

Lesson Ideas

Henry V: Language of Persuasion

OVERVIEW

These learning materials do not require the teacher or learner to have read William Shakespeare's *Henry V* or to have seen the National Theatre production.

Each activity comprises several short tasks and a selection of video clips focusing on the Shakespeare's use of the language of persuasion in *Henry V*.

The materials include:

- Lesson Introduction
- Four Activities with key questions
- Aims and Learning Outcomes
- Curriculum Context
- Plot Synopsis & Background
- Further Reading & Resources
- Suggestions for Extended Topic Work
- Plenary Suggestions

Activities:

1. Identifying Features of Persuasion
2. Language of Persuasion: Henry's Speeches
3. Delivering a Persuasive Speech
4. Writing A Persuasive Speech

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THESE LESSON IDEAS

Aims and Learning Outcomes

What students can expect to learn and achieve.

Curriculum Context

How the materials relate to the Programme of Study for English at Key Stage 3 and 4.

Synopsis & Background

A synopsis of the plot and background to *Henry V*.

Extending The Topic

Useful ideas for taking the lesson on.

Further Reading

Suggestions for additional reading on this topic.

Plenary Suggestions

Some ways to draw together the lessons learned.

Documents to Download

Word & PDF.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Be able to identify persuasive techniques and rhetorical devices
- Analyse a speech from *Henry V* identifying use of persuasive language and rhetorical devices
- Use different persuasive techniques and devices in their own writing
- Deliver a speech persuasively using tone, pace, emphasis, pause, inflection, gesture etc.

Curriculum Context

Students are required to study at least two of Shakespeare's plays in KS3 and KS4, of which at least one should be studied at KS3. A close study of Henry's speeches provides an opportunity for students to understand how *language is used in imaginative and original ways* (En 2 1g) *examine technique, structure and form* (En2 1j) and to distinguish between the *attitude and assumptions of the character and the author* (En2 1i) and to examine how *ideas, values and emotions are explored and portrayed* (En2 1 c).

In preparing to deliver a persuasive speech students will have the opportunity to practise speaking fluently in different contexts, adapting their talk to take account of purpose and audience (En1 1a) To use *gesture, tone, pace and rhetorical devices for emphasis* (En 1 1c). The writing task covers objectives for persuasive writing, providing opportunities for *developing logical arguments* (En3 1i) *using persuasive techniques and devices* (En3 1j) *anticipating audience reaction, counter opposing views and use language to gain and sustain attention* (En 3 1k).

Synopsis and Background

Henry V is a historical drama. Shakespeare's main sources for the play were Hall's *The Union of the Two noble and Illustre Families of Lancastre and York* and Holinshed's *Chronicles of Englande, Scotlande and Irelande*. It is generally agreed that the play was written in 1599 due to the topical allusions. For example, 'the general of our gracious Empress' (ACT V scii) is believed to refer to the Earl of Essex who led an English expedition to quell rebellion in Ireland in March 1599. The first recorded performance took place in January 1605 when it was presented at the Court of James I by the King's Majesty's Players.

Henry V has strong patriotic themes and has enjoyed popularity at times of national crisis. For example, Laurence Olivier's 1944 screen version was filmed during the Second World War on the eve of the Normandy Beach landings. The NT production provides an interesting ideological contrast to Olivier's interpretation.

As the play opens, Henry has just ascended to the throne. The archbishop and clergy are surprised by his display of piety and statesmanship, which contrasts to the wild lawless image for which he was renowned as the heir apparent. Henry's claim to the throne of France is justified by the Archbishop in his *Salic Law* speech. When the French Dauphin insults Henry with a gift of tennis balls, this is taken as pretext for invasion. After unmasking the three traitors – Cambridge, Scope and Grey– Henry sails for France. His army besieges and captures Harfleur. Then, with his famous Saint Crispin's Day speech, he rallies his soldiers to a resounding victory at Agincourt. Comedy is provided by Henry's old drinking companion, Pistol and the Welsh Captain Llewellyn. The play concludes with Henry's uneasy courtship of Katherine of France.

Extending The Topic

To explore the use of persuasion in other famous speeches (see resource list). Students might be given copies of a speech with the final paragraph omitted. After analysing they can be asked to write a final paragraph using what they have learned about style and content. To look at the persuasive impact of visual images. Use the dramatic form freeze frame to create visual pro-war and anti-war images

Plenary

Final reflection:

What have we learned about persuasive language?

Self-evaluation;

Have I become a more effective user of persuasive language?

Am I more aware of the techniques a speaker/writer uses to try to persuade me to their point of view?

Lesson Introduction

Start by activating prior knowledge. Where do we find language used persuasively?

Draw on students' experiences of using persuasive language. Ask them to recall a time when they tried to persuade a friend or family member to their point of view or to do something (e.g. go and see a film of their choice, choose a particular location for a holiday etc). Ask them what powers of persuasion they used:

What did you say?

How did you say it?

How successful were you?

Why/not?

Share experiences and make a list of persuasive devices, recording them on the whiteboard.

Activity 1:

Identifying Some Features of Persuasion

Preparation

For homework, ask students to bring a useless object to the lesson (e.g. one sock from a pair, a clock with no hands, a pen that has run out of ink).

Organise the students into groups of three. Explain that 1 person is going to try and sell their useless object to a partner. The third member of the group is an observer and notes the persuasive devices used by the 'seller'. Allow two minutes and then change roles.

At the end of the activity review the list of persuasive devices listed earlier in the lesson. Take suggestions from the students' observations to extend the list.

Explain that LOGICAL, PERSONAL, EMOTIONAL appeals can be used in persuasive speaking. To be successfully persuasive a speaker/writer needs to imagine the argument from the POINT OF VIEW of the audience (reader or listener).

Logical appeal relies on reasoning in a clear and consistent manner. Logic may be real or false (i.e. giving the appearance of logic)

A speaker/writer is able to use personal appeal when they know and understand the audience. Knowledge of personal motivations and history can be used to good effect

When using emotional appeal, highly emotive words, images, colours will be used to stir an effective response.

Activity 2:

Language of Persuasion: Henry's Speeches

View video clip *Once More Unto the Breach*. Ask students for initial responses to the speech and discuss briefly.

Provide copies of speech *Once More Unto the Breach*

In pairs, read the speech aloud and then highlight examples of persuasive language.

Gather the class together. Using an interactive whiteboard or OHT, read through the speech. Ask students to suggest examples of persuasive language they have identified. Highlight the text and prompt the students to explain how the persuasive devices work. Extend the list, drawing attention to features that the students may not have been identified.

Examples (this list is illustrative not exhaustive).

*Once more unto the breach, **dear friends**, once more* An expression of familiarity is used to suggest comradeship

On, on, you noblest English,/Whose blood is fet from fathers of war proof!-/ Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,/ Have in these parts from morn till even fought Calls on the nobles to live up to their fathers' reputations

And you good yeomen..... For there is none of you so mean and base / That hath not noble lustre in your eyes. Flatters the ordinary soldiers, builds self-image

I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips/ Straining upon the start. The game's afoot! Builds the excitement of the battle with the metaphor of the hunt.

*But when the blast of war blows in **our** ears* First person plural suggests that speaker and listeners are as one

Cry, 'God for Harry, England, and Saint George! Impassioned nationalistic rallying cry.

***Follow** your spirit* Imperative verb form

Consider Henry's use of appeal (logical, personal, emotional).

Issue for consideration: how patriotic language can quickly imply negative qualities in other nations.

Extension

Students might work in pairs to identify the persuasive devices used in another of Henry's speeches (e.g. *Before Harfleur* or *St Crispin's Day*)

Summarise

What have we learned about the persuasive language used in Henry V's speeches?

Activity 3:

Delivering A Persuasive Speech

Introduce the activity by explaining that a persuasive speech not only involves making effective language choices but also needs to be thoughtfully delivered for maximum impact. The message IS important but delivery can make the all the difference to an audience.

View video extract *Fire in the Belly*. Discuss the main point with students.

View one of the video clips e.g. *Once More Unto the Breach* or Laurence Olivier's *Henry V* (both could be used for a comparison of the style of delivery).

After viewing, invite the students to identify features of effective delivery. Summarise under the following headings:

Body language

Articulation/clarity

Emphasis

Pitch (high/low tones)

Pace

Pause/caesura

Volume

Variation

Body language

Body language can be very subtle. Eye contact is important but an unbroken gaze can come across as threatening. Hunched shoulders, twiddling with hair or touching the face may suggest uncertainty. Upright posture will indicate confidence. Crossed legs may indicate lack of sincerity. Open arms may give the impression of trustworthiness. Gesture can reinforce an emphatic statement.

Articulation

Well formed words are audible and so more easily understood. The importance of good articulation varies according to context.

Emphasis

Changing the words emphasised in a sentence creates different nuances of meaning. Emphasising verbs instead of adjectives can be more forceful.

Pitch /inflection

Inflection is the musical pattern, the rise and fall which conveys emotion, feeling and meaning. Monotone speeches will quickly sound boring.

Pace

Variation of pace (increase, decrease) can be used to good effect. Winston Churchill was particularly good at changing the pace of his delivery often beginning laconically and picking up pace.

Pause/ Caesura

In music and speech pauses are never empty. A pause before and after an important word can intensify the impact.

Volume/ Power

Power is about the energy used. A speech can be delivered loudly or softly, shouted or whispered, firm or gentle. A speech delivered at a constant loud level may not be as effective as one where a crescendo is built up. A contrast between quiet and loud phrases may also work well.

Vocal warm-up

You might use some warm-up activities prior to reading. Here are some suggestions:

Raise shoulders to ears, squeeze tight, hold, let go with a sigh

Hold your hand at arm's length in front of your face. Hold up one finger. Imagine that it is a candle. Use just enough breath to blow the candle out. Repeat with 10 candles (10 fingers).

Now imagine that you have three cakes lined up in front of you each with 10 candles. Blow all of the candles out *using one breath*. Now imagine one candle. Blow on the candle bending the flame with a steady breath. Keep the flame bent for as long as possible without blowing the candle out.

Volume/power: count from one to ten aiming at a point in the room. Start quietly and increase volume.

Articulation/clarity: try some tongue twisters (e.g. red lorry yellow lorry, bipperty bopperty, fattypuff thinnifer)

Emphasis: repeat a sentence with the emphasis on different words in the sentence (e.g.

Would you like a cup of tea? Would **you** like a cup of tea? Etc)

Enlarge a copy of the speech *Once More Unto the Breach*, using the OHP or interactive whiteboard. Demonstrate how the text can be annotated with a marking code.

Students can invent their own marking codes or alternatively you can suggest some symbols (e.g. underline a word for emphasis; use a slash to indicate a pause; use a crescendo mark to show increase in volume and diminuendo mark to show decrease in volume) Words can also be used as annotations (e.g. faster, slower, accentuate alliteration etc.).

Distribute copies of *Once More Unto the Breach*.

Working in pairs, students decide how to read the speech and annotate it.

Allow time for practice and encourage students to self-appraise and make changes.

Ask for volunteers to read their prepared speeches. Evaluate. Comment on the effective choices made by the students.

Summarise

What have we learned about presenting a persuasive speech?

Activity 4:

Writing A Persuasive Speech

Distribute copies of *Before Agincourt* (St Crispin's Day Speech). Identify persuasive techniques and devices (see activity 2)

Alternatively if students have already worked on activity 2, review and remind the students of the range of persuasive techniques and devices that can be used.

Illustrative list of some persuasive features:

- Rhetorical questions
- Hyperbole
- Alliteration
- Emotive language
- Logical argument
- Logical connectives (therefore,,,, because,,,,)
- Use of second person
- Repetition and patterning used to build a climax
- Imperative verbs
- Impassioned statements
- Taking the audience into your confidence
- Use of first person plural (assuming familiarity)
- Use of second person (direct appeal to the audience)
- Flattery
- Reference to the past
- Emphatic statements
- Impressive syntax
- Short dramatic sentences
- Pattern of three (three points)
- Imagery (simile and metaphor)
- Humour
- Threats of violence

Explain that the students are going to write speeches about issues they feel strongly about using what they have learned about the art of persuasion.

Pre-writing

Discuss list of possible topics for persuasive speeches. Students should be encouraged to write about issues of current interest to them (e.g. Should the school leaving age be lowered/extended? Is school uniform a good thing?).

Having identified a topic for their speech. Students should research and make notes to:

- Identify different sides of the argument
- List any relevant facts
- Anticipate objections
- Make a list of statements to support their position

Drafting

Points to note

While you may have noted both sides of the argument it should be clear which side you are on
Structure – write a strong opening statement
Link your points in a logical way
Use list of persuasive devices and use judiciously

Review

Share work in progress and evaluate.

Extension

More able pupils could write a speech in blank verse

Extra support

Children requiring extra support may need a writing framework[?] to assist with the structure of the speech.

Resources on Stagework

Video

Once More Unto the Breach
Clip from Olivier's *Henry V*
Besieged Harfleur Speech
Fire in the Belly

Text

Harfleur Speech
Once More unto the Breach Speech (Act 3 sc i)
Henry Before Agincourt (St Crispin's Day Speech)

Workshop

Henry's Language of Persuasion

Further Reading

David Crystal (2004) *Shakespeare's Words* London: Penguin Books
Rex Gibson (1998) *Teaching Shakespeare* Cambridge: CUP

Video

BBC (2003) *In Search of Shakespeare*
DVX Productions (2002) *The Life of Shakespeare*
Universal Pictures (1989) *Henry V* (Kenneth Branagh)
Carlton Visual Entertainment (1944) *Henry V* (Laurence Olivier)

Persuasive Speeches

Martin Luther King 'I Have A Dream'
Malcolm X 'The Ballot or the Bullet'
Chief Seattle 'Your God is Not Our God'
Winston Churchill 'We Shall Fight them on the Beaches.'

Links

Shakespeare's Globe
<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/globe/>

Royal Shakespeare Company
www.rsc.org.uk

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
www.shakespeare.org.uk

All Shakespeare

<http://www.allshakespeare.com/>

BBC History

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/shakespeare_william.shtml

Martin Luther King *I Have a Dream* Speech

<http://www.mecca.org/~crights/dream.html>

Winston Churchill *We Shall Fight Them on the Beaches* Speech

http://www.presentationhelper.co.uk/winston_churchill_speech_beaches.htm

Malcolm X *The Ballot or the Bullet* Speech

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/malcolmxballot.htm>

Chief Seattle *Your God is Not Our God*

<http://www.barefootsworld.net/seattle.html>

(note: the historical accuracy of this speech has been disputed)

Lloyd George Oratory Radio Clip

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/walesonair/database/election.shtml#content>

Speeches

<http://www.historychannel.com/speeches/>

Worksheet 1

Writing a Persuasive Speech: Planning Sheet

Topic.....

Points FOR	Points AGAINST