

# Lesson Plan: “Writing for Social Justice: Class Activity”

Goal: Prep for a Rhetorical Analysis Paper

Time: 50 minutes

## Lesson Overview

Today's class reintroduces students to rhetoric as a tool for analyzing and understanding social justice discourse. Students will connect rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos, kairos, e.g.) to real-world examples of activist writing and speech. This lesson aligns with my *Writing to Analyze* unit by preparing students for their rhetorical analysis essay. Students practice identifying rhetorical strategies in action.

## Learning Objectives/Outcomes

By the end of class, students will be able to:

- Define rhetoric and rhetorical appeals as presented in the Writing Commons article.
- Analyze how rhetorical appeals operate in texts advocating for social justice.
- Reflect on the power of rhetoric in shaping discourse, persuasion, and justice.

(Addresses 3 first-year writing learning outcomes: Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Rhetoric and Genre; Linguistic Diversity & Rhetorical Complexity.)

## Instructional Materials and Resources

### Before class (as assigned in syllabus):

- Writing Commons: “Rhetoric – How To Decode Rhetorical Situations And Communicate With Power” [https://writingcommons.org/section/rhetoric/#What\\_is\\_Rhetoric](https://writingcommons.org/section/rhetoric/#What_is_Rhetoric)

### In Class:

Video: Watch: What is Rhetoric: Study Hall Writing Composition #10  
<https://youtu.be/xpooxL-i5UI?si=QurWuODYPzxZkpc3>

- Short excerpts/examples of social justice rhetoric ( e.g., activist posters, tweets, excerpts from speeches).
- Whiteboard/Google Doc/Canvas page for group notes.

## Activity

### Step 1 – Review (10 min)

- Begin class with the “What is rhetoric” video.
- Turn-and-talk: students pair up and answer “What is rhetoric?” in their own words.
- 2–3 pairs share with the class.

### Step 2 – Social Justice Rhetoric Scavenger Hunt (15 min)

- Divide into groups of 3.
- Each group retrieves a short text excerpt on a social justice issue: examples include,
  - Climate justice tweet (or other short social media post)
  - BLM poster
  - Excerpt from op-ed (news or blog site)
- Task: Identify at least two rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos, kairos, etc.) in the text. Note how each works to persuade the audience of the social justice issue.
- Write 2–3 bullet points on group notes doc or chalkboard.

### Step 3 – Whole-Class Reflection (15 min)

- Each group shares on one rhetorical appeal they identified and how it works toward social justice.
- Class discussion on each appeal: “Why might this rhetorical strategy be powerful (and problematic) in a social justice context?”

### Step 4 - Debrief (10 min)

- Ask: *What did you learn about how rhetoric operates in social justice texts?*

- Ask: *How could this practice help you in your upcoming rhetorical analysis assignment?*
- Give a takeaway: Rhetoric is **never** neutral — it's tied to power, persuasion, and justice.