective or persuasive or ineffective and unpersuasive?	
2. What is the message of the advertisement?	
3. What type of sell is the advertiser making? What language alerts you to this type of sell?	
4. What might the advertiser want the responder to think, feel or do?	
5. After analyzing this advertisement, has your opinion of it changed? Explain why or why not.	

Place your ad here or attach it to this handout.

Tasks in Lesson 1

Advertising in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Persuasive Texts

Advertisement Analysis

Anticipatory Guide and Extended Anticipatory Guide

Constructing and Deconstructing Modality

Narrative Construction with Rubric

Pluchik's Wheel of Emotion

Quick-Write

Round-Robin

Viewing with a Focus

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Advertisement Analysis

Purpose: This Extending Understanding task requires students to critically examine an advertisement of their choice, applying what they have learned in the lesson to their own example.

Required for use: Students choose their own advertisement for this task, so the teacher may want to have a stack of magazines or sample ads that students may choose from. The questions in the cells represent all of the persuasive techniques that students have studied in this lesson, and students now have an opportunity to apply them in a novel way. While students may need a review of these concepts, they should be familiar with the terms and ideas presented in the matrix.

Structure of the activity: To use the matrix, students must have an ad to use on their own. The first time students engage in this task, the teacher should model how to answer the questions and fill in each cell.

Process outline:

- Students bring in their own advertisement, or choose from a selection that the teacher has brought in to class.
- Students read each question and fill in the corresponding cell, individually.
- Students should be prepared to share their analysis with a partner or with the class.

Anticipatory Guide and Extended Anticipatory Guide

Purpose: An Anticipatory Guide is intended to activate students' background knowledge that is relevant to the content of a text they are expected to read and comprehend, as well as introduce key concepts and language. As a preparatory task, the anticipatory guide provides a context for the text and makes connections between content and students' own experiences. The Anticipatory Guide also enables teachers to introduce key vocabulary within the context of a theme. Furthermore, it is a vehicle for teaching students the importance of being aware as readers of their own knowledge in relation to the content of a text. The Anticipatory Guide is a useful diagnostic tool for the teacher, as it allows her to learn ahead of time what students believe about a certain theme or topic, and what background information they are bringing to the text which may support or impede their understanding.

Required for use: To use the Anticipatory Guide effectively, the teacher writes five statements that require students to reflect on and think about themes and concepts they will encounter in the text. The sentences should capture students' interest and provide a mixture of statements that trigger agreement and disagreement. Teachers need to take care when creating the statements so that they are neither too narrow nor too broad. Statements should be one level above the text. For example, a statement might be, "All small children love dogs," rather than, "Peter loved the dog his grandfather gave him."

Structure of the activity: The first time students encounter an Anticipatory Guide, the teacher should model how to read and respond to the statements. When the students engage in the activity, they should be alerted that they have two minutes to read each statement and respond, "agree" or "disagree" by checking the appropriate column. In the column to the right, students will write why they agree or disagree, providing personal evidence to support their response. It is important for students to know that there is not a right or wrong answer.

Process outline:

- Students silently read each statement and individually place a checkmark under the column that best represents their opinions.
- Students add a reason to justify their responses.
- Students begin to share responses in their small groups. One student begins by reading the statement and then stating agree or disagree, and providing a reason for the opinion.
- The other students in the small group each state whether or not they agree or disagree, providing reasons for opinions.
- Once all students have shared, the next student repeats the process with the second statement.

Options for scaffolding: Two students work together, taking turns reading a statement at a time. The first student reads aloud the statement and “thinks aloud” about the reasons he/she agrees or disagrees with the statement. The second student responds and “thinks aloud” about whether he/she agrees or disagrees with the first student’s opinions and reasoning. The partners alternate who “thinks aloud.”

Two possible exchange frames follow:

Frame I

S1: I will read statement 1. It says _____. I agree/disagree with it because _____. So, I am going to mark it agree/disagree. What do you think?

S2: I agree/disagree with you because _____. So, for statement 1, I will mark agree/disagree. Now let me read statement 2. It says _____. I agree/...

Frame II

S1: Ok, I will begin by reading statement 1. “...”Based on what I know, I would say this statement is true/not true, so I will agree/disagree. One reason for my opinion is that ...

S2: I agree/disagree with you. The reason for my agreement/disagreement is that I know that ... Now I will read statement 2. “...” Based on what I know I would say this statement is true/not true, so I will agree/disagree.

Constructing and Deconstructing Modality

Purpose: This task helps students develop understanding of the use modality -- the language used to communicate the degree of certainty that something may be the case—in persuasive texts. As they understand modality, students can determine, by analyzing language choices, the attitudes and opinions of authors of visual, written or hybrid texts.

Required for use: The teacher needs to select clear instances of the use of modality for this task to be effective. As students read more complex texts, they can determine the author’s degree of certainty about desired actions or changes in beliefs by analyzing the type of modal verbs used within and across sections of text.

Use in Lesson 1: Advertising slogans provide a good beginning text for studying modality because their purpose and word or phrase choice are usually indivisible. The task as used in this lesson has two parts. Students first read advertising slogans and decide whether they are a soft sell or a hard sell and identify the language that made them decide on placement within a category. The teacher then asks for examples and highlights the words that students identify. The categories of high, medium, and low modality and words and phrases that signal each category are explained. Students are asked for examples in real life. Students then are assigned a product that they must sell three times, once with a soft sell, once with a medium sell, and once with a hard sell. Students write their slogans using words from each category. As students present, other groups determine the type of sell based on the modality of the language used in the slogans.

Use in Lesson 4: The task, as used in Lesson 4, builds on and extends students’ understanding of the use of modality learned in Lesson 1 by focusing on one writer’s use of modality to influence readers of her essay. Students are introduced to the use of modal verbs to convey whether something is suggested, possible, certain, or required, and then analyze specific instances of modality in Barbara Jordan’s essay “All Together Now.”

Process outline:

- Students sit in small groups.
- They take turns reading selected phrases or sentences aloud.
- Once a sentence or phrase has been read, students decide on the level of modality and the specific word(s) that alert them to the type of “sell.”
- Groups should be prepared to share one phrase or sentence, the level of modality, and the language that indicates this modality.

Narrative Construction with Rubric

Purpose: This task engages students in analyzing a video that has no words or sounds to determine its central idea and the way in which the key moments in develop that idea. Students work collaboratively to write a narrative that communicates these elements to others.

Required for use: The teacher needs to select a rich and compelling video clip – one without dialogue-- that can be analyzed for its purpose, key moments, tone, and message and warrants the writing of a narrative. Ideally, the visual text should be complex enough that students can interpret it in varying ways. The questions that focus multiple viewings should engage students in analyzing the video’s purpose, message, author’s point-of-view, and its component parts.

Structure of the activity: The Narrative Construction task has three main parts. In the first part students watch a video and take notes individually on what is happening in the video and its message, and then come to consensus in small groups about their answers and their rationale for them. Students watch the video a second time, this time focusing on the key narrative moments that develop the message. Finally, small groups then work together to write and a narrative for the video that represents their analysis, using the task rubric as a guide for their work. Students use the rubric categories and indicators to write an individual assessment of the group’s story and its collaborative process, which is turned in to the teacher. Groups represent their narratives, and the teacher leads a discussion about differences in interpretation and narrative construction.

Process outline:

- Students work in groups of four.
- Students are given focus questions for viewing.
- Each student takes individual notes in response to the questions as the video is played.
- Students share responses using a round-robin format.
- Students come to consensus about their answers and rationale for their responses.
- Students view the video again, this time focusing on questions about its key moments and message.
- Students are introduced to the narrative rubric and its performance descriptors are explained.
- Small groups write their narrative.
- Students individually write a reflection on the quality of their narrative and collaboration using the rubric as a guide.
- Groups present their narratives and discuss differences in interpretation and narrative construction.

Pluchik's Wheel of Emotion

Purpose: The task helps student describe with precision their emotional responses to visual, written or hybrid texts. Students move beyond pat responses by using *Pluchik's Wheel of Emotion* to identify subtle emotions and a more complex vocabulary for describing their responses. *Pluchik's Wheel of Emotion* supports students' awareness of a range of emotions, development of a language for describing emotion, and increased ease in talking about emotional response. It can be used as part of a series of Interacting with Texts tasks, as it helps students distinguish between tone and mood.

Required for use: When first using *Pluchik's Wheel of Emotion* it is important that students be reading a potent visual or written text that triggers emotional responses they have to describe. For example, students respond strongly when reading about the sacrificial killing in Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery," as the characters go about their business with no visible affect. It is their matter-of-factness about a disturbing reality that provokes strong responses in students.

Structure of the activity: *Pluchik's Wheel of Emotion* has eight basic emotions at the center of the wheel. Contrasting emotions are opposite in color and placement on the wheel. The outer circles on the wheel represent blends that are more nuanced than basic emotions. The emotions outside of the wheel are combinations arising from adjacent blends. The teacher asks students to jot down emotions felt when reading or viewing a text. Students determine where these emotions would fit on the wheel and whether their intensity reflects students' feelings. If they don't, then the wheel provides them with alternative choices. This activity can be repeated at different points in a text, visual, written, or hybrid. Alternately, students can use the wheel to identify how they felt at different points. The teacher can list emotional responses to different parts of a text and then match those responses to stylistic choices made by the author.

Process outline:

- Students work in small groups.
- Students write down three emotions in response to a text.
- They then locate the emotions on Plutchik's Wheel.
- The group discusses their responses and uses the wheel to arrive at three emotions they share and the rationale for these emotions.
- At a second point in time the activity is repeated and changes in emotional response are identified and mapped back to the text.

Quick-Write

Purpose: The Quick Write invites students to make a connection between background knowledge and themes expressed in a text or unit. It provides students with an opportunity to give a quick gut-level reaction to ideas, situations, or events. Since the goal of the activity is to capture students' first impressions, memories, or feelings, linguistic accuracy and complexity are not stressed.

Required for use: An open-ended and engaging prompt that connects to topics, themes or issues about which students have some background knowledge is an important part of what makes this task effective. If the prompt is too general or too removed from students' experiences in or out of school, students may feel unsure about how to approach the topic. A commitment to fluency on the part of the teacher and students is also required. Students need to know that correctness is not the focus of the activity. If need be, encourage students to write in their native language and require them to use English to talk about what they wrote.

Structure of the activity: One way this activity may be explained to students is to tell them that the writing goes "from your heart to your hand to the paper." Introduce the prompt and, if need be, provide some context by connecting the topic to students' knowledge and experience and the topic or theme that the prompt explores. Give students no more than five minutes to write. If a student says that he or she cannot think of anything to write about have the student write, "I don't know what to write about" for the allotted time.

Process outline:

- Students respond in writing to a prompt without focusing on spelling and grammar correctness.
- Students have no more than 3-5 minutes to write their response.

Round-Robin

Purpose: This task structures small group interaction and participation to ensure that all students have a voice and those students who might otherwise monopolize small group work do not limit anyone else's opportunities to participate. By requiring that every student state his or her response to teacher-initiated questions without interruption, each member of the group connects his/her own ideas to that of their peers and has opportunities to build conceptual and linguistic understanding.

Required for use: Students need time to develop a response to a question prior to engaging in the Round Robin task. The question(s) need to be substantive and open-ended so that students are engaged and learning from each other. If the question(s) are closed, responses will be repetitive and learning constrained. An open-ended question might ask students to pick two or three words from a Wordle (Lesson 3) that jump out to them and describe the images and ideas that come to mind, while a closed question might ask how a character is physically described in a specified section of text.

Structure of the activity: Round Robin requires members of a group listen to and learn from peers without interruption. Students may feel that agreeing and adding information when someone is sharing information shows engagement. To promote active listening, without speaking, some middle school teachers use a prop when first introducing this task. The student holding the prop "holds the floor," and when done speaking, he or she passes the prop to the next person. Eventually students will internalize the structure and will not need a material reminder.

Process outline:

- Each student shares his/her response to a prompt.
- One person speaks at a time
- Nobody should interrupt
- If a student's answer is similar to somebody else's, the student may not pass. Instead the student should indicate agreement ("I have the same opinion as... I also think ...")
- There are no interruptions or discussions until the four members have finished sharing their responses.

Viewing with a Focus

Purpose: This task helps students focus on main ideas and key information as they “read” visual text such as a movie or video clip, a picture, an advertisement, etc. In the same way that reading focus questions help students navigate through extraneous or non-salient information in a written text, questions for viewing help students focus on what the teacher thinks is important or noteworthy in a predominately visual text.

Required for use: The questions that guide students’ viewing of text need to focus on central ideas in the discipline or subject area. If students are asked low-level questions, they will concentrate on details instead of key ideas or discipline-specific ways of analyzing text.

Structure of the activity: Students are asked to read or view with a specific purpose in mind. For example, they may be given three questions to consider as they view a text or members of a group may have different questions to focus on. Students may need several different possible models of how they might begin their responses to a focus question. Models should be generative, meaning that students are learning ways of using language that will be useful in other academic settings. If visual texts are lengthy, complex, or viewed in different ways (with sound, without sound), students may need questions for different sections or viewings.

Process outline:

- Students use the focus question(s) as a guide for viewing and jotting down notes in response to the question(s).
- Students initially work alone, but may share responses with a partner or small group.

Understanding Language

Language, Literacy, and Learning
in the Content Areas

Understanding Language aims to enrich academic content and language development for English Learners (ELs) by making explicit the language and literacy required to meet Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards <http://ell.stanford.edu> .

