Lesson Objectives

- Reflect on Assignment 1
- Introduce different genres of texts
- Discuss and practice a new critical reading strategy.

Prep

Familiarize yourself with the various genres of texts. Also look at a static visual of your choice (or you can use one of the examples of Social Media Cartoons in the appendix) and practice the record/question/respond critical reading strategy for visual rhetoric. You will be walking through how you apply this critical reading strategy with your students, so the more familiar you are with the process in advance, the better.

Materials

- Copies of Social Media Cartoons (Appendix)
- Critical reading strategy notes (record/question/respond)
- Overhead Transparencies
  - Postscript questions
  - Static Visual of your choice (editorial cartoons work well)
  - Record/Question/Respond critical reading guide (this could be done on a blank transparency or on the board as you go)
  - Homework

Lead-In

For today, students have revised a summary and response and are preparing to turn in the first graded assignment of the semester. Before you introduce Assignment 2, your students need to understand that “text” can mean more than merely printed material. Genre takes a major role in the reading for assignment 2, so it’s good to lay the foundation today.

ACTIVITIES

Attendance (2 minutes)

Begin class as usual, being sure to preview activities and connect this class to course goals.
Discuss revision, assign a postscript and collect A1 (10 minutes)

Chat with your students for a few minutes, asking them to talk about how they revised their assignment, what they did with the workshop feedback, etc. If your students don’t want to get specific, ask them to talk generally about the experience of writing and revising the assignment.

Next, put “postscript” questions on the overhead and give students a few minutes to answer them. You might ask them to write answers on the backs of the assignments they’re about to turn in. We do a postscript at the end of each graded assignment, and this allows students to reflect on the writing process as well as to communicate with you about their writing. Students often get so wrapped up in the end product they forget about all the important steps that led them to that final product. Yet process is vital, and it’s important to remind them of that. For the first assignment, keep the questions focused on what kinds of things you want to hear as you grade your students’ writing. More open-ended questions, such as “what did you get out of workshop?” or “what should we do differently as we work on our next assignment?” can be valuable, but since they’re not directly relevant to their writing process and/or the final product they are about to turn in, they should be saved for a mid-semester evaluation.

General postscript questions follow that tend to work well for most assignments. Feel free to modify them to suit your students’ needs and to suit each assignment.

Postscript Questions

1. What was most successful about this project? Why?
2. Where did you struggle most? How did you address this challenge?
3. What did you do to revise? How did you use your workshop feedback?
4. Is there anything I should know as I assess this assignment?

Collect Assignment 1 from students and explain your grading practices—you’ll apply the same grading criteria that you’ve discussed with them in class, you’ll write comments that are intended to help them recognize their strengths as well as ways to improve for the next assignment, it’ll probably take about 2 Weeks for you to grade the assignment, etc. You will complete a grading conference with one of the Special Instructors of Composition Administration (Emily, Tom, or Nancy) on this assignment.

Transition: Now that we’ve reflected on our first assignment, we’re going to start taking small steps to expand our critical reading and thinking skills for the next assignment. So I’ll start with this question: When we say “text” does it only mean print, or are there other “texts” that can be read?

Tip: Sometimes using a question as a transition technique is highly effective, but only if you ask a leading question—otherwise you might not get what you want.
Genre Identification Brainstorm (10 minutes)

The next assignment is going to ask students to closely and critically read texts from various genres—not just places of publication, but also various mediums through which communication is conveyed. Ask your students to help you brainstorm a list of the various genres of texts that we encounter frequently. Use a chart and have students give you ideas about print texts, visual texts, multimedia texts, and aural/sound texts.

After your class brainstorm is over, your list should look something like the list below (though students might come up with ideas not listed here!). If students have not listed them all, ask leading questions that help them complete it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Texts</th>
<th>Visual Texts</th>
<th>Multimedia Texts</th>
<th>Aural/Sound Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper feature articles</td>
<td>Photos</td>
<td>Personal websites</td>
<td>Speeches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper editorial/op-ed</td>
<td>Cartoons</td>
<td>Business websites</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine articles</td>
<td>Drawings</td>
<td>FB pages</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly/academic articles</td>
<td>Paintings</td>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Feature Films</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentaries</td>
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<td></td>
<td>TV shows</td>
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<td></td>
<td>TV Commercials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>YouTube videos</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Point out to students that the purpose of identifying different genres of texts is twofold: first, it helps us expand our understanding of the “text” portion of the rhetorical triangle. Though colleges tend to privilege written text, there are many types of texts that are worthy of critical examination. Additionally, we want to identify different texts so we begin thinking about the fact that different texts have different purposes and often speak to different audiences. The purpose of an editorial cartoon, for example, is very different than the purpose of a TV commercial, and the people who create those texts are likely speaking to different audiences. As we launch into doing our multi-genre reading assignments in the coming Weeks, you’ll want to keep this in mind.

Transition: Before we jump straight into reading things like films, let’s practice critically reading visual texts by examining a visual text.
Introduce a new critical reading strategy called Record/Question/Respond (10 min)

When we read visuals we often skip straight to the analysis without really taking the time to become a scrupulous observer. Observing exactly what we see, however, is an important step. It is basically a summary of the text, and as we learned from assignment one, summary shows that you have closely read and understood a text. This critical reading strategy breaks reading down into three stages: Recording, Questioning, and Responding (a strategy adapted from Kim Stallings in her book Quest). Each stage is important to really develop a critical sense of the text.

- **Recording:**
  - Make a written record of the surface details of the text (a summary!)
  - Focus on what the text is communicating and avoid subjective commentary.
  - By articulating what you see and understand about a text, you can more easily identify what you don’t understand and ask good questions about it.

- **Questioning:**
  - Read with a critical eye and ask questions about the text.
  - Look closely at the information you recorded and consider what you DON’T see, what you have NOT been shown/told, or what you need more explanation about.
  - The gaps in information should raise questions: Why hasn’t the text explained this? How did this come about? What happened next?
  - Avoid yes/no questions – ask open-ended questions that show you’re really engaged with the text.
  - Don’t worry about answering the questions yet – just be curious and ask good questions.

- **Responding:**
  - This is your opportunity to “speak back” to the text you’re reading and engage in a “conversation” with it.
  - This is different than the type of responding we did in Assignment 1.
  - In this type of response, you’re trying to answer the questions raised by the text and exploring your own thoughts and ideas while searching for meaning communicated by the text.
  - The goal is to move beyond the surface and understand the message communicated by the text and its significance in terms of how it connects with other texts in the same conversation.

Transition: This process of examination of a text, specifically a visual text, helps you make connections to what you already know. By recognizing what you know, you also begin to recognize what you don’t know, to see information gaps, and those gaps will raise questions for you. A big part of CO150 is learning to make connections, ask questions, and ultimately seek answers to those questions.
Walk-through an example of the Record/Question/Respond strategy (10 min)

Put your own example of a static visual (editorial cartoons work well) on the overhead. First you want to objectively give a description of what you see, either summarizing or listing. Describe objects, colors, textures, and lines. Be descriptive without interjecting personal thoughts and feelings about the content of the image. After you provide a summary of what you see, then it is time to question the text in order to get at a deeper meaning (analysis). However, just write a list of questions for the time being—don’t try to answer them yet. After you ask questions, it is time to respond to the text. In the first assignment students were asked to focus their response on rhetoric only, but now they can explore a bit more with readerly-response. One way to capture this kind of responding is to create a double-entry journal with the questions on one side and the response on the other. Students already used this format for the critical reading guide – this time it’s a bit different since they’re asking questions. Show an example of how a conversation might unfold by doing it this way.

Tip: You may use the walk-through in the appendix if you wish. It is an example taken from Kim Stallings’ Quest. It is an editorial cartoon about 9/11. It works well and provides a bit of a break from social media issues.

Transition: Let’s practice this strategy of reading visual texts in groups. One type of visual argument that has a rich history in social commentary is cartoons.

Read the Social Media Cartoon Arguments in groups (10 minutes)

Divide students into small groups and pass out the Social Media Cartoon examples (Appendix). The group will need to complete one Record/Question/Respond to turn in.

If there is time at the end of class, have a few of the groups share their RQRs for their cartoons and discuss their responses.

Assign homework and conclude class (3 minutes)

Assign the following as homework, and then wrap up today’s class.

- Read about comparing and evaluating in the PHG (pp. 364-367).
- Read about visual rhetoric in the PHG (pp. 183-196).
- Using the same record/question/respond strategy we did in class, critically read the following texts:
  - “Internet Rights and Wrongs: Choices and Challenges in a Networked World,” by Hillary Clinton
Tip: As the semester progress, some of the previous categories in the daily lessons (such as the Conclude Class section) will begin to disappear. They are still important components of class, so be sure to include them in your own lesson plans.

Connection to Next Class

Now that they've been introduced to analysis of visual rhetoric, students will be prepared to “read” multiple genres, including multi-media and static visuals, building on their ability to interpret and analyze texts rhetorically. This kind of thinking is gearing them for assignment 2, which will be introduced soon.
Week 4, Day 9 – Monday, September 12

Lesson Objectives

- Continue exploring how genre impacts the rhetorical situation
- Discuss the “context” piece of the rhetorical situation

Prep

Read and annotate the texts for the day. Try to learn as much about the context of the social media/social activism debate as possible. Make sure you’re keeping up on checking the forums and recording students’ responses for a process/participation grade. Feel free to leave comments for the students.

Materials

- Your annotated copies of the texts read
- Technology to show movie
- Overheads:
  - Contextual Questions

*Tip: If you are uncomfortable using technology in the classroom, you might add Shirky’s TED Talk to the previous night’s homework, rather than show it in the class. Just be sure you adjust the times for the activities in today’s lesson accordingly.*

Lead-in

Students will consider a new piece of the rhetorical situation—context. Knowing the context for a text can provide a natural connection point between texts. Making connections between texts is going to be a primary consideration for the next few Weeks as students prepare for Assignment 2.

ACTIVITIES

Attendance (2 minutes)
Take attendance your usual way and introduce class, focusing on the context piece of the rhetorical situation.

**WTL & Movie (25 minutes)**

Have students apply a record/question/respond critical reading strategy to Clay Shirky's Ted Talk. After students complete the critical read, discuss their responses briefly.

*Transition: This is an excellent close/critical viewing of the movie, and you have relied on all of your rhetorical knowledge thus far. However, there is one more piece of the rhetorical situation that we should consider—Context.*

**Introduce Context (5 min)**

Draw a blank rhetorical triangle on the board with a big circle around it; have students label the triangle vertices. Add “context” as the label for the circle. See if any of your students can define context (be encouraging of any attempts at a response – it can often seem difficult to pin down.) Explain that context is the social, historical, and/or cultural circumstances that surround a text, and these circumstances inevitably impact the way we understand a text.

You might follow with a discussion like the following, using your own example or the one provided.

*Just as looking at how the genre of a text impacts the reading, so too does looking at the context. Context exists outside of the immediate text, so it is often overlooked when analyzing a text’s rhetoric. I describe it as the “stuff” that happens around us that influences how we look at something. For example, last summer at the library my 3-year-old picks out a book with a rose on its cover. The title was A Rose Grows in New York. It reminded me vaguely of A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, so we added the book to our stack and took it home. I read it to my kid that night. The book was hideous! It started by showing this kid who was afraid of EVERYTHING—she wouldn’t pick up a bug because it was yucky, she wouldn’t ride on a rollercoaster because it was scary, she wouldn’t go to sleep without a nightlight because she didn’t want to be alone in the dark, she was afraid of stormy weather—ridiculous stuff like that. And I thought as I was reading, this is NOT a message I want to be sending to my child. Halfway through the book the message got a bit better, although terribly cliché…the fluffy stuff like how you shouldn’t be afraid of the storm because after the rain comes the rainbow, etc... This was a better message, but still, I decided the book was a total disappointment as a children’s book. I happened to flip to the back page and noticed that the book was written September 22, 2001...all of a sudden I had a different idea about the book. This was a piece of contextual information that influenced my perception and evaluation of the book’s worth and content. That’s how context works...it isn’t part of the text; it surrounds the text.*
Transition: One step in the process is identifying the context – that is, understanding the social, historical, or cultural circumstances that surround the text. After we’ve identified the basics of the context of a text, we need to think critically about it in order to understand it more deeply. Here are some questions that you can use to think critically about context.

Handout or show the Context Questions (5 minutes)

- What motivates these arguments? What specifically happened to get the authors to take "pen in hand?"
- What is the lens (jobs, expertise background) of the authors making these arguments?
- What disciplines and institutions do the authors represent?
- What values do the authors appear to hold – that is, what’s important to them?
- What cultural values are important to these arguments?
- Is there anything threatening to cultural values about these arguments?
- Can you cite specific passages from the text that deal with the cultural forces at work around the idea?
- What important historical information is important to the context?

Transition: It’s these added layers that create a deeper meaning for the text. Now let’s consider the entire rhetorical situation (including the context) of several of the texts we read for today.

Discuss the context of Clay Shirky’s essay and Clinton’s speech (15 min)

Draw two blank rhetorical triangles on the board (one for each text) and have students help you label them, putting the specifics for both Shirky and Clinton on the board (be sure to note that both texts come from different genres.) When you get to the context piece of the triangle, use the questions above to have students help you evaluate the context of both these pieces. On the board, compile a context list of everything that should be considered when we attempt to understand how Shirky and Clinton make their arguments.

Tip: Students will be crossing contexts for A2, which will be practiced at length in future classes. Spend today making sure they understand what context is and how to evaluate it so they have a firm foundation for future classes when they will be taking the next step to cross contexts.

Transition: To prepare us for Assignment 2, we’ll be doing a lot of reading, so be prepared for a hefty reading schedule over the next few Weeks. To every reading that you do, apply a critical reading strategy that works best for you and the text.
Assign homework and conclude class (3 minutes)

- Critically read the 3 open letter examples: located on our Class Files page.
- Review & print Assignment 2 from Writing Studio (under “Assignments”). Bring a copy to class along with questions about the assignment.
- Respond to Forum #4: Thinking Critically about Context: Think critically about the way understanding context has changed or influenced your understanding about a situation in your own life. Consider the following: What was a situation in which you responded without knowing or completely understanding the context? What was the result of that lack of awareness? How did learning more about the context change how you understood the situation? How might you make yourself more aware of the context of the things you read?

Connection to Next Class

Students have just been introduced to context, which is integral to A1. The next class will continue immersing students in social media conversations and allow them practice for making even more connections between texts and across contexts.

Tip: There is an alternate lesson plan for this day and discussing context. Look for the alternate in the appendix; it is titled “Jeremy”. It is a technology-heavy lesson. If you insert this plan, have students view Shirky’s TED talk for homework.
Lesson Objectives

- Introduce crossing contexts
- Introduce Assignment 2
- Continue finding connections between ideas/arguments and contexts where they would be useful

Prep

Read and annotate the open letter examples, paying particular attention to purpose and audience. Prepare your overheads and take stock of your grading situation—remember that you need to return their first assignment within two weeks; it’s already been one. Bring in copies or overheads of the open letter examples.

Materials

- Annotated copies of the open letter examples
- Notes about crossing contexts (fire example)
- Copies of A2 (if you didn’t have your students print them off and bring them to class)
- Overhead on specific → larger intended audiences (alternatively use the board)

Lead-In

The next couple of classes will be focusing on having students practice crossing contexts, as they will do in their open letters. Students are becoming accustomed to analyzing visual texts and they’re prepared to begin making critical comparisons in preparation for the work they’ll need to do for Assignment 2, which makes today’s lesson a good time to introduce the particulars of the assignment to the class. Since Assignment 2 is asking them to write in the genre of an open letter, it is a good idea to explore the genre of open letters so they understand the basics about them.

ACTIVITIES

Attendance (2 minutes)

Take attendance and introduce class as usual.
Transition: Last time we discussed what context was and learned questions to ask in order to evaluate it. Today we’re going to take our thinking about context even further.

Crossing Contexts Discussion (10 Minutes)

The controlled use of fire: arguably one of humanity’s most important discoveries. The controlled use of fire is a great example of an idea that can be applied to multiple contexts. Ask students what they believe were the first controlled uses of fire and then list these answers on the board. Then, after helping them at first, have them match the use to the context it belongs in. The board might look something like this when you are through:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses of Fire Examples</th>
<th>Contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>Food/nourishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domesticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel (to colder climates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domesticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Human activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extending work hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled burn</td>
<td>Hunting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Forestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating stones</td>
<td>Tool making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defense/Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hunting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farming</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Architecture</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Imagine if fires stayed confined to the context of food--how cold we would be! How difficult it would be to cut our meat with sharp sticks! Hyperbole, yes, but you get the point. Ideas, born in one context, can be very useful to other contexts. This is the spirit of Assignment 2.

Transition: So you can see how important context is to our world. Because of the human ability to apply ideas across contexts, we are able to discover wonders, invent marvels, and solve seemingly insurmountable problems. We started by noticing a strike of lightening burning up a tree and after applying some critical thinking to that situation we move fire from the tree to the hearth, from the hearth to the hunt, from the hunt to the fields, from the fields to the workshop, from the workshop to the laboratory, and out of the laboratory we’ve moved from a lightning strike to the fiery entrails of a space shuttle.
**Introduce Assignment 2 (10 minutes)**

As you introduce Assignment 2, consider what worked and didn't work when you introduced the first assignment. Also, you may want to emphasize the new skills being required in this assignment, such as crossing contexts, arguing, and directing the letter to an audience who isn’t the teacher. These new skills add a layer of complexity in this assignment that wasn’t seen in the first. If it fits your teaching style and your students’ learning style, you may want to go over the following graph and explanation:

![Three Zones Diagram]

When we introduce new concepts and challenges to our students, the idea is to get them out of their comfort zones (where no learning happens) and into the growth zone (where the learning happens). When we do this, we must provide enough clarity and direction to keep them from entering the panic zone, another zone where no learning happens. When introducing a new assignment, try using this metaphor to allow the students to consider the assignment sheet actively, deciding which concepts they feel comfortable with (e.g. objectively summarize using paraphrase and quotations), which concepts they feel are still growing on them (e.g. supporting a thesis), and which concepts they are feeling panicky about (e.g. crossing contexts). As you go over the assignment, you might ask them to generate lists under three column headings:

- **Comfort Column**: Which concepts they feel comfortable with
- **Growth Column**: Which concepts they are growing more comfortable with, but need more time to master
- **Panic Column**: Which concepts are completely foreign and panic inducing
Have students take out the assignment sheet, or distribute it at this time. Then walk them through it (no need to read it word-for-word, but be sure to highlight the essentials, perhaps by calling on specific students to read key sections) and allow time for questions. Ask students to read and listen to the assignment actively and critically, generating their three-columned lists. If a student asks a question you don’t want to answer right away, simply say, “let me get back to you about that” and then be sure to return to it at a later time. Be sure to include the assessment rubric with the assignment sheet. Ask that they read these documents again carefully before next class and to bring questions they raise.

*Transition. The first thing we should do for this assignment is figure out our own writing situation, so let's begin with the genre: an open letter.*

**Group Work: Open Letter Analysis & Discussion (10 Minutes)**


"According to the John Trimour, of Emerson College, the Open Letter is a genre that most resembles conversations. In Chapter 4 of *The Call to Write*, Trimbur reproduced an open letter from writer James Baldwin to his 14 year-old nephew, James. In this letter, Baldwin is attempting to pass on what he's learned from his own past experiences in our culture. He's trying to give his nephew the benefit of his experiences, and since it is an open letter it can also reach other young people."

In this assignment, you might think of a specific audience, like your parents. But you will write the letter in such a way that all parents can benefit. Let’s look at the three examples of open letters that we read for homework, two from our theme, social media, and one about SUNY Albany cutting their humanities programs. The first example was posted on Facebook by none other than founder Mark Zuckerberg. The second example was posted on the Social Media Academy's website by a blogger and the third as a blog post on the website Genome Biology, by Gregory A. Petsko.

Break students into groups and have them analyze the open letters. You might split the work, having each group focus on a specific letter.

Possible questions:

**Audience**
- Who is the specific intended audience for the letter?
- What larger groups can you identify as part of the audience?
- How does the place of publication relate to intended audiences?
- Brainstorm other places of publication where the letter might be effective.

**Purpose:**
- What is the author trying to accomplish with the audience?
- How is the author effective with the primary audience?
How is the author effective with the broader audience?

Context
- What was the motivation for these letters? What specifically prompted the author to write?
- What is the lens (jobs, expertise background) of the authors making these arguments?
- What values do the authors appear to hold--what's important to them?
- What cultural values are important to these arguments?
- What important historical information is important to the context?

Transition. Now that we've analyzed these letters, let's reconvene as a class to share our group analysis and discussions.

Class Discussion (15 Minutes)

Reconvene as a whole class to discuss the letters. Use the questions they answered in their groups as a guide, but be sure to take the conversation further by connecting it to their purpose in Assignment 2. These authors are not necessarily crossing contexts, so ask students how their purpose in the assignment will differ from these authors.

Note: As we progress through the semester, framework for specific ways to conduct your discussions will decrease, allowing you more freedom to make the right decisions for your class. Not every class is the same, so the discussion questions you used for one class may not work for your second section—be prepared to address the particular needs of your different sections.

Assign homework and conclude class (2 minutes)

- Read about visual rhetoric in the PHG 215-230
- Watch the following TED Talks (You will need a computer with Internet access and sound to complete this assignment):
  - Ted Talk 2: Evan Williams on listening to Twitter users
  - Ted Talk 3: James Surowiecki: When social media became news
  - Ted Talk 4: Johanna Blakley: Social media and the end of gender
- As you critical read these Ted Talks, answer the prompts and questions in the Rhetorical Situation Movie Guide (located in “Materials” section of the Writing Studio).
Tip: The Rhetorical Situation Movie Guide is located in the appendix materials. You could also have students complete RQRs on these Ted Talks. The most important thing is that they’re reading them critically and thinking about them – not just watching them to get through with their homework as quickly as possible.

Connection to Next Class

Emphasize the purpose of the open letter: to apply ideas/arguments in a new context. Ask students to be thinking of other contexts that could benefit from the ideas expressed in each of the movies they'll view for homework.
Lesson Objectives

- Discuss the rhetorical situation of a film.
- Continue making connections between contexts.

Prep

Because today’s class will focus on a rhetorical viewing of three TED Talks, your preparation should include viewing and making notes on the films. Review the assignment sheet, familiarizing yourself with the purpose so you are prepared to answer any questions students might have. With luck, you may also be ready to hand back your students’ Assignment 1 drafts—or at least in the next few days.

Materials

- Notes from the movies, talking points and discussion questions.
- Group work instructions with rhetorical analysis questions.
- Overheads for activities.
  - movie comment samples from the TED website

ACTIVITIES

Attendance (2 minutes)

Take attendance your usual way and introduce class, focusing on how today’s activities will help students critically read even more kinds of texts.

WTL: Open Letters or Movie Blog (15 minutes)

Design a WTL that allows students to engage with the texts they read for homework and/or asks them to practice the skills that will be needed for A2. Use one of the two options below, or craft your own.

Option 1: What are some of the most interesting ideas you’ve read or heard about so far this semester? Jot down a few of these ideas and then think of some audiences who would benefit from hearing about this idea. Next, write a brief letter, a paragraph will do, discussing the idea with a specific audience with a larger intended audience in mind. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Audience</th>
<th>Larger Intended Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dear Mom</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Mr. Carter
Dear Senator Udall

Have volunteers share their letters. You might even have the students read them aloud, leaving off the addressee and having the other students guess their intended audiences.

Option 2:
You might have seen the blogging space underneath the viewing boxes on the TED website. These are spaces where viewers can leave comments and engage in discussion. With blogging growing in popularity, these days anyone can go out to the movies, come home, and become and “influential” critic on Twitter, Facebook, etc. After listening to some sample comments posted by viewers, let’s write our own responses to one of the bloggers, furthering the conversation.

Ask students to provide specific reasons and details from the movie in their "post" so you can collect the WTL holding them accountable for the homework.

End this exercise by asking for volunteers to share their blogging post. Encourage students to actually post their comments at a later time.

Transition. Now that we’ve thought about some of the ideas presented in these texts, let’s practice another skill we’ll be using for Assignment 1 – taking a text from one context and applying it to a new context.

Small Group Work on Crossing Contexts (20-25 minutes)

Tip: Group work is useful because it decreases some of the pressure some students might feel when speaking in front of the whole class, but it can also turn into an opportunity to goof around or otherwise become distracted. Be sure to maintain a presence among the groups and move back into a class-wide discussion as soon as it seems that the groups have finished their discussions.

In five or six small groups, ask students to consider the three TED Talks, first doing a brief rhetorical summary and analysis of the movies (this will be review, since they did this as part of their homework with the rhetorical situation movie guide), followed by a critical thinking session where they analyze the originating context before brainstorming and listing new contexts that could benefit from the idea or argument.

You might provide students/groups with a grid and do the first row with them to help get them started:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Compelling ideas presented in the text</th>
<th>Originating Contexts</th>
<th>New Contexts where the idea would be helpful</th>
<th>Potential Audiences for an open letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evan Williams: On Listening to Twitter users</td>
<td>Using Twitter to find cheap gas</td>
<td>TED Conference</td>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>Parents Mountaineers College students backpacking across Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using Twitter to follow the food wagon</td>
<td>Social Media Business</td>
<td>Exploring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Surowiecki: When Social Media Became News</td>
<td></td>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanna Blakely Social Media and the end of Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tip:** For this activity, and all others where students are engaged in group work, you should “float” among the groups to provide guidance. Be sure you’re available to provide encouragement and help as students do this activity.

**Discussion (5-10 minutes)**

Take the last few minutes of class to discuss the challenges they had filling out this grid and thinking about shifting contexts. Remind students that they’re in the “growth” zone right now – this grid may seem strange and difficult to fill out, but it provides excellent preparation for the type of critical thinking they’ll be doing for Assignment 2. Sometimes when our brains grow it is uncomfortable at first! Have some volunteers explain how they filled out the grid for the texts they read and discuss the new contexts they could apply the ideas in.

**Tip:** Whenever groups are actively sharing their work, be sure to give prompts to inactive groups, in order to keep them involved. This could be anything from developing questions to ask the active group, or specific listening prompts, where each group is listening for a specific aspect of rhetoric from the active group. ex: one group listens for the purpose, one group listens for the audience, etc.
Assign homework and conclude class (3 minutes)

For next time, critically read the following essays from our reader. Please read them in the order listed (Carr then Cascio). The second article was written in response to the first, so it’s best to read them in the order in which they were published.
- "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" by Nicholas Carr
- "Get Smarter," by Jamais Cascio

Connection to Next Class

Today’s lesson gave students the chance to analyze and contextualize films, which incorporates sound and movement alongside visual and linguistic modes of communication. Next time students will move back to print, so it is a good idea to discuss this shift in genre with them.
Week 5, Day 12 – Monday, September 19

Lesson Objectives

- Continue to model and practice crossing contexts
- Introduce Open Letter Development: how to develop the argument in their open letters

Prep

Read and annotate the texts with an eye on applying these arguments to new contexts. Review the Open Letter Development worksheets.

Materials

- Annotated copies of Carr and Cascio
- Overheads or Handouts
  - Open Letter Development: Process and Examples
  - Open Letter Development Handout

Lead-In

There’s a lot of ground to cover in today’s class so you’ll need to pay attention to time. Remember to continue contextualizing activities for your students so that they recognize the relationship between the in-class work they do and the goals of the current major assignment—everything you do in class is intended to be immediately applicable to your students’ writing, which is why the WTLs and other in-class writing (not to mention their forum posts) should act as pre-writing notes for the larger assignments.

ACTIVITIES

Attendance (2 minutes)

Take attendance and introduce class as usual.

Quiz/WTL: Carr and Cascio (15 minutes)

Design a quiz or WTL to hold students accountable for the Carr and Cascio readings. There are two options below you can choose from, or design your own quiz/WTL.

Option 1:
Have students write a summary of the Carr and Cascio's arguments followed by a description of the contexts where they are making their arguments and finally a list of other contexts and audiences that might benefit from the argument. Follow up student writing by listing on the board their ideas about what other contexts would benefit from hearing about Carr and Cascio’s arguments. Be sure to add your own ideas to the list in order to model critical thinking.

Option 2:

1. How does the author of “Is Google Making us Stupid” define an “intellectual technology”? What is one example of an “intellectual technology”?
2. Tweet the thesis of either Carr’s or Cascio’s article (i.e. sum up his argument in 140 characters – “characters” include letters, punctuation, and spaces.) You can choose either article, just be sure to note which one you're choosing.
3. Why does Jamais Cascio, author of “Get Smarter,” argue that “Google isn’t the problem; it’s the beginning of a solution?” Refer to specific aspects of Cascio’s article to back up your answer.

Transition. The open letter will contain an actual argument with a thesis that conveys your purpose (what you want to accomplish with your audience) and reasoning and evidence to support that thesis. Today we will work on how to develop your letters from the basic idea to a developed argument.

Open Letter Development and Thesis (10-15 minutes)

Introduction: Many of us inherited our argument skills from the adults in our lives who supported their arguments (no, you cannot borrow my car) with very little support (because I said so). In academe we strive to mature our arguments (no offense to parents!) by developing our theses with logical reasoning and appropriate and credible evidence.

Provide the following on an overhead, making it an interactive lecture by having students share their own examples.

Open Letter Development—Process & Examples

Step 1: Active listing. When analyzing the texts, pay attention to compelling ideas within those texts that may be useful elsewhere.
   Example #1—the compelling idea: using Twitter in strange, surprising ways (ways that even the creators didn’t expect!) such as to find cheap gas.
   Example #2—the compelling idea: Johanna Blakely argues that social media can free us from absurd gender assumptions by helping people focus on what we like/dislike, rather than what demographic group we fall into.

Step 2: New contexts. Identify new contexts where the idea could be useful. Be creative!
**Example #1:** **New Contexts:** emergency services (tweeting about accidents on the freeway), search and rescue (tweeting the whereabouts of lost/kidnapped people) parenting (kids tweeting about where they are so they can have more freedom)

**Example #2:** **New Contexts:** education (using social media to recruit students for certain majors that are dominated by students of one gender), military (using social media for briefings/meetings so people aren’t distracted by gender)

**Step 3: Choose One Context, and Identify a Problem Within the Context the Idea Could Solve**

**Example #1**

*New Context:* Parenting  
*The problem:* finding healthy ways to allow teens to explore boundaries  
*The solution:* Parents can use Twitter to follow their teens as they expand their curfew boundaries.  
*The idea:* One place that Twitter would be useful would be to parents as they allow kids to expand their boundaries with later curfews. Parents could use Twitter to keep in touch, and keep peace of mind, while allowing their teens to expand their boundaries.

**Example #2:**

*New Context:* Education  
*The problem:* Certain fields of study are dominated by students of a single gender (e.g., men in engineering and women in social work).  
*The solution:* Use social media to recruit students for these majors so people of the minority gender in those fields will be judged on their ideas/potential, not their gender.  
*The idea:* People should look to Joanna Blakely’s idea that social media can free us from absurd gender assumptions in order to recruit students from all genders into certain fields that are dominated by a single gender (such as engineering and social work.)

**Step 4: Choosing an audience:** The audience should come from the new context.

**Example #1:** Since the new context is raising teens, parents present themselves as a likely candidate for your open letter.  
**Example #2:** Since the new context is education, university presidents or department heads present themselves as appropriate audiences for your open letter.

**Step 5: Drafting: putting it all together:**

1) **Create a thesis:**

**Example #1:** Parents should use Twitter to stay in touch with their teens while expanding their curfew boundaries.
Example #2: Johanna Blakely’s idea about social media freeing us from gender bias could help increase the number of male students in female-dominated majors and vice versa.

2) Explain your reason(s):

Example # 1 Reasoning:
Because Twitter will keep parents informed

Example # 2 Reasoning:
Because old methods are keeping some students from pursuing their dream because of gender assumptions.

3) Support reasons with evidence:

Example #1 Evidence (supporting reasoning):
A direct Quote from Evan Williams on the surprising uses of Twitter and how it has helped unexpected users

Example #2 Evidence (supporting reasoning):
A direct quote from Joanna Blakely showing that traditional demographic analysis has been wrong that young people like certain things.

Transition: Now that we have an idea about the form these letters will take, let’s apply this structure to the readings we did for today.

Group Work (15-20 minutes)

Tip: Every student learns differently, so it is important to offer choices for relaying information to the students. Practicing multiple kinds of graphic organizers helps to emphasize the important skills at play as well as addresses multiple learning styles.

Hand out the following information in worksheet form, or have students work from an overhead and write their responses on their own paper. If you choose the second option, it’s wise to make the information available under the “Materials” section of the Writing Studio for those who didn’t finish and/or those who may want to see the information again at home.

Open Letter Development—Process & Examples

Step 1: Active listing. Choose either Carr or Cascio’s article. List the text’s compelling ideas/arguments while simultaneously trying to identify other contexts where the ideas would be useful.

Carr—the compelling idea/argument:

Cascio —the compelling idea/argument:
**Step 2: New contexts.** Identify new contexts where the idea could be useful. Be creative!

*Carr:*

*Cascio:*

**Step 3: Choose One Context, and Identify a Problem in the Context the Idea could Solve**

*Carr:*
New Context:
Problem:
Solution:

*Cascio:*
New Context:
Problem:
Solution:

**Step 4: Choosing an audience:** The audience should come from the new context.
What individuals/groups within the new context would benefit from hearing about Carr's argument?

What individuals/groups within the new context would benefit from hearing about Cascio's argument?

**Step 5: Drafting: Putting it all together:**

1) **Create a thesis for:**

Applying Carr’s argument to a new context:

Applying Cascio’s argument to a new context:

2) **Explain your reason(s):**

Reasoning to support the Carr thesis:
Reasoning to support the Cascio thesis:

3) Support reasons with evidence:

Evidence to support reasoning for Carr thesis:

*Look to direct quotes or paraphrases from his text or other texts for help here.*

Evidence to support reasoning for Cascio thesis:

*Look to direct quotes or paraphrases from his text or other texts for help here.*

**Conclusion:** Finish the activity by listing ideas from student group work on the board. You might use your time mingling in groups to pick out the ideas most worth sharing with the whole class and maybe another idea that needs work.

**Transition:** *Now that you are beginning to take the steps that will be needed to compose your letter, next time we’ll discuss some techniques on things to keep in mind when writing your letter.*

**Assign homework and conclude class (3 minutes)**

- Critically read the following Ted Talks and fill out the rhetorical situation movie guide (or have students do a critical reading guide or RQR) for each one.
  5: Seth Godin on the tribes we lead
  6: Stefana Broadbent: How the Internet enables intimacy

- Critically read the following websites, using the “How to Analyze a Website” guide (under “Materials” on WS) to help you analyze them.
  
  - It Gets Better Project: [http://www.itgetsbetter.org/](http://www.itgetsbetter.org/) Be sure to watch a few of the videos from this website (if you want to see the most popular, choose "Popular" from the front page right underneath the "It Gets Better Project” logo). Come to class prepared to discuss the specifics of some of the videos you watched on the website.

- **Respond to Forum #5: Practicing Crossing Contexts in an Open Letter**
  
  - According to Horizon Report (a report written by EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative and the New Media Consortium about the potentials of new media technologies), game-based learning is growing in popularity at schools across the country. In game-based learning, a student uses specifically focused video games to acquire a particular skill
set. For examples, some universities use a game called Virtual Forensics Lab to instruct students to conduct forensics at crime scenes. Thus far the technology has been used mostly in the context of education (i.e. at schools, colleges, etc.) For this forum, your goal is to do two things: First, pick another context where the idea of using game-based learning could be helpful (such as medicine, military, business, travel, etc.); Then, choose an audience in that new context to whom you’d write an open “letter” (really a paragraph of about 250 words) in which you argue how and why the idea of game-based learning could be useful in the new context. Respond to this forum by ______ (date) at _______ (time).

**Connection to Next Class**

Today's class helped students understand how they will develop their arguments and make rhetorical choices concerning their letters. Make sure that you continue to reinforce the letter structure and the crossing contexts as students struggle with “what to say” in their letters and what contexts these ideas and argument might apply. You might say a word about the new genre they’ll be exploring: websites. Websites won’t be new to students, but critical and rhetorical analysis of them probably will be.
Lesson Objectives

- Review rhetorical situation
- Foster critical thinking about the assignment through discussion
- Practice writing letters and addressing audiences

Prep

This is a good day to expand your comfort zone in terms of class discussion, perhaps trying new techniques (such as the suggested activity – having students write the discussion questions.) Review the rhetorical situation material. Prepare yourself with your own ideas of crossing contexts. You’ll be asking students to do this in class today, so it will be helpful to have some of your own prepared.

Materials

- Overheads for activities
- Notecards (if you’re using them for the WTL)
- Discussion questions

Note: Since you might be starting to branch out on your own for activities, you should begin to supply your own materials list in your written lesson plans.

Lead-in

Students should be getting adept at thinking critically about context, and today you’re going to build on these abilities by guiding students in a discussion aimed at enhancing those skills even further.

ACTIVITIES

Attendance (2 minutes)

Review rhetorical situation (5 minutes)

To get students into position to discuss rhetorical modes and context today, quickly review the rhetorical situation with the overhead you showed them several classes ago. You’ve been talking about it since, but reviewing the visual will help your students engage in the
other activities. Better yet, draw a blank rhetorical situation on the board and have your students label each part for you.

**WTL and Discussion: Thinking Critically about Texts (25 minutes)**

Start off by pointing out that today's WTL is a bit different than usual. Rather than me (the instructor) asking the questions, you (the student) are going to ask the questions that will guide our discussion. You’re going to craft a thoughtful, critical question about one of the texts we read for homework.

Put up the following overhead briefly to give students a bit of guidance on how to write a good discussion question.

*Writing Good Discussion Questions*

Adapted from: http://community.thinkfinity.org/community/professionaldevelopment/trainer_toolbox/blog/2010/06/29/how-to-write-questions-that-stimulate-discussion

**Good discussion questions are:**

- Open-ended
- Clearly Stated
- Conversation Stimulators

**Open-ended**

- Good discussion questions are open-ended, leading to a variety of responses. A person can answer "yes" or "no" without engaging their brain. An open-ended question compels people to think about the situation.
- **For example:** When you say to a child, "How was school today?" they respond, "Fine." And you’re done. But if you say, "Tell me something interesting that happened today at school," they have to focus on a specific incident, and you can get them talking.

**Clearly Stated**

- Good discussion questions are clearly stated. You can’t be lazy about creating a discussion question.
- **For example:** A clearly stated question gives the person enough information to focus his/her thought:
  - Good example: What assumptions does Cascio make about the readers’ view on the internet? (That is, what does Cascio assume the readers know about his topic? What preconceived notions does he think they have?)
  - Poor example: What does Cascio think about the internet?

**Conversation Stimulators**

- Good discussion questions are conversation stimulators that invite a wide variety of viewpoints (as long as they are backed by the text, of course.)
- **For example:** “Are Cascio’s views of augmented intelligence potentially dangerous? Why or why not?”
Give students a few minutes to write their good discussion questions. Have students hand them in, then mix them up and hand them back out (so each student has someone else’s question.) Let them discuss the question in front of them with a partner for a few minutes. Call the students back together as a large group and have them share what they discussed in their partnerships. If the conversation stagnates, use the discussion question guide below to keep the conversation going.

*Tip: Students can either write their questions on notecards that you provide, or just have them do it on notebook paper. Either way, make sure they put their name on the question so you can assign them process/participation points for this in-class work.*

*Tip: This is a different way to lead a discussion that adds variety to a class. If you’re not comfortable with this model, adapt it to your needs as an instructor and the needs of your students.*

**Discussion Question Guide:** Keep the conversation going using the following prompts:

- Ask questions related to summary (purpose, audience, main idea, etc.) to get everyone on the same page
- Ask questions related to rhetorical effectiveness, exercising the A1 skill still in development
- Ask questions related to context, discussing all the important information surrounding these texts
- Ask questions related to content, allowing the students to express how they feel about the subject matter (Note: content discussions are always a risk, so if you lose control of the discussion, or if it becomes uncomfortable or inappropriate, use the neutrality and safety of rhetoric to refocus the discussion).
- Ask questions that converge texts, bringing similar ideas together.
- Ask divergent questions, where you guide the students in moving ideas to other contexts
- Ask synthesis questions where you guide the students in bring different ideas or arguments together from different texts in order to make new arguments.
- Ask assignment specific questions, where you prompt students to make direct links between the discussion and the rhetorical choices they will make in A2.
- Ask course specific questions, when you prompt students to make links between the discussion and the course objectives.
- Ask inter-assignment questions, where you prompt students to link between the current discussion, the current assignment goals, and skills from the previous assignment.
Tip: By this point in the semester you should be feeling more comfortable initiating fruitful class discussions, though some of us will likely have classes we cannot seem to motivate to discussion no matter what we try. Remember to use discussion techniques, such as calling directly on students and redirecting their comments to other students, to help the flow of discussion.

WTL: Letter Writing Exercise (15-20 minutes)

Transition: Now that we’ve explored and discussed these texts, let’s consider some specific rhetorical choices we might make in the upcoming assignment. It’s okay you do not know who you will be writing to in A2--consider this practice. You can keep the same choices you make in this exercise or you can make different choices as we begin officially drafting our letters next week.

One of the things that you’ll be evaluated on for Assignment 2 is how you address an audience – that is, how you speak to your audience’s needs, values, and assumptions. This is an important part of A2 and of writing in general. Today we’re going to practice writing to a specific audience.

The catch phrase of the TED organization is "Ideas worth spreading"

As of right now, if you had to "spread" and idea/argument what idea would you spread?

Now, let’s write two brief letters spreading the idea, trying to convince two audiences of the idea’s usefulness, one to a serious audience and one to a silly audience. As you write, consider what your audience cares about. What does this audience think is important? What does it value? How can you spread your message while appealing to what they care about?

Go through a brief example using one of the audiences below. Ask your students to help you brainstorm: what do coaches value? What do they care about? A brief list may look something like this:

- Hard work, fitness, self-discipline, team spirit

Tell students that when they’re writing to a specific audience, it’s vital that they keep the needs and values of their audience in mind and try to speak to those needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serious Audiences</th>
<th>Silly Audiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>Dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>Ninjas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Cats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches</td>
<td>Werewolves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ask for volunteers to share their letters, reading them aloud to the class. Have the students leave off the addressee’s name, so the class can listen closely and guess the intended audience. You might:
- alternate between a serious letter and a silly letter
- ask the class to guess the audience (have volunteers leave off the addressees to make this possible)
- ask the class to specifically reference effective rhetorical choices in the volunteers letter
- look for teachable moments (how a letter might be more effective), but be careful not to admonish a student who risked volunteering
- finish up by asking students how the change in audience affected their rhetorical choices such as purpose, tone, word choice, etc.

Conclude class and assign homework (3 minutes)

- Critically read Malcolm Gladwell’s essay, “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted.” Use one of the critical reading strategies we’ve practiced so far this semester to take notes on the text.
- Critically view Ted Talk 7: Roger Ebert: Remaking My Voice
- Critically view Ted Talk 8: Alexis Ohanian: How to make a splash in social media
- Read about claims and claims related to evaluation in PHG (pp. 21, 341).
WEEK 5, DAY 14 – Friday, September 23

Lesson Objectives
- Compare the rhetorical situations of three texts, focusing on context
- Continue making critical connections and crossing contexts
- Critique example Open Letter
- Return first assignment

Prep

Read and annotate Gladwell’s article and Ebert’s Ted Talk. Review the PHG discussion about claims. You’ll need to draft your overheads for the activities and decide whether you want to distribute copies of the sample assignment or work from an overhead. If you work from an overhead, be sure that your font size is at least 16 point. Read the sample carefully and note for yourself where the thesis, reasons, and evidence are so that you’re prepared to help students see how the reasons support the thesis (or could do so better), and how the evidence develops the reasons (or could do so better).

Materials
- Annotated texts and discussion questions
- Example Open Letter (Appendix)
- Graded Summary/Responses
- Overhead
  - Letter Writing Best Practices
  - A2 Rubric

Lead-In

Students are getting to the point where they’ll be choosing their ideas and audiences and beginning to think about how to structure the arguments in their letters. Today's class covers the last of the texts as options for Assignment 2 and will give students the opportunity to review assignment goals and see an example of an Open Letter.

ACTIVITIES

Attendance (2 minutes)

Comparing Rhetorical Situations of Texts (15 minutes)
Put three blank rhetorical situation models on the board (one for each of three texts we read for today). Have students help you fill them in for each of the texts you read. As you do this, focus especially on context (since this is, of course, the focus of A2.) Have students go beyond the obvious for each of the texts. Yes, part of Roger Ebert’s context is the TED conference and the conversations that surround social media, but he’s also functioning within the context of disability. Have students dig more deeply and go beyond knee-jerk answers that are easy and safe.

After you’ve filled out the rhetorical situation models for each of the texts, take a step back and ask students to evaluate the texts based on what’s on the board. Lead a discussion in which you ask students to use critical rhetorical terms (e.g., purpose, audience, contexts, etc.) to make evaluations about the success of the texts. Let students share their ideas and at the end, then have students “cross” contexts. In what other context might Roger Ebert’s idea be useful? In what other context might Malcolm Gladwell’s ideas be useful?

Transition: Now that we’ve read and thought about all the texts that are “up for grabs” in Assignment 2, let’s learn about some techniques we should use when we’re writing our letters.

Letter Writing Best Practices (10 minutes)

Put up the following overhead with tips for writing the open letter. As always, amend the overhead to meet the needs of your students (e.g., shortening some of the explanations on the overhead and using your lecture to “fill in the holes.”)

- **Always be polite.** This rule is essential and invariable. Your aim is to help, not to relieve your own feelings. People don’t read abusive or condemnatory letters.

- **Always write your letters on the basis that the audience concerned is open to reason and discussion.**

- **It is important where possible to stress a person’s or a group’s reputation, to show respect for who they are and what they do, and to demonstrate an understanding of current difficulties.** This will give more scope to point out ways in which the discussion can benefit.

- **Be clear and concise about your intentions for discussion.** For instance do not include random appeals that will appear out of context or appropriate in another case.

- **Never use political jargon.** Don’t give the impression that you are writing because you are ideologically or politically opposed to the audience. It is far more effective to stress the fact that your concern for your issue is not politically based in any way, but in keeping with basic principles of your values.

- **Please explain who you are.** This indicates that the letter is genuine, and also shows that people from varying walks of life are following events in our country.
- If you have any special interest or link with the audience, it is a good idea to mention this in your letter. For instance, you may have visited their hometown or studied at the same institution.

- Write something about yourself, connecting it to your purpose. Example: “I love travel and look forward to my semester abroad. I think travel could be a lot safer by taking advantage of social networking technology such as Twitter.”

- Your purpose should explain why you are writing the letter. Example: “I am writing to let you know about a great idea I recently read about that would benefit your profession.”

- Summarize your understanding of the topic and the idea/argument being considered. But don’t rely solely on summarizing various texts. Remember it’s time to add your voice to the conversation.

**Transition:** Now that we’ve reviewed some techniques for the letter, let’s remind ourselves of what other criteria I’ll be looking for in your open letter.

**Review A2 Rubric (5 minutes)**

Have students get out the assignment sheet for A2 and review the evaluation rubric, focusing on what the “big picture” goals of the assignment are: making an argument, addressing an audience, etc.

**Tip:** You may want to have an overhead handy of the evaluation rubric, just in case students didn’t bring their copies with them to class.

You know best how your students discuss, so adapt this discussion to best meet their needs.

**Critique Example Open Letter (10 minutes)**

Hand out copies of an example open letter (or put one on the overhead). Give students a few minutes to read it, and have students compare it with the A2 rubric. Ask them questions that get students thinking about the assignment criteria. For example:

- What argument is this student making?
- What reasons and evidence does he/she use to make this argument?
- How does the student consider the new context for the idea?
- Where/how does the student appeal to the audience by addressing their needs/values/assumptions?
Tip: Some students will be struggling with what to write about and what audience to address, let alone developing an argument. Remind students that you are trying to teach them how to write at a more sophisticated level than they may have every written before. Just because something is hard doesn’t mean it isn’t worth doing! Sophisticated critical thinking and the ability to express it in writing is essential for their educations.

Return First Assignment (5 - 10 minutes)

If you haven’t already done so, return students’ graded Assignment 1. Whenever you return assignments, you should always wait until the end of class—that way there are fewer distractions as you work through your lesson. You may want to explain your policy for handing assignments back. For example, you may want to express the following:

- A “C” is considered average; therefore, it is NOT a “bad” grade
- There is a 24 hour policy regarding returned work; wait 24 hours before coming to talk to me. This way you have allowed yourself plenty of time to read the very detailed comments and reflect on your own writing.
- I enjoy discussing your writing with you, so please feel free to stop in at my office hours or make an appointment to discuss your writing. I will not, however, discuss your grade.

Assign homework and conclude class (3 minutes)

- It's time to make choices for your Open Letters.
  - complete a letter outline, where you write down the “compelling idea” from the original text, the new context you’ll be transferring it to, who your audience will be, and what you intend to argue (that is, why this idea would be useful to your new audience in the new context.) This can be a bulleted list/outline. Bring it with you to class next time.
- Complete the Context Analysis Worksheet (Materials). This is a research document that will help you become informed about the context where you have chosen your audience.
- Begin your Audience Analysis Worksheet (Materials). A complete draft of Assignment 2 will be due Wednesday for a workshop, so start thinking about how to manage your time so that you’ll be able to finish it.
WEEK 6, DAY 15 – Monday, September 26

Lesson Objectives

- Share ideas about Assignment 2
- Review argumentation techniques

Prep

You’ll need to review argumentation strategies. You may elect to do option #1 of the argumentation activity with real candy bars, in which case you will need to supply these for the students. This is completely voluntary—don’t break your budget for the sake of a sugar rush for your students! You’ll need to create an overhead with directions for the activities today.

Materials

- Overheads for activity and homework
- Basic Argumentation Structure

Lead-In

Students are familiar with context and have pushed themselves to cross contexts. They’re now ready to share their ideas with their peers and get feedback on them, and are also ready to practice techniques for effectively integrating evidence.

ACTIVITIES

Attendance (2 minutes)

Activity for Getting Feedback on A2 ideas (15-20 minutes)

Give students a minute or two to review the outline they brought with them today with their ideas for A2. No matter which of the options you choose for this activity, they will need to have their ideas fresh in their minds.

Option #1: Open Letter Drafting Interviews

To help you write an informed argument, interview a peer and write down each other’s answer, providing some concrete material to take home and implement into the drafting of
your letter. Strive to make these interviews interactive, meaning the interviewer should jump in and offer ideas to the interviewed.

1. Summarize your understanding of the topic and the idea/argument being considered. But don’t rely solely on summarizing various texts. Remember it’s time to add your voice to the conversation.

2. What ideas do you have for capturing your audience's attention in the beginning of the letter?

3. Why do you think the idea/argument will be helpful to your audience? Describe in detail why you feel a decision will lead to the impact you foresee.

4. Which other texts that we’ve read back up your reasoning?

5. What does the idea/argument mean to you personally? Describe the idea’s positive or negative effects for you.

6. If you think others will also be affected, identify them. What people or groups will be affected in the same way by implementing or not implementing the idea/argument in the new context?

7. Describe everything you know about how your audience will respond to your idea.

8. If you think your audience will be resistant to your idea, can you think of ways to make them less resistant?

9. Describe what action you hope the audience will take.

10. In what way do you plan on concluding the letter?

Option #2: Idea Speed Dating

Move the desks around in the room so that there are 10 pairs of desks facing each other, all in a line. Have students sit somewhere (anywhere), then put up the direction for the activity.

- In this activity, you will try to articulate your ideas for the next assignment quickly and efficiently.
- You will have 60 seconds to tell your partner WHAT compelling idea you’re taking from the original text, WHAT the new context is, and WHO the new audience is, and WHY they need to hear the idea.
- Your partner will then have 60 seconds to ask you critical questions about your ideas. For example, “Have you thought of X?” or “What about So-and-So’s article? Could that help clarify your thinking?”
• The second partner will then have 60 seconds to explain their compelling idea, what the new context is, who the new audience is, and why they need to hear the idea, which will be followed by 60 seconds of questioning from the other partner.

• After two minutes, one row of people will move to the desk next to them and repeat it. Listen for the cues.

Transition: Now that you’ve had the opportunity to get feedback on some of the ideas for your next assignment, we’re going to do an activity that gives us more tools for putting the letter together.

Fun argumentation activity (20 minutes)

Set your students up with one of the following activities, or invent your own that lets them play with argumentation strategies in a fun way.

Option #1: SWEET TOOTH

Using thesis, reasons, and evidence, groups draft quick arguments intended to convince the instructor that their candy is the best candy. You can assign the candies (Snickers, Skittles, Starburst, Hershey Kisses, Trident sugar-free gum, etc.) or let groups come up with their own. Since they can’t do any actual research on the matter, the accuracy or even plausibility of their evidence isn’t as important as the validity of the argument they construct—they can argue that Baby Ruth candy bars are the best because they make you a better athlete, and develop this reason with goofy stats about batting statistics increasing after the hitter consumed the candy bar for three weeks, etc.

Option #2: SWING VOTER

Using thesis, reasons, and evidence, groups draft quick arguments intended to convince the instructor (the swing voter) to elect their candidate for president. You can assign candidates (Mickey Mouse, Liz Lemon, Captain America, Harry Potter, Eric Cartman, etc.) or let groups choose their own candidates. No actual political figures are allowed, though, and the candidates should be generally recognizable to most of the class. Again, the structure of their arguments is more important than the accuracy of the evidence they use to support them.

Transition. Isn’t argumentation fun? And it’s got a pretty basic structure. Let’s see how this structure plays out in a real student open letter.

Review a sample student open letter (5-10 minutes)

Go over a sample student letter (in the Appendix) and ask students to locate the thesis and find the reasons that support it, and then spend some time looking at how the sample supplies evidence to develop the reasons. Are we convinced by this student’s argument? Is there other evidence or are there other reasons that might be more compelling?
Tip: Sample letters and other sample assignments can be found in the appendix of writing studio. If you can’t find one, ask Nancy, Emily, or Tom.

Tip: you might give your students a little pep talk, instilling some confidence in them, letting them know they’re ready to make this argument.

Assign homework and conclude class (3 minutes)

- Read in the PHG about MLA citation conventions on pp. 613-616
- Complete your Audience Analysis Worksheet (Materials)
- Write a complete draft (it has a substantial beginning, middle and end) of your open letter, ready to workshop at the beginning of the next class. This should be a complete draft of Assignment 2—printed, double-spaced, stapled, and representative of all the criteria in the assignment description.
- Respond to Forum #6: Continuing the Conversation In class recently we had the opportunity to learn about crafting good discussion questions, which we then used to have our own class discussion. Now’s your opportunity to continue the conversation. Consider ALL the texts we’ve read so far (from the beginning of our “eavesdropping” stage until now) and consider a topic that you’re particularly interested in with regards to our class theme (e.g., cyberbullying, privacy, freedom of speech, etc.) Craft a thoughtful discussion question about one of the issues within this topic – a question that will require critical thinking and exploration. Feel free to ask questions about specific authors or texts. Your well-written question will be part of your participation points for this forum. The other part will come from your RESPONSE to another person’s question. Choose another person’s question you find particularly interesting and craft a thoughtful response. Post your question and response by _______ at ________.
Lesson Objectives

- Review workshop goals and principles
- Workshop a peer’s paper

Prep

Review workshop guidelines and principles and review Forum #3 where students reflected on their first workshop. Consider incorporating some of their suggestions into today’s workshop if you feel comfortable doing so. Access another student sample and prepare to review it with your class—in other words, read it carefully and note where it's fulfilling the Assignment 2 criteria and where it might improve so that you can effectively guide your students’ analysis of it. Compose your lesson plan and overhead materials.

Materials

- Workshop 2 Guidelines
- Student sample
- Overheads for activities and homework

Lead-In

Students are coming to class today with a complete draft of their Open Letter, ready for workshop. Using the workshop guidelines, apply the A2 criteria to a student sample before students get into groups for workshop of this assignment.

ACTIVITIES

Attendance (2 minutes)

Transition. You’ve already participated in one workshop in this class, so before we give you the chance to get some feedback on Assignment 2, let’s talk about workshop goals.

Workshop goals (5 minutes)

You can set this up as a WTL and open it to discussion or move directly into an informal discussion of workshop goals. You might also show some anonymous posts from Forum #3
to prompt this discussion. The primary goal is to make students feel comfortable enough that they can offer each other specific, constructive feedback—the most common fear students report when workshopping is that they’ll sound bossy when giving feedback, and their biggest complaint is that the feedback that they get is too “nice” and insubstantial. To open the conversation, you might have students do a brief formulaic WTL activity like this:

**Objective**

*To get students into a focused state of mind for peer review sessions by highlighting concrete goals.*

**Procedure**

*At the beginning of class, hand out index cards. On the cards have students anonymously respond to the following questions and prompts using concrete and specific language. Collect the cards, shuffle them and then read them aloud to the class, allowing the responses to initiate a brief discussion centered on strategies for an effective workshop.*

**Index Card Question & Prompts**

1. *In the last workshop, the most effective piece of advice I received was...*
2. *In the last workshop it would have been more helpful if...*
3. *In this workshop, I would appreciate my peers spending more time _____ than on _____?*
4. *Because I want to be a better writer, I would like my workshop peers to ____ and I pledge to do ____ in order to help my peers become better writers.*

You might have students pass these forward and then read random answers anonymously to generate a discussion. If you come up with your own prompts, remember to craft them in such a way that students won’t be encouraged to report a workshop failure committed by one of their classmates, since the student being referred to may well recognize it.

**Review Sample student open letter (10 minutes)**

Go over another sample student open letter and focus this time on how to craft really good feedback—focus on both criteria- and reader-related feedback and on specificity of comments. Help students distinguish between those reader- and criteria-based comments that are useful (“This seems like a great reason, but I’d be more convinced if there were some more concrete evidence to develop it—maybe an example from Gladwell’s article?”) and those that are difficult or impossible to apply during revision (“Great job” of doing what? “Seems like it needs more” of what?)
Tip: The Workshop 2 Guidelines can be found in the Appendix of the syllabus on Writing Studio.

Workshop Assignment 2 draft (30 minutes)

Group students in pairs or groups of three and conduct a workshop activity that will generate feedback and revision ideas. Save a few minutes at the end to debrief – that is, have students share ideas they got from a partner’s draft (rather than having students publically describe problem with their partner’s draft.)

Assign homework and conclude class (3 minutes)

- Read about revision in the PHG (pp. 367-370).
- Revise your Assignment 2 draft and bring a fresh copy ready to submit next time.
- Insert your own instructions for turning in the assignment here.