

Margo Batha  
National Speech and Debate Association  
Educator of the Year Finalist  
Teaching Portfolio

National Board Certified Teacher  
Candidate, Master of Arts in Teacher Leadership-May 2019

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***“Debate is "an extracurricular activity to real citizenship...Debating is not preparation for life. It is life itself. And every intelligent person is consciously or unconsciously a debater.”***

~H.M. Tinkcom, 1931, "Debating for Citizenship" *Pennsylvania School Journal*.

***“Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with deeper meaning.”*** ~Maya Angelou

**Margo Batha**

**Personal Statement**

**Educator of the Year**

The “Speech and Debate Effect” started with a casual comment at our family’s dinner table. Eleven years ago, my introverted son, Ben, mentioned that he wanted to join our high school’s speech and debate team. Since Ben was our quiet one (albeit argumentative at home), this statement came out of the blue. Little did I know that when he joined the Los Alamos Hilltalkers Speech and Debate team, I would find my passion. I’ve named that passion the “Speech and Debate Effect”.

At the same time that Ben decided to join the speech and debate team, I was in the last few months of a teacher education program for those seeking alternative licensure. In a lucky turn of events, I was hired that same fall to be a long term sub in the English department of Los Alamos High School where my son was a student. While he was starting his high school speech and debate career, I was starting my career as a classroom teacher. Ben took to debate like a duck to water. In turn, I took to teaching like a duck to water. At the end of that year, I was hired as a full-time English teacher. Two years later, I became coach of the Hilltalkers and I found my place as a classroom teacher and as a coach.

A year after my son joined the Hilltalkers, my daughter, Toni, became a member of the Hilltalkers. While she did not debate after high school, her speaking skills have served her well in teaching and in advocacy. As part of her Peace Corps service, she started a debate club in her school in Namibia to bring the “Speech and Debate Effect” to her Namibian students. My introverted son, who debated in high school and college, landed his first job as a software engineer because according to his boss, he is “a geek who speaks.” The “Speech and Debate Effect” on my family has been profound and I’ve witnessed the same profound effect on hundreds of students over the past eleven years.

Bringing the “Speech and Debate Effect” to the classroom is where pedagogy meets practice. Teaching and coaching are two halves of a whole. Because Speech and Debate is an extra-curricular activity at Los Alamos High School, I’m not explicitly evaluated on my Speech and Debate coaching in our state evaluation process. My coaching was not part of my National Board Certification since Speech and Debate is not an explicit class that I teach in a classroom setting. However, my teaching pedagogy does reflect who I am as a coach and my coaching pedagogy reflects who I am as a teacher. My teaching and coaching philosophy has at its heart the values of the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA)—inclusion, integrity, leadership, and service. My teaching and coaching mission is to instill these values in my students and to give all students the agency for the “Speech and Debate Effect.”

Since I’ve taken the values of leadership, integrity, service, and inclusion as my guiding philosophy for teaching and coaching, my classroom pedagogy has evolved to student-centered and student-driven learning. To begin our school year, each classroom sets norms that are based on the values of the NSDA. These values are learned values through constant use and repetition. In a student-centered classroom, these values are a key component of our ability to learn from each other. By giving students agency in their learning and a safe space based on the NSDA values, we can discuss and learn about issues that can be difficult, controversial, and sensitive.

The students members of the Hilltalkers drive their learning by being a student-led team. They choose to be in Speech and Debate, and their agency in choosing their events and their level of leadership creates energy that inspires my classroom teaching. They enthusiastically participate in our long-standing service to the League of Women Voters and they use their speaking abilities to lead and serve in many clubs and activities in our school community. All members of the team work diligently to fundraise for our expenses so that all students can participate in speech and debate regardless of their personal financial situation. Our team’s heart and focus are the guiding values of the NSDA.

This year, as my students run with their 20% Time projects once again, I see their leadership growth and I see the passion and excitement in my classroom for inquiry and leadership. Students are agitating for change in our community by

advocating for the re-opening of our county public health clinic, by advocating for a mental health professional on our campus, and by raising awareness that there are too few female classical composers taught in high school music classes. Their list of projects is varied and exciting. These projects naturally create equity and inclusion in my classroom by tapping into each student's passions and abilities.

Perhaps my most important learning about the "Speech and Debate Effect" is that the "effect" plants the seeds of equity and inclusion that naturally grow from allowing students agency and choice. With student agency and choice, I can meet all students where they are and I can meet their learning needs. All students feel welcome on the team and in my classroom because they understand that everyone's ideas are important and that all of us bring valuable thinking to the table. When we as coach educators allow our students agency and choice and we model for our students the qualities of integrity, leadership, service, and inclusivity, greatness happens in our classrooms and on our teams. The "Speech and Debate Effect" is what motivates a quiet student to speak, encourages a student to inspire citizens of another country, and motivates students to effect change in their local communities. It is what sits at the core of all of my work with students.

**Margo Batha**

**Speech and Debate Education and Advocacy**

**Going Beyond the Four Walls of the Classroom**

It began with an off-hand conversation with my next door neighbor while I was getting my mail from my mailbox. We were catching up on our news, and she mentioned that she had just been elected the president of our local League of Women Voters branch. We realized simultaneously that each of our organizations had something to offer to each other. That casual conversation started an ongoing partnership between our speech and debate team and the League. For the past eight years, our Hilltalkers have been helping to keep time and moderate at the League's Candidate Forums and Legislative Previews. Going beyond the four walls of my classroom and my school started with this one initiative.

This service to the League of Women Voters is a project that gives back to our speakers and debaters. Students learn first hand about civics and the democratic process while members of our local community see our articulate and civic-minded students in action. Several years ago, our service work was featured in an article in *The Rostrum* written by our former team president. Bringing our Speech and Debate skills to our local community creates a larger community for our students beyond the four walls of our school. Our Speech and Debate team members take their civic experience and their speaking skills and use their abilities as liaisons to our School Board, founding an iVote club at our school to get out the vote, leading March for our Lives, Santa Fe, and serving in Key Club.

As our students have found their voices outside of the four walls of our classroom, our Hilltalkers are finding new ways to advocate for all students. This semester, two-thirds of our team participated in a dating violence training sponsored by our school district's Healthy Schools Initiative. The goal for the team was to learn how to speak in a nonjudgemental way to friends and classmates who might be caught in an abusive relationship. We left the four walls of our classroom in order to use our speaking skills to help others.

Involvement with the Speech and Debate community has created opportunities beyond the four walls of my classroom for me as a coach and teacher leader. It was my involvement in mentoring new coaches and teaching workshops for new coaches that led me to enroll in a Master of Arts degree program in Teacher Leadership. Two years ago, I began this program to gain skills in coaching and mentoring teachers as well as learning advocacy skills for the teaching profession. Last year, I officially launched my advocacy for teachers and coaches by taking part in a Center for Teaching Quality [blogging roundtable](#). I used that opportunity to blog to a national audience about the harm done to all extracurricular activities when teachers leave the profession. Using my background as a Speech and Debate coach, I tapped two of my New Mexico Speech and Debate colleagues as resources for my blog post.

While teacher recruitment and retention is an issue in all areas of the United States, New Mexico feels this issue acutely in recruiting and retaining new coaches in Speech and Debate. In a state where many schools do not have enough teachers, students lack access to extra-curricular activities like speech and debate, producing another barrier to equity. When a school does offer a speech and debate program, it is likely that the teacher put in charge of the program has not been trained to teach or coach Speech and Debate. For several years, we offered short half day coach workshops to support new coaches. However, as a state and district organization, we realized that a short workshop was not enough to give both experienced and novice coaches the professional development they need to be effective.

This past August, Trey Smith, our district chair, organized the first annual New Mexico Speech and Debate Conference. By hosting a two-day conference with sessions for all levels of experience, we could really build relationships with all of our coaches and meet their professional development needs. As a presenter at the conference, I ran a session on managing a new team and another session on judging Speech and Debate events. I also mentor new coaches so that a new coach has a friendly face and a point of contact in our organization. By using the skills gained in my master's program and my experience coaching Speech and Debate, I'm going beyond my four walls to become a better coach and advocate for Speech and Debate.

Our district committee, along with our state board, is working on more initiatives to support new coaches with training and mentorship. I am excited about plans to host a second state conference and to be on the Host Committee for the 2020 National Tournament. Our New Mexico students need the community of Speech and Debate and our teacher and coach leaders in Speech and Debate must be on the frontlines advocating for all of our students in New Mexico to have this

opportunity. Our community must extend beyond the four walls of our classrooms to create access for all students and to develop the coaches our students need.

Blogging Roundtable link: <https://www.teachingquality.org/thoughts-from-the-land-of-disenchantment/>

## **AP Language and Composition 11**

### **English 12**

#### **20% Time Project Overview**

##### **Instructional Context**

For the past nine years, I've done some variant of a creative research project with my students. Rather than assigning a traditional research paper, I assign the 20% Time or Genius Hour project to my students. I've been inspired by educators A.J. Juliani and Kevin Brookhauser and the work they have done to popularize the idea of completely student-centered and student-driven projects. This project exemplifies the project-based learning that also reflects how our speech and debate team operates.

It seems counterintuitive to assign AP students who are under pressure for a high stakes exam in May to do an open-ended project like 20% Time; but this project is preparation the AP exam. Rather than endless exam practices, students exercise their critical thinking skills which serve them well on the essay portion of the exam. This year, since I am teaching grade 12, I've assigned this project as their senior capstone project. Our English Department requires a research paper in both junior and senior years, and the 20% Time project fulfills that requirement and the relevant English Language Arts Common Core Standards for grades 11 and 12.

With complete freedom to choose their projects, students achieve the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy--evaluating and synthesizing. The work is student driven and student created. Students are fully invested in the outcome of their work. During the months of this project, my classroom is noisy and messy and satisfying. The 20% Time project culminates in the strongest reading, writing, and thinking that we do all year.

##### **Common Core Standards**

**RI.11-12.7:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**SL.11-12.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**SL.11-12.2:** Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

**SL.11-12.4:** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

**SL.11-12.5:** Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

**W.11-12.1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**W.11-12.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**W.11-12.5:** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

**W.11-12.6:** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

**W.11-12.7:** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

##### **21st Century Skills and Themes from the Partnership for 21st Century Learning**

Themes: Global Awareness, Civic Literacy, Health Literacy, Environmental Literacy

Skills: Critical thinking and Problem Solving, Communication and Collaboration, Media and Information Literacy, Flexibility and Adaptability, Initiative and Self-direction, Social and Cross-Cultural Skills.

## Assignment

Both AP 11 and Grade 12 will be working on 20% Time projects this semester. These projects represent the culminating work in your English class this year.

## Learning Goals

- The ability to synthesize multiple sources to form an argument.
- To conduct deep research on a topic.
- The ability to create an annotated bibliography.
- To evaluate sources.
- The ability to visually display your researched argument.
- To improve your public speaking skills and to create a killer presentation.
- To manage your time wisely on a long term project.

## Essential Questions

How do I access community and research resources to create an argument?

How do I evaluate arguments for bias, relevance, and authenticity?

How do I write a persuasive speech?

How do I use different forms of media to create a presentation of an argument?

## Choosing A Topic

Your 20 Time project will be a reflection of your interests. Your project could be an outgrowth of the independent reading that you did last semester or you can go in an entirely different direction. You will be required to research background information on your idea and you will be required to present your project in a classroom presentation in April. All 20% Time projects will include a research paper and an annotated bibliography.

The hard part about this project is that you may choose any area that interests you. Most of us struggle with narrowing down topics. This project is not only a conventional research paper but it is also a creative representation of your topic. Your project may be an extension of an existing interest like National History Day or Science Fair; your project might be something that benefits an organization or serves our community; you may invent or create something—in other words, the sky's the limit.

You are encouraged to reach out to members of our community for research and for support. Most community members love helping our students with their projects.

## How will I get time to complete this project?

You will spend 20% of our class time (half a block once a week) working on your projects. You will work individually to:

- formulate an inquiry-based question,
- come up with a project based on your question,
- plan and set goals,
- research deeply,
- reflect on your progress,
- conference with me and your peers on your project
- create and write your paper

## Assessment of 20 Time Projects

You may have noticed that I have not included specific rubrics for each phase of your project. I will hand out rubrics and directions separately as we tackle each phase of your project. In the creative design phase of your project, I want you to be focused on the project, not on the grade.

You will receive time in class to work on your projects--that's the 20% Time. On other days, I'll be teaching lessons that align with the parts of your project. For example, we will have an extensive set of lessons on giving a persuasive speech so that you are prepared for the oral presentation elements of the project.

**Failure is an option.** Learning from your mistakes teaches you more than success. In other words, some elements of your project may not come to fruition, but you will learn from those moments.

## **Required Elements and Timeline for the 20% Time Project**

Three Minute Project Pitch--yes, this pitch is in front of the class.

Thursday, January 24 (B)

Friday, January 25 (A)

Written proposal

Due on the day of your project pitch.

Weekly reflections (if you are absent for 20 Time, you are required to do the reflection and make sure that it is in your Google Folder).

Periodic Checks on your Google Folder—be prepared!

I'll have access to your Google Folder of work, and I'll check your folder periodically to make sure you are on track.

Annotated bibliography

Thursday, February 7 (B)

Friday, February 8 (A)

Rough draft of your research paper

Wednesday, March 6 (A and B)-- due on turnitin.com by 11:59 pm.

The final copy of your research paper on your project

Friday, April 5 at 11:59 pm on turnitin.com.

Classroom presentations

Presentations will be the week of April 1 (that's the week we get back from Spring Break).

The creative product

Due on the same day as your final paper and presentation. The creative product is very open and is a reflection of your learning process throughout the project.

Community Expo

Date TBD--probably the first week of April. You will show and discuss your work with members of the Los Alamos High School community and interested members of the Los Alamos Community.

## **Sample 2019 Student 20% Time Projects (from the first proposal and pitch)**

*How can coaches, administrators, parents, and players work together to reduce the risk of a long term injury in high school sports? I will research articles and studies published about the benefits and risks of sports. I will also analyze ways high schoolers could increase their safety while playing sports. I will also interview coaches in order to find out information from their perspective. I will specifically interview local coach Sean Reardon and look on the Gale database and Google Scholar. I will create a scratch computer animation of a runner running with perfect form, which will minimize the risk of a long-term injury. I will share this information with my teammates and any others who want to prevent injuries while running.*

*What motivates me and helps me to complete my best work? What artistic styles am I most interested in?*

*I am reading a book about how art has changed and developed through different time periods. I also look at many different artist's works through their websites and social media accounts. I am going to look back at my own artwork to see which styles and techniques I'm best at and that I use the most often. I will be referring to the AP portfolio guidelines and example portfolios. I also want to do online research and watch TED talks about motivation and productivity. A research paper about why it is important to focus on the things you are interested in so that you can stay motivated and increase your productivity in school and other areas of your life.*

- *My drawing portfolio for AP Studio Art*

- *A presentation that includes information about what I have learned about motivation and productivity and photos of the artwork in my portfolio.*

*How is food indicative of a culture and its values? I will answer this question through the experience of collecting family recipes. I will also do academic research on how food relates to culture. My culminating project will be a cookbook. It will include recipes from multiple Jewish cultures.*

*How does ballroom dancing improve mental health? I will document my research and reading by taking notes on the text or video. For my experiment, I will be recording the experiment and the questions afterward. The notes will be on a Google Doc and the videos will be uploaded later once they have been edited. A video of the three pairs doing the lifts and the questions I ask will also be included. Then I will write a short paper or the collection of my notes explaining my research.*

*How can biotechnology be utilized to prevent malnutrition in developing countries? Some ways I will research this topic include online research, interviews, books, online lectures, and working with malnutrition data. My project will yield two final products: a paper and a poster. The poster will outline, in a comprehensive manner, how different biotechnologies can help prevent malnutrition. It will serve as a source to educate people on the uses of biotechnology, and how it can save lives. Genetic engineering is often attacked, so I hope to give a more complete understanding of its many benefits. My paper will walk through bioengineering applications in malnutrition. Some examples include higher-yielding crops, crops with more vitamins and nutrients, or drought and pest-resistant plant varieties. I also hope to touch on how these same crops can help save the environment.*

### **Reflections from past projects**

*I absolutely and firmly believe that the 20% Time project contributed greatly to my intellectual growth. I was given free rein over a research project that allowed me to explore my passion for language through multiple mediums. I loved seeing the overlap between different sources and their opinions whether expressed through words in a book or article, or through musical notes of Duke Ellington's trumpet. I really enjoyed keeping a binder and documenting each source so that when I looked back over my research, I could remember the importance and main idea that I gathered from that source. I grew in my ability to write persuasive nonfiction reports as well as conduct research through documentation and critical thinking.*

*Both the mind maps we did in class and the 20%Time project greatly contributed to my growth. These assignments allowed me to synthesize various sources, which is essential for making connections, a useful tool in everyday life and for future careers.*

*The 20% Time project that I did on defining success really helped my intellectual growth this past year. The most difficult part of my junior year for me was self-reflection, not because I was completely lost about my identity, but because it challenged me to think harder about how I wanted to fit within the scheme of things. 20% Time gave me insight into the meaning of success and how to go about it. It helped me understand the difference between personal success and the success that other people perceive. On top of that, 20% Time project gave me time to think about what interested me. It was great to read about Steve Jobs and realize that life isn't black and white and goals are not necessarily everything. That calming force was really great for keeping the anxiety demons at bay.*

*The 20% Time project really did develop my intellectual persona. I found books and sources that related to a wide set of my interests and consumed them, trusting that connections would make themselves evident. This they did, and I ended up with a huge network of ideas that tied back into a common theme of ethics and experimentalism, based on technology, religion, economics, and culture.*

## AP Language and Composition/English 12

### Writing a Persuasive Project Pitch

#### Lesson Plan

#### 21st Century Themes

Global Awareness (working with those who have diverse perspectives)

#### 21st Century Skills

Creativity and Innovation  
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving  
Communication and Collaboration  
Information and Media Literacy

#### Common Core Learning Standards

**RI.11-12.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

**RI.11-12.5:** Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

**RI.11-12.6:** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

**RI.11-12.7:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**SL.11-12.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**SL.11-12.3:** Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

**W.11-12.1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**W.11-12.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**W.11-12.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

#### Duration

- Three 90 minute block periods

## Learning Goals

To review the structure of a persuasive speech.  
To identify the rhetorical strategies and appeals that enhance a persuasive speech.  
To understand how to write an effective persuasive speech.  
To apply your understanding of an effective speech by writing a three-minute speech pitching your 20Time project.

## Essential Questions

What are the ingredients of a persuasive speech?  
How do we write a persuasive speech?

## Resources/Materials

Student handout with directions and SOAPStone graphic organizer, TED talk by Simon Lidsky, Youtube video on an effective Shark Tank pitches, large paper and markers for mind maps, student Chromebooks.

## Technology Integration

Google classroom--lesson and resources posted  
TED talk  
YouTube video  
Student Chromebooks for writing the speech using Google Docs

## Instructional Strategies/Learning Activities

### Preparation

- Students will receive an overview of the lesson by reviewing the student handout with me.
- Students will view the Isaac Lidsky TED Talk.

### Discuss

- As a class, we will briefly go over the main points of the TED talk.
- In small groups, students will use the SOAPStone graphic organizer to review the appeals in Lidsky's talk.

### Application (as a group)

- We will view the YouTube video on effective Shark Tank pitches and as a class, we will go over the strategies.
- Students will then work in their groups to do another SOAPStone organizer to analyze the Shark Tank talk.

### Synthesis

- In their small groups, students will synthesize the analysis from the SOAPStone organizers to create a mind map of the effective strategies and appeals used in a speech.

### Application (individual)

- Each student will use the handout on writing a short speech to outline their project pitch speech.
- Each student will write a rough draft of their speech for homework and turn the speech in on Google Classroom.

## Differentiation

Will occur in small group work where I can observe individual students and modify as needed.  
Self-selected 20Time projects and project pitch speech topics.

## Skills (To Be Assessed):

- Collaborative working skills (formative)
- Understanding of the use of appeals to write an effective speech

## Products/Assessment:

### Formative Assessment

- Observation of small group discussions
- Group work--mind maps, SOAPStone organizers for both videos
- Outlines and drafts of speeches

### Summative Assessment/Product

- Three-minute pitch speech

## Resources

SOAPStone Strategy

<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/soapstone-strategy-reading-and-writing>

TED Talk

[https://www.ted.com/talks/isaac\\_lidsky\\_what\\_reality\\_are\\_you\\_creating\\_for\\_yourself?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/isaac_lidsky_what_reality_are_you_creating_for_yourself?language=en)

Shark Tank

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zq3fwHwgB9g>

National Speech and Debate Association "Tips for Writing a Persuasive Speech"

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/tips-for-writing-a-persuasive-speech-2/>

## Writing a Persuasive Speech

### AP English 11

### English 12

#### Instructional Context

This assignment is part of a larger assignment for both my AP Language and Composition 11 class and my English 12 class. Both classes have been assigned a 20 Time project to practice synthesizing multiple sources, to gain extended research skills, to learn how to manage a large project with multiple deadlines, to research an argument, and to increase speaking and presentation skills.

The idea of a 20% Time, or Genius Project, is not original. The work of AJ Juliani, John Spencer, and Kevin Brookhauser paved the way for creating this assignment for my students. Thomas Romano's work in developing multigenre projects also influenced the development of the 20Time Assignment. Since I started teaching AP Language and Composition ten years ago, I've always assigned a choice driven project. As with any project-based learning, managing five sections of students doing individual choice driven projects can be challenging, but the learning that comes from these projects is inspiring. Many students find their voice in the process of doing the 20Time project and the results are unforgettable.

This assignment is the first part of the 20Time project. Students must pitch their project idea to the class. For many of my students, this is the first time that they have been asked to write a speech and deliver that speech to an audience. This lesson is then extended later in the project as students prepare to present their completed projects to their classmates.

#### Project Pitch Assignment

##### Essential Questions

What are the ingredients of a persuasive speech? How do we write a persuasive speech?

##### Learning Goals

To review the structure of a persuasive speech.

To identify the rhetorical strategies and appeals that enhance a persuasive speech.

To understand how to write an effective persuasive speech.

To apply your understanding of an effective speech by writing a three-minute speech pitching your 20Time project.

##### Standards Addressed--Common Core Standards

**RI.11-12.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

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##### 21st Century Learning Skills (P21)

Creativity and Innovation

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Communication and Collaboration

**Context**

The first major step in your 20Time Project is to pitch your 20Time idea to me and to the class. In order to effectively pitch your idea, we will be reviewing the elements of an effective speech (both visual and written). As you listen to the speech by Isaac Lidsky and read the transcript at the link below, please note the rhetorical appeals that Lidsky makes to his audience.

**Part 1: What makes a persuasive speech persuasive?**

TED Talk by Isaac Lidsky (transcript)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/isaac\\_lidsky\\_what\\_reality\\_are\\_you\\_creating\\_for\\_yourself/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/isaac_lidsky_what_reality_are_you_creating_for_yourself/transcript)

Now that you've listened to the TED talk, let's analyze the speech and figure out why the speech is persuasive. Please work in your table groups to analyze this speech using the SOAPStone graphic organizer. You should use the transcript of the speech so that you can cite specific examples from the speech that support your analysis.

**SOAPStone Graphic Organizer**

Title of Piece:		
Author:		
Subject	The general topic, content, and ideas contained in the text. What is this piece about?	
Occasion	The time and place of the piece; the current situation or context which gave rise to the writing or speech.	
Audience	The group of readers to whom this piece is directed. The audience may be one person, a small group, or a large group. What qualities, beliefs, or values do the audience members have in common?	
Purpose	The reason behind the text. What does the speaker, writer, or filmmaker want the audience to do, feel, say or choose? In literature, we call this the theme of the piece.	
Speaker	The voice that tells the story, or in nonfiction, the author. What do we know about the writer's life and views that shape this text?	
Tone	What choice of words and use of rhetorical devices let you know the speaker's tone? Is the tone light-hearted or deadly serious? Mischievous or ironic?	

Credit: <https://4.files.edl.io/b7c0/10/11/18/135436-112d9c92-ac09-49d7-add4-84081c83e38f.doc>

## Part 2: Creating a persuasive project pitch

For your project pitch, you will need to use the elements of a persuasive speech to pitch your project to the class and to me. To complete your understanding of creating a successful pitch, let's listen to the cast of "Shark Tank" explain the most successful elements of a Shark Tank pitch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zq3fwHwgB9g>

### Synthesizing the information

As you watch the video, please create a second SOAPStone organizer on the back of your SOAPStone sheet. Also, please list on the sheet the most successful elements of a pitch.

After watching the "Shark Tank" video, please discuss the two videos and work in your groups to create a mind map synthesizing your analysis of what makes a persuasive speech effective. Each group will present their analysis to the class. Your mind maps should be on large sheets of paper with lots of color. We will be hanging up the mind maps to remind the class of the successful elements of a persuasive speech.

## Part 3: How do I write a persuasive Three Minute Project Pitch?

To help you outline and understand the format of a persuasive speech, please read this tip sheet from the National Speech and Debate Association.

"Tips for Writing A Persuasive Speech"

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Tips-for-Writing-a-Persuasive-Speech.pdf>

### Introduction

There are four key components to an introduction: the attention-getting device (AGD), common ground, thesis, and preview. For the sake of this speech, you'll want to keep your introduction around 20 seconds (give or take).

- **Attention Getting Device:** Start your speech off with a quotation, a short narrative, a mind-blowing statistic—anything to wow your audience and grab their attention. Make sure your AGD is topical, though. You don't want to start off your speech praising Ryan Gosling's good looks when the subject is clean city water.
- **Common Ground:** In order to be persuasive, you need to establish common ground with your audience. They need to feel directly connected to the problem. Think about what you have in common with your audience—their values, interests, shared experiences—which can relate back to your topic.
- **Thesis:** The thesis is simply your solution statement. Use it as a call to action for the audience. Example: "We need to find affordable and sustainable ways to produce clean water."
- **Preview:** This is the easiest piece of the introduction to write because, at its core, it's the same for every speech. Give the audience a roadmap, or signposts, of the next three big points you'll be discussing. In a persuasive speech, your signposts are typically the problems, causes, and solutions. Example: "Let's first learn more about this pressing problem, next identify the causes of unclean water, and finally establish some solutions."

### Body

You are now going to write the body of the speech, which consists of problems, causes, and solutions. The body is the meat and potatoes of your speech. For the purpose of this speech, the body should be about two minutes long.

You should spend about 40 seconds per point.

- **Problems:** This is where you'll describe the problem you chose to discuss. First, restate the problem. Next, you'll need to give evidence supporting your claim. Use articles, journals, and statistics to assert your problem exists, is significant, and has harms associated with it. You could have a source for each of those areas (existence, significance, and harms) and make sure you articulate these ideas in a logical format.

Tip: Implementing or showing a visual here would be a great way to give your audience a visual representation of the effects of your problem!

- **Transition:** Give a transition statement explaining to the audience you are now changing subjects. Example: "Now that we understand the problem, let's take a look at the causes."

- **Causes:** Start off with a statement of the causes (there are usually more than one) of the problems. Don't forget to use evidence! End this section with a statement as to why the status quo (how things are now) won't solve the problem.
- **Transition:** Give a transition statement explaining to the audience you are now changing subjects. Example: "Now that we understand the causes, let's take a look at the solutions."
- **Solutions:** State your solution. (This should be a restatement of the thesis). Then explain in detail how your solution will work. Ask yourself, how will my solution be implemented? How will it be executed?

Tip: This is another great area to use your visual to show your audience how your solution will work!

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion is about 20 seconds long. Wrap up the speech by summarizing the problem and solution. Next, restate your thesis. Last, give a final statement. This is the last thing your audience will hear—so make sure it's good! And that's it! You're done. You've written a persuasive speech! Pretty simple, right?

### **Part 4: Writing your speech**

Using the tips from the National Speech and Debate Association, please outline your project pitch using the format outlined on the tip sheet, the ideas that you've learned from Shark Tank, and the appeals that you noted in the Lidsky TED Talk.. Once you've created your outline, you may begin writing your speech. Both your outline and your speech should be turned into Google Classroom by our next class.

### **Three Minute Project Pitch Assignment--what you need to write for our next class**

In the business world, an "elevator pitch" is a quick, passionately delivered description of a product that an inventor/business owner has created. You never know when you'll be standing in line or sharing an elevator ride with a rich and powerful investor. To make the most of such an opportunity, an inventor must have an elevator pitch ready to roll at a moment's notice. Next week, you will "pitch" your 20Time Project idea to the full class with a three-minute elevator pitch/mini-presentation. Please include the following in your pitch.

- What do you want to create during your 20Time Project?
- Why you chose this project.
- Let us know what research you've done on the topic.
- What materials/resources you'll need.
- What obstacles you anticipate and your plan to navigate those obstacles.
- Why this project is worthy of a significant investment of time.
- Graciously thank the audience for our time/consideration of your idea.

You will also participate in a full-class question/answer session after your pitch so be ready to further explain/defend your idea.

## Scoring Rubric for a Persuasive Speech

### Presentation – 15 points

- Passionate about the topic and why others should feel the same way
- A strong and interesting attention-getting style that made us want to listen
- Established credibility by being knowledgeable and well prepared
- The main idea, sub-points, and evidence were presented in a logical way
- Presented a valid argument with emotional, logical, or ethical appeals
- Strong evidence to prove and support the persuasive thesis
- Smooth transition sentences were used to lead to the next main point
- Thoroughly summarized (argued) main point, evidence, and any obstacles noted.

### Delivery - 15 points

- Adequate directness, animation, and enthusiasm
- Natural conversational tone
- Used voice inflection to get and keep attention at key points in the presentation
- Normal speaking rate with clear articulation
- No vocalized pauses (um, uh, and yeah)
- Consistent eye contact
- Natural gestures
- Displays confidence throughout the presentation
- Preparation for the speech was obvious (knew topic well and how to persuade)
- Did not rely on note cards/outline/organizer

## **Adulting 101**

### **Life After High School Project**

#### **Instructional Context**

The Life After High School Project was designed for the students in my on level Grade 12 English class. These students are a diverse group of learners who include students who are applying to competitive colleges and universities, seeking certification in the trades, attending community college, or joining the military after high school graduation. This assignment was designed with the support of our guidance department. As part of the work we did in class, our guidance counselors visited our classes and worked with students to review Naviance, the online career and college platform that we use.

This project represents a real world, authentic application of English Language Arts and 21st Century Learning Skills. Students could immediately see the relevance to their own lives and situations in the process of researching and writing for this project.

#### **Resources consulted for this assignment**

Gonzalez, Jennifer. "Meet the #SinglePointRubric." *Cult of Pedagogy*, edited by Jennifer Gonzalez, 4 Feb. 2015, [www.cultofpedagogy.com/single-point-rubric/](http://www.cultofpedagogy.com/single-point-rubric/). Accessed 16 Feb. 2019.

"Guide to Life After High School." *Mapping Your Future*, Money Management International, 2019, [www.mappingyourfuture.org/guidetolife/](http://www.mappingyourfuture.org/guidetolife/). Accessed 13 Feb. 2019.

#### **Learning Goals**

To understand the options for college and career after graduation.

To organize your planning for post-high school.

To synthesize multiple sources of information to create a plan.

#### **Essential Questions**

What are some resources that I can access to plan for my post-high school life?

What is required for my possible career path after high school?

#### **Assignment**

I know that all of you have been thinking about what you will do after high school. Some of you are planning on a military career, some of you are planning on college or university, and some of you are planning on technical training. Each of these post-high school plans has great merit, but all of these plans require planning and preparation. To begin the post-high school planning process, you will create a personalized portfolio of research that you have done for your post-high school plans.

#### **Standards Addressed in this assignment**

##### **Common Core State Standards**

**RI.11-12.7:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**W.11-12.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

##### **21st Century Skills and Themes from the Partnership for 21st Century Learning**

##### **Communication and Collaboration**

##### **Communicate Clearly**

##### **Critical Thinking**

##### **Reason Effectively**

##### **Creativity**

##### **Portfolio Requirements**

- Any research from outside sources must be cited with both in-text citations and a works cited page.
- Your written work must be in MLA format.
- Your portfolio is electronic and you will use Google Docs to create your portfolio.
- Use the rubric for each category to ensure that your work meets the standards for Grade 12.

##### **Resources/Collaboration**

1. You should go out into the community and interview relevant experts on your post-high school plans. For example, if you plan on going into the military, please interview our Los Alamos High School Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Commander about options for a military career.
2. College and career fairs--please take advantage of the College and Career Fairs coming up in Santa Fe and Albuquerque. These fairs are a great place to talk to admissions counselors and explore your college options.

- Albuquerque: <https://www.aps.edu/events/new-mexico-college-fair-abq>
- Santa Fe: <https://www.sfcc.edu/event/college-night/>

**Activity #1--Exploring your Naviance resources**

**10 points**

- Please choose two Naviance items (personality test, career clusters, college match) from your dashboard that you think will help you explore your personality and possible career/college/technical training choices.
- When you have completed two exercises, please print out your results to include in your portfolio.
- Write a reflection (1-2 paragraphs) about the results from these explorations and what the results mean for you and your plans.

**Activity #1 Rubric (W-11-12.2, P21 Technology Integration, Communication, Creativity, including effective reasoning)**

Concerns <i>Areas that Need Work</i>	Criteria <i>Standards for This Performance</i>	Advanced <i>Evidence of Exceeding Standards</i>
	<p><b>Criteria Activity #1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have thoughtfully and thoroughly researched the best career options on Naviance based on your interests and personality test results.</li> <li>• Your reflection demonstrates that you are thoughtfully considering the results of your research as you make decisions about your future.</li> <li>• MLA format is used and sources are cited correctly.</li> </ul>	
		Total _____/10

**Activity #2--Personal statements or career interview**

**10 points**

Choose one:

Write a draft of your college or scholarship essay

or

Interview someone who is in a career field of interest to you. Please submit your notes from the interview and reflect on whether the information from the interview will help you in your decision-making process.

**Activity #2 Rubric (4C's Communicate and Collaborate, W.11-12.2)**

Concerns <i>Areas that Need Work</i>	Criteria <i>Standards for This Performance</i>	Advanced <i>Evidence of Exceeding Standards</i>
	<p><b>Criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your essay and notes are written clearly and show time and effort</li> <li>• Your writing demonstrates a willingness to think about different aspects of your future</li> </ul>	
		Total _____/10

**Activity #3--How do I pay?****10 points**

Whether you decide to go to college, join the military, or choose technical certification, your choice will cost you money. How will you pay for education post-high school?

- Choose two possible scholarship programs that you wish to apply for (local scholarship packet, scholarships on <https://www.cappex.com/>, the GI bill, etc.) and write a short essay describing the scholarship application process and what you will need to do to apply.

**Activity #3 Rubric (R.11-12.7, W.11-12.2, P21 Framework Communication, Technology Integration, Critical Thinking)**

Concerns <i>Areas that Need Work</i>	Criteria <i>Standards for This Performance</i>	Advanced <i>Evidence of Exceeding Standards</i>
	<b>Criteria</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You've thoughtfully and carefully researched your financial options and scholarships available.</li> <li>• You have a plan for paying for your post-high school education.</li> <li>• Your work is in MLA format and your sources are correctly cited.</li> </ul>	
		Total _____/10

**Activity #4--Keeping track****10 points**

For this section of your portfolio, please create a spreadsheet using Google Sheets so that you can keep track of your due dates. Your spreadsheet should include the following:

- List of colleges, programs, scholarships, and career options for next year
- Due dates for applications and other paperwork
- Due dates for essays
- Due dates for scholarship applications

**Activity #4 Rubric (R.11-12.7, W.11-12.2, P21 Framework Communication, Critical Thinking, Technology Integration)**

Concerns <i>Areas that Need Work</i>	Criteria <i>Standards for This Performance</i>	Advanced <i>Evidence of Exceeding Standards</i>
	<b>Criteria</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are synthesizing all of the information needed to make decisions about your post-high school plans.</li> <li>• Your information is organized and complete so that you achieve your deadlines.</li> </ul>	
		Total _____/10

**Activity #5--Synthesizing your research****10 points**

In this section of your portfolio, you will need to write a short (2-3 paragraph essay) explaining your college and career choices based on your interests and your Naviance searches and tests, the financial obligations for your choice, and how you will implement your plans.

- After doing this research, have your plans changed?
- Did you learn anything new when you researched your options?
- Why are you excited about your chosen path?

**Activity #5 Rubric (R.11-12.7, W.11-12.2, P21 Framework Communication, Critical Thinking, Creativity)**

<b>Concerns</b> <i>Areas that Need Work</i>	<b>Criteria</b> <i>Standards for This Performance</i>	<b>Advanced</b> <i>Evidence of Exceeding Standards</i>
	<b>Criteria</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reflection demonstrates a high level of “metacognition” (thinking about your thinking).</li> <li>• The writing and reflecting you have done demonstrate a clear understanding of what you need to do to be successful after graduation.</li> </ul>	
		Total _____/10

**Excerpts from student reflections and projects**

*“After graduating from Los Alamos High School, I plan to further my education at New Mexico State University in which I will not only major in elementary education, but gain experience on how to further other’s educations, as well as my own. I also intend to learn key skills in communication that would allow me to incorporate them into my life, inside and out of my education and future career. If I were to be provided with the necessary tools of the trade, I would be able to build upon the basics of leadership and ingenuity I have already been taught throughout high school, and become proficient in educating and teaching youth. As well as gaining a degree in elementary education, I also have considered double majoring with studio arts. This would allow me to fine tune my craft and gain further skill in my artistry. I would not only be allowed a creative outlet but {be} provided with an educational opportunity that would create a wider scope of mediums, techniques and art history which could broaden my future prospects.”*

*“My post-high school project helped me figure out what I want to do in the future and help me find the school I would like to go to. The project has helped me lean towards my interests more and what would be best for me when I go to college. It helped decide what I want to be when I graduate from college and see where I would want to live. The project had helped with school choices that looked good and have the programs I want to do.”*

*“One of my favorite things we’ve done so far was our post-high school project. I was excited to actually work on something other than school work, instead, I was working on my future and something I could benefit from. It really helped me get a couple steps ahead and start to focus on my future and what it has in store for me.”*

## AP Language and Composition 11

### Gender and Sexuality Book Club Unit

#### Instructional Context

The design of this unit grew out of a conversation that my AP Language and Composition colleague and I had while teaching *The Great Gatsby*. We noted that students were eager to discuss gender and sexuality, and they are more comfortable discussing issues relating to gender and sexuality than previous groups that we had taught. We also noted discussing gender and sexuality was a good fit for an AP Language and Composition class with the shift in common usage to gender-neutral language.

My colleague and I collaborated on the structure of the unit and the essential questions for the unit, but we each designed the reading and the book club structure differently based on the needs of our class sections. We worked together to choose a wide-ranging selection of books on gender and sexuality, and we collaborated on the films, TED talks, and articles used in the unit. We teach students from all backgrounds, and we wanted to ensure that all views and ideas were represented in this unit. In the second semester, we wanted to give our students more freedom of choice to structure their work and their discussions while still creating opportunities for collaboration, rhetorical analysis, and writing arguments.

This unit contains more controversial material than other units we have done this year, but we have extensive support in our school district and in our administration for offering this unit. Our Healthy Schools coordinator and our school librarian have worked with us to ensure that we are offering diverse reading selections and that we are thoughtful and intentional about our discussions in class.

Running individual book groups in a class of thirty diverse learners is challenging, but with the use of technology tools like parlayideas.com and Screencastify, I can assess student work and differentiate instruction. Although this unit is still ongoing, I wanted to include this work in my portfolio because the assignments are timely, and they represent intellectual inquiry for both my students and myself.

#### Gender and Sexuality Unit--Introduction

In the next two weeks, we will transition into our next big unit: Gender & Sexuality. In this unit, we will examine masculinity, femininity, gender fluidity, being transgender, and homosexuality.

You will select one book from the five listed below to purchase/check out, read, and engage in small group book-specific discussions.

[\*When Boys Become Boys: Development, Relationships, and Masculinity\*](#) by J. Chu

[\*Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide\*](#) by N. Kristof

[\*The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives\*](#) by D. Slater

[\*Becoming Nicole: The inspiring story of transgender actor-activist Nicole Maines and her extraordinary family\*](#) by A. Nutt

[\*Queer, There, and Everywhere: 23 People Who Changed the World\*](#) by S. Prager

As our culture and society shift to accommodate multiple perspectives on gender and sexuality, as evidenced by changes in pronoun usage and other additions to American language and culture, our goal is to respectfully examine the argumentation, rhetoric, and reasoning behind our different perspectives on gender and sexuality. As experienced AP students, you are charged to exercise your integrity, your leadership skills, and your commitment to including each member of the class in our inquiry in the course of our inquiry and discussions.

## **BOOK SEMINAR GROUPS – TASK OVERVIEW:**

In February and March, you will be reading your book on gender and sexuality, preparing to discuss it with your group in a series of half-hour in-class seminar sessions, incorporating ideas from related articles, and writing arguments about the topics raised by the articles assigned to your group and to the class.

## **STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS UNIT**

**RI.11-12.1:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**RI.11-12.2:** Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

**RI.11-12.3:** Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

**RI.11-12.5:** Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

**RI.11-12.7:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**SL.11-12.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**W.11-12.1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**W.11-12.8:** Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

## **21st Century Themes and Skills from the Partnership for 21st Century Learning**

**Themes:** Global Awareness, Creativity and Innovation

**Skills:** Critical Thinking, Communicate Clearly, Information and Media Literacy, Initiative and Self-Direction, Social and Cross-Cultural Skills.

## **Learning Goals**

To synthesize multiple perspectives and ideas to create your own arguments.

To collaborate with diverse groups of people to study a complex subject.

To write arguments that are coherent and logical using a blogging platform.

To understand how language changes and evolves.

## **Assignment**

Your seminar discussions will be guided by the following essential questions as well as ones that you create in the course of your discussions:

1. How do your ideas about gender and/or sexuality relate to those of the writer? How do your experiences with gender and/or sexuality relate to those of the writer? (Text to Self)
2. How does the writer as a rhetor use rhetorical strategies to persuade you of their argument about gender and/or sexuality? What is the writer’s argument about gender and/or sexuality? What evidence does the rhetoric use to support their arguments? (Text to Itself)
3. How does this writer’s argument about gender and/or sexuality compare to arguments about gender and/or sexuality made in other texts—such as song lyrics, op-eds, Ted Talks, documentaries, historical documents, speeches, novels, and/or research studies? (Text to Text).
4. How are the writer’s arguments relevant to current events, current political movements, social movements, American or non-American societal norms, trends, power structures, and other big ideas? (Text to World)

## DISCUSSION

- You will use the site Parlayideas.com to individually blog about your discussion and your thinking about your reading. Your Parlay posts will be formative opportunities to develop your argumentation and synthesis skills as we head into the last units of the course.
- Your group will create a Seminar Planning Google Doc (shared with me on Classroom) to keep track of reading timelines and to create your own essential questions for discussion.
- As you discuss the essential questions, your group will create a mind map that will show the connections to the various texts you have read.

## MEETINGS, SUPPLEMENTAL READING, AND BLOGGING:

- Your groups will meet four times in total. The first meeting will be to establish timelines for reading, to start creating your mind maps, and to discuss your thoughts about our essential questions as they relate to the first three chapters of your book.
- You will use some time at the end of each of the subsequent meetings to establish a new essential question for the next meeting (using the above questions to guide you), recording it on the planning Google Doc.
- The last two meetings will be recorded on video, and your group will decide together which of the two recordings to submit for evaluation. Make sure you do some test runs of filming so that you submit your group's best work. Use Screencastify to film your discussions.
- Before the second, third, and fourth meetings, articles will be posted to Parlay for you to read and to incorporate into your discussion.
- A blogging topic based on that article will also be posted. Each person in your group is required to post two blog responses that make an argument about that topic. You can choose which articles to respond to; you are required to write two from the three topics posted. This task will give you practice with formulating an argument and using support – you must use MLA in-text citation and ICE to incorporate your quotations. Your blog post should be about 500 words long and will get formative feedback using the Parlay feedback tools.
- You will use the Parlay tools to respond to one of your classmates' blogs from another book group. Posting responses are additional practice in argumentation and a way for you to become familiar with the other book titles. Your response post should be 200-250 words and include MLA in-text citation and ICE to incorporate your quotations.

### Blog post and response due dates (choose two of the three dates)

Thursday, February 21 at 11:59 pm

Thursday, February 28 at 11: 59 pm

Thursday, March 7 at 11:59 pm (remember your rough drafts are also due this week)

\*No blog posts or responses will be accepted after March 7.

### MEETING DAYS

A Day Schedule

Tuesday, February 12

Wednesday, February 20

Tuesday, February 26

Monday, March 4

B Day Schedule

Monday, February 11

Tuesday, February 19

Monday, February 25

Tuesday, March 5

### Socratic Seminar Guidelines and Rubric

- Come prepared. Bring notes and information that is relevant to the discussion.
- Participate, participate, participate!
- Support your comments with evidence/ facts.
- Try to comment on someone else's previous statement before you give yours.
- Personal stories should have a direct connection to the facts.
- Keep discussion alive by asking open-ended, thought-provoking questions.
- Disagree with comments, not individuals. Remember our class norms and protocols.

- Use your speaking time fairly (contribute but do not control).
- Film your discussions on Screencastify.

### Socratic Seminar Rubric

	5	4	3	2	Total
Conduct	*Patient with differing opinions. *Asks for clarification. *Brings others into the dialogue. *Very focused on the dialogue.	*Respectful. *Comments, but does not attempt to involve others. *Generally focused.	*Participates but shows impatience. *Some focus. *Engages in “sidebar” conversations.	*Disrespectful. *Argumentative. *Does not participate.	
Speaking	*Speaks to all participants. *Articulate. *Takes a leadership role without monopolizing the discussion.	*Speaks to most participants. *Attempts to move on to new ideas. *Tends to “ramble on” after making a point.	*Speaks too softly. *Needs prompting to get involved. *Has no sustainable point; uses “sound bites.” *Monopolizes the discussion.	*Reluctant to speak. *Comments do not support point.	
Reasoning	*Cites relevant text. *Relates topic to outside knowledge and other topics. *Makes connections between own thoughts and others’. *Willing to take an alternate viewpoint. *Asks questions to further dialogue.	*Makes limited connections to others’ ideas. *Some intriguing points that merit reaction. *Some references to the text.	*Accurate on minor points, but misses the main point. *No textual support; “talking off the top of your head.” *Refuses to acknowledge alternative viewpoints.	*Illogical comments. *Ignores the movement of the seminar.	
Listening	*Writes down comments, questions, ideas. *Builds on other’s ideas & gives others credit.	*Generally attentive and focused. *Responds thoughtfully. *Takes <i>some</i> notes.	*Appears disconnected. *Takes limited notes.	*Inattentive. *Comments show lack of understanding. *Takes no notes.	
Reading/ Preparation	*Familiar with text. *Understands major concepts. *Was well prepared in small discussion groups.	*Fairly familiar with the text. *Asks for references. *Was mostly prepared in small discussion groups	*Confused with key concepts of text. *Writing assignment may be completed on time. *Occasionally prepared in small discussion groups.	*Unfamiliar with text. *Very much unprepared in small discussion groups.	
Total:					

## **AP Language and Composition 11**

### **Letter Writing Assignment**

#### **Impact of Speech and Debate Outside of the classroom**

##### **Instructional Context**

In the Fall of 2017, I collaborated with my colleague in AP Language and Composition to create an assignment for students to argue for or against a later start time for high school students in our school district. Students were asked to write a letter to members of our school board and/or our superintendent using a researched based argument and taking a position on a later start time for our high school. Students were also offered the option of speaking at a school board meeting, and many took advantage of that opportunity.

One of the advantages of a small school district (one high school, one middle school, and five elementary schools) is that students and staff have access to school administration. The late start time letter writing assignment represented an authentic opportunity for students to use their speaking, writing, and argumentation skills to champion a cause. When the Parkland tragedy occurred last February, our students wanted to take action but they were at a loss as to what kind of action would be helpful. We had already been affected by a school shooting in Aztec, NM, a couple of months prior to the Parkland shooting, and our students were angry and frightened. My colleague and I wanted to model for students that the value of collaboration and the willingness to take action can be healing and productive.

We re-worked our letter writing assignment from the first semester to encourage conversation around the issue of school shootings and gun violence. Because of the difficult emotional issues surrounding school shootings and the political nature of guns and gun violence, we made it clear to students that as long as they researched the issues and stated their arguments with evidence from their research, that they were free to take any position they wished.

Both of the letter writing assignments gave students an opportunity to participate in civic discourse about issues that directly affected them. Three of the students who wrote letters on gun violence organized our school walkout for school safety and were speakers at March for Our Lives, Santa Fe. Two of the three students who led these efforts are also on the speech and debate team, and the third was a competitor on our middle school speech and debate team.

##### **Assignment**

###### **Standards Addressed**

**RI.11-12.7:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**SL.11-12.2:** Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

**SL.11-12.4:** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

**W.11-12.1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**W.11-12.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**W.11-12.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

**W.11-12.5:** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

**W.11-12.6:** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

**W.11-12.7:** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

### **21st Century Learning Themes and Skills from the Partnership for 21st Century Learning**

Themes: Global Awareness, Civic Literacy, Health Literacy

Skills: Creativity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Information Literacy, Media Literacy, Social and Cross Cultural Skills

### **Essential Questions**

How do we frame arguments for a specific audience?

How do we use research to convince others of our argument?

How do we use our knowledge of grammar and syntax to write effectively for a cause?

### **Learning Goals:**

- Students will be able to create a personal argument for an authentic audience and occasion. Students will be able to choose and skillfully use evidence, both personal and research-based, which supports and strengthens their arguments.
- Students will be able to tailor their arguments for a specific audience, using language that acknowledges the rhetorical context and exigency of the situation.
- Students will practice editing and revising for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word choice while using descriptive and specific vocabulary and effective sentence structure.

### **School Violence Research and Argumentation Assignment**

**Materials:** Student Chromebooks, *Thank You for Arguing* by Jay Heinrichs, Q3 argument thesis statement notes, rhetorical device notes, a thesaurus, writing cheat sheets, and possibly a printer, white paper, and a white envelope.

**Rationale:** While gun violence in schools is not a new phenomenon, the recent acts of violence, namely the 17 lives lost on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in a school shooting in Parkland, Florida, and violence close to home, specifically the two lives lost on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in a school shooting in Aztec, New Mexico, have posed important questions for our school. What should be done to prevent school shootings? What should be done to ensure the safety of students and staff in the event of a school shooting? Since you have a stake in these questions and are directly affected by the safety and security of Los Alamos High School, you have an important voice on this issue. Please use your ever-improving skills of rhetoric to make a difference that could save lives and make your school a safer place.

**Prompt:** Consider what can be done to make our high school safer, potentially preventing a school shooting, or what precautions can be taken during a school shooting that would prevent the deaths of students and staff. Then, write a letter in which you argue for a particular safety measure, or shooter protocol, or even a change in school culture. Use evidence from your personal experiences, readings, observations, current events, and/or historical events to support your argument.

**Evidence:** While you will be making a largely personal argument, a well-placed statistic or fact can enhance your argument. Additionally, reading and researching sources on the subject of school violence can give you ideas about what your specific argument might be. Please conduct your own research, but here are some helpful links to get you started:

- [NPR- "Is there any way for schools to prevent shootings?"](#) and ["School safety training founder on preparing for a school shooting"](#)
- [New York Times- "What explains U.S. mass shootings? An international comparison suggests an answer"](#)
- [Huffington Post- "Every teacher should have a gun"](#)

- *Reader's Digest*- [“One teacher’s brilliant strategy to stop future shootings- and it’s not about guns”](#)
- *BBC*- [“Is it time to arm teachers?”](#)
- *The Atlanta Journal*- [“What if schools focused on improving relationships rather than test scores?”](#)
- *PBS*- [“Should educators be armed?”](#)
- *Slate*- [“The Four Most Important Lessons of Columbine”](#) and [“How to Stop Violence”](#)
- *Washington Post*- [“A Loud, new voice after the latest school shooting: kids wanting to know why adults hadn’t done more”](#)
- *CDC*- [“School Violence: Prevention”](#) and [“School Violence: Data & Statistics”](#)
- *ABC News*- [“to teach or not teach gun safety in school”](#)
- [Lethal Violence in Schools: A National Study](#)
- [ALICE Training](#) and [Guardian Defense](#)

**Possible Audiences:** Please tailor your argument for one or a combination of the following target audiences. Remember that the language of your argument should *acknowledge the values* of the target audience. Learning about the values of your target audience may take a little informal research on your part.

If you have a different target audience in mind, please run it by me first.

Local Level Options:

- [Los Alamos Public Schools School Board Members](#)
- [Los Alamos Public Schools Superintendent](#)
- Los Alamos High School and Freshman Topper Academy Principals
- [Los Alamos Police Department Police Chief](#)

State Level Options:

- [New Mexico State Governor Susana Martinez](#)
- [New Mexico District 43 House Representative Stephanie Garcia Richard](#)
- [New Mexico District 5 Senator Richard C. Martinez](#)

National Options:

- [United States President Donald J. Trump](#)
- [Speaker of the House Paul Ryan](#)
- [Majority Leader Mitch McConnell](#)
- [United States Senator Martin Heinrich](#)
- [United States Senator Tom Udall](#)
- [United States Representative Ben Ray Lujan](#)
- [United States Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham](#)
- [United States Representative Steven Pearce](#)

Other:

- [National Rifle Association of America \(NRA\)](#)

**Directions:**

1. Write your argument rough draft.
  - a. Introduction- Since you are likely persuading someone who does not know you, it is important to start by building your own ethos so the target audience will find your logos and pathos valid. This is an important place for the language of kairos too. Acknowledge the context of the issue, the occasion for the argument, and the target audience’s values. Incorporate a thesis statement that makes a clear and specific argument while minimizing the counter-argument (just like in our Q3 timed writes).
  - b. Argument- Use one or several paragraphs to support your argument. Each paragraph should always start off with a strong topic sentence that connects your argument to the specific point or reason in that paragraph. Develop your argument by giving evidence (personal examples, analogies, quotes from sources, and paraphrases from sources) and

analysis that connects the evidence to your argument. Since this is a letter, not an MLA formatted paper, you won't use an MLA citation. Use the introduction to the evidence to add a speaker tag and give reference to the source. Don't forget to elaborate and explain- why is this point or evidence important?

c. Counter Argument- Use one paragraph to acknowledge the counter-argument. Each paragraph should always start off with a strong topic sentence that connects the counter-argument to the specific point or reason in that paragraph. Develop the counter argument by giving evidence (personal examples, analogies, quotes from sources, and paraphrases from sources) and analysis that connects the evidence to the counter argument. Since this is a letter, not an MLA formatted paper, you won't use an MLA citation. Use the introduction to the evidence to add a speaker tag and give reference to the source. Refute the counter-argument evidence. Why is the argument still more convincing than the counter argument? Explain.

d. Conclusion and Call to Action- Reaffirm your argument so you don't appear fickle. This would be the place to propose a clear and calculated solution to the issue at hand. This solution needs to be tailored to your target audience. You wouldn't write to Speaker Paul Ryan and ask him to post a security guard in E Wing, would you? Explain the importance of this issue and what would happen if this issue were not addressed. Close with a strong call to action and acknowledgment of the kairos.

2. Engage in the revision process. This would be the place to make sure that you used high level, descriptive vocabulary and a variety of rhetorically appropriate verbs. Smooth out your writing by adding appropriate transition words and phrases.

Enhance the texture of your argument by weaving in effective sentence structures and rhetorical devices. Incorporating some of the strategies from *Thank You for Arguing* would also help to take your argument from "run-of-the-mill" to "wow!" Most importantly, please revise your writing for accurate spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and letter format.

3. Format this argument as a letter with an introduction (Dear so and so), salutation (Sincerely), and your contact information or credentials. Google Docs has templates for formal letters and you should use the template to correctly format your letter. Consider the font size, style, and color. What is legible and professional? What does your target audience expect?

5. Please do not send your letter until I have double checked your letter for errors. Because these letters are being shared with people of influence, it is vitally important that you allow me to check your letter for form and style.

**Submission:** Your argument will be snail mailed or emailed to the target audience(s) of your choice. You will "turn this assignment in" by CCing me on the email to the target audience(s) OR by bringing your typed, printed letter and unsealed, addressed envelope to me.

Scoring Rubric (inspired by <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/single-point-rubric/>)

<b>Concerns</b> <i>Areas that Need Work</i>	<b>Criteria- <i>Standards for Assessment</i></b> <b>Writing for an Authentic Audience: School Violence</b>	<b>Advanced</b> <i>Evidence of Exceeding Standards</i>	<b>Your Scores</b>
	<b>Criteria #1: Strategies</b> Your paper should reflect logos, ethos, pathos, and strategies from TYFA in its argument. Rhetorical devices and syntax add texture to your argument. Your argument follows the classical or Toulmin model.		_____/5
	<b>Criteria #2: Audience</b> You are appealing to your target audience clearly and use the language of Kairos. You acknowledged their values. You matched your audience’s expectations for decorum. The solution and call to action match the target audience.		_____5
	<b>Criteria #3: Development</b> This argument is well developed (contains lots of personal evidence), explained, and contains clear connections between the evidence and argument. Points are not thrown in without thorough development. So lots of E in ICE, so to speak. A counter argument is developed and firmly refuted. A solution and call to action are included.		_____/5
	<b>Criteria #4: Mechanics and Clarity</b> There should be few to no grammar and usage errors. Sentences should be free of vague language. Use Hayakawa’s Level one words. Clear thesis and topic sentences. Effective transition words are used.		_____/5
Comments:			Total: _____/20

## Outcomes and Reflection

### Student Work Sample and Reflection

*Dear Members of the LAPS Community,*

*In our country, there has been a newfound urgency towards preventing tragedy in our schools. An urgency that has been prominent since the Columbine shooting in 1999 and, on December 7, 2017, this need to act against gun violence in schools came quickly upon our own state. On that day, a shooter came to Aztec High School and killed two students. Up until this point, our state had been untouched by the ever increasing number of mass shootings occurring across the country, but this tragic instance made the issue personal for Aztec, for New Mexico, and, most importantly, for our school district. I am currently a junior at Los Alamos High School and have been a student in the Los Alamos school system since kindergarten and was never warned of any possibility of a school shooting until my freshman year. If we are to change how our schools approach this possibility of tragedy, we need to acknowledge the subject and take action in order to provoke change to keep our schools, our staff, and our students safe.*

*Although many have been focusing on gun control in order to tackle the root of the problem, I believe we need to take initiative at stages occurring before the procurement and use of a gun and help students cope with the emotional trauma that can eventually lead them to be a school shooter or commit other acts with the intention of harming others. As a community, we need to pay attention to those who are troubled and/or have mental health problems. The shooter at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, Nikolas Cruz, had shown signs of mental illness before the shooting. ABC News reports that he had cut his arms, used racial slurs, put hate signs on his backpack, and suffered from depression. In addition to this, Cruz had the police called on him eighteen times and the FBI was alerted of behavior leading people to believe that Cruz was planning a school shooting. If someone had stepped up and found help for Cruz before he reached this point, the Parkland shooting may have never happened and seventeen lives would not have been lost at Stoneman Douglas High School.*

*The mental health issues faced by Cruz and other school shooters, such as the one at Sandy Hook Elementary School, are not unique to perpetrators committing violent crimes and are faced by students in Los Alamos as well. According to the New Mexico Health Council, from 2005 to 2011, an average of 8.4% of Los Alamos High School Students reported that they had attempted suicide. From 2007 to 2012, the suicide death rate in Los Alamos County has steadily increased from 5% to about 10% and shows no signs of slowing. The mental health of our students is critical and not acknowledged nearly enough. In 2016, 500 high school students from Los Alamos High School reported feeling some sort of anxiety and about 400 suffered from some form of depression. This is a considerable portion of the student population that is afflicted with some sort of mental illness, regardless of its severity. In order to keep our schools safe from the same tragedy faced by Stoneman Douglas High School, Aztec High School, and countless others, it is of the utmost importance that we increase our focus on the mental health of students by providing more resources regarding student mental health.*

*Although Los Alamos has made progress in acknowledging and providing resources for students struggling with mental illnesses, there is still room for improvement. As of right now, there aren't accessible mental health resources at the high school or middle school for students. There are counselors available in the community, but as for the schools themselves, there are not counselors that are readily available to students. The topic of mental health is also not openly discussed very much. Many students including myself see it as a stigmatized topic in our schools that is better kept private and between trusted individuals when it should be talked about openly. Students need to be educated on this subject because chances are, they are a student or know a student suffering from mental illness or struggling with their mental health. I have seen this topic openly discussed twice during my academic career in Los Alamos, once in eighth grade health and again in health this year. Mental health is a topic that should not be confined only to health classrooms. It is an ever-present factor in the lives of many students and should be addressed as such.*

*More than half of school shooters suffer from a mental illness. Our town is not the poster town for stable mental health, but this is an issue that can be fixed. If we implement more resources for mental health that students can access willingly and readily, students can seek the help they need without shame. With new resources, students who would not have previously sought help might have a better chance at finding aid. By simply bringing more attention to mental health and educating people on it, the stigma surrounding mental illnesses and seeking help for them will begin to dissipate and students and adults alike can cope with mental illnesses to avoid the possibility of instances like the Stoneman Douglas shooting. If we simply focus on the health of students and change our school culture so that it facilitates students seeking the help of others, we can avoid such tragedies and make our school safer and our culture more positive and welcoming for those suffering from mental illnesses.*

***The student who wrote the above letter helped organize our high school's walkout to end gun violence and this student was one of the speakers at the March for Our Lives, Santa Fe, NM. Her college essay offers a reflection of the impact that this project had on her.***

*Even after five years of participating in speech and debate, staring out at a crowd of thousands of people with clammy hands clutching a microphone is terrifying. The fact that I was about to address this titanic group about an issue close to my heart and the heart of America didn't diminish this anxiety at all. But there comes a tipping point when the impact of words outweigh the anxiety of speaking them. And at that moment, addressing thousands of New Mexicans in the plaza of our capital outweighed every hesitation I had about speaking at the March for Our Lives and against gun violence across America.*

*It did not matter that my friends thought I was fighting for a lost cause. It did not matter that I come from a highly conservative town and a family of "California rednecks" (as my dad says) who all own guns. I yearned to spread my message and, with the help of two teachers, myself and two friends of mine, we were able to stand in Santa Fe Plaza and convince thousands of citizens to change the gun culture being fostered in America.*

*These two friends, along with several other students, also helped me organize a walkout for our high school featuring one of the state representatives from our district. Being able to look out at hundreds of my peers, school faculty members, and respected community members knowing that I helped bring them together was a feeling unlike any other. The discourse sparked by these events truly changed the attitude towards firearms in my high school and town. My school district began contemplating measures to increase school safety. The students and staff in my school district were trained on what to do in the event of a school shooting and my town took a stand against gun violence. I never thought I would be able to make this large of an impact in my own community but I did; this has inspired me to incite change in whatever place I may find myself in the future.*