



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2010 Volume II: Persuasion in Democratic Politics

To Persuade or Not to Persuade: The Makings of a Persuasive Speech

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by David Probst

This unit is all about the use of rhetoric to persuade someone. In the unit we will learn the history of rhetoric and those who were influential in shaping it. We will look at the different components of rhetoric and learn about what makes up a good persuasive speech by looking at working definitions but also examples by people who have used rhetoric to make significant impacts and contributions both positive and negative to society. After that we will learn what it takes to put together a good persuasive speech. We will look at the steps that one should follow when putting together a persuasive speech. It will culminate in the writing of a speech. The goal of the unit is not only to strengthen writing skills but also to enhance verbal skills by learning the art of rhetoric.

(Developed for Language Arts and Social Studies, grade 5; recommended for Language Arts, grades 4-5, and Ancient History, grade 5)

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