



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2014 Volume IV: Eloquence

Eloquence and Authenticity: Who Are You and Why Should I Listen to You?

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The purpose of this unit is to transform students into creative and informed critics. They will gain an enhanced awareness of rhetorical tropes both in American history and contemporary popular culture while learning that eloquence is artifice as a means to sincerity. We will compare the successfulness of eloquence in four different works: Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Edward Everett's Oration at Gettysburg, Kendrick Lamar's album "good kid, m.A.A.d. city" and Jay Z's album "Magna Carta Holy Grail." In each pair of works, one succeeds much more in stirring the passions through eloquence and a sense of authenticity. This unit will not only examine what eloquence means, but how the speaker achieves credibility and a sense of "truth" through it. At the end of the unit, students will create a rhetoric rubric for the perfect hip hop song and write a persuasive review of a musical album. This unit will give students ownership of literature by helping them develop a nuanced approach to aesthetic evaluation.

(Developed for English, grade 11; recommended for English and AP English, grades 11-12)

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