

THE POWER OF WORDS

Grade Level: 8th Grade English

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Length of Unit: 4 Weeks

I. ABSTRACT

The power of words makes its impact on our lives daily --- through newspapers, magazines, advertising, speeches, and essays. Providing students with the tools to recognize this power is a vital lifelong learning skill. Students have the opportunity to read essays and to hear/read speeches that demonstrate methods, which force a reader/listener to reflect on a particular topic, and to write for the purpose of persuasion and information. The unit culminates with students writing or presenting speeches and essays utilizing the techniques of parallelism, strong vocabulary, allusion, anecdotes, quotations, and grammatical clarity. The "Power of Words" unit provides students an insight into the emotion of a "Death of a Pig;" the necessity for moral right in "I Have a Dream;" the importance of patriotic nurturing in "Ask not what your country can do for you..." and the environmental protection of "The Marginal World."

II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives (Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills, English Language Arts & Reading: 8.1 – A,C; 8.2 – A, B, C, D, F; 8.3 – A, B, C; 8.4 – A; 8.9 – A; 8.10 – J; 8.15)
 1. Students will learn to read nonfiction as an expert by understanding the power of persuasion and the power of words.
 2. Students will understand the purpose of essay writing is to give information regarding a person, a place, a topic, an event.
 3. Students will develop skills an appreciation for being "Three-eyed writers" by having:
 - A material eye...to study the subject
 - A critical eye...to check the thinking process
 - An intuitive eye... to supply emotion.
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*:
 1. "Ask not what your country can do for you..." (John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address)
 2. "I have a dream..." (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)
 3. "Death of a Pig"...(E.B. White)
 4. "The Marginal World"...(Rachel Carson)
- C. Skill Objectives (Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills, English Language Arts & Reading: 8.18 – A – I; 8.17 – A – H; 8.15 – B,G,H; 8.12 – A; 8.2 – A – F)
 1. What is fact?
 2. What is fiction?
 3. The Power of Vocabulary
 4. Writing Techniques (parallelism, anecdotes, allusion, quotations, grammatical clarity, etc.)
 5. Strength and organization of the writing process.
 6. Speech Presentation Tools

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers:
 1. Biographical information on the authors: Dr. Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, E.B. White, Rachel Carson
 2. Writing Process information
 3. Speech Writing and Presentation tools

- B. For Students:
 - 1. Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address"
 - 2. Public speaking practice
 - 3. Writing process

IV. RESOURCES

- A. Rachel Carson's essay – "The Marginal World"
- B. E. B. White's essay – "Death of a Pig"
- C. John F. Kennedy's speech – "Ask not what your country can do for you..."
- D. Dr. Martin Luther King's speech – "I have a dream..."
- E. Appendices A – I

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: Emotions

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 - 1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will learn to read nonfiction as an expert
 - b. Students will understand the power of words
 - c. Students will understand the purpose & strength of essay writing
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. "Death of a Pig" by E. B. White
 - b. Emotions and their validity
 - c. Writing Techniques
 - d. Writing Process
 - 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will recognize the strength and organization of the writing process.
 - b. Students will recognize the necessity of sequencing.
 - c. Students will recognize the use of allusion.
 - d. Student will identify the feeling of a piece of literature...mood.
 - e. Students will identify palette of imagery...simile, metaphor, etc.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. Folder with pockets and tabs
 - 2. Copy of "Death of a Pig" by E.B. White
 - 3. Notebook paper and pen
 - 4. Dictionary
 - 5. Thesaurus
 - 6. Overhead Projector
 - 7. Transparencies
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. Parallelism-repeating of phrases/sentences similar in meaning or structure
 - 2. Allusion-reference to familiar person, place, or event
 - 3. Mood-feeling reader gets from a work
 - 4. Sequencing-order of events
 - 5. Imminence-an event about to occur
 - 6. Penitence-feeling/showing of sorrow
 - 7. Coy-shy
 - 8. Vicariously-felt as if one taking part in experiences of another
 - 9. Ruse-a deception
- D. *Procedures/Activities*

DAY ONE

1. Teacher shows students a transparency with five different statements (see Appendix A) and has the students respond orally to the “emotions” the words impart.
2. Teacher facilitates a brief (5 minutes) discussion of the power of words.
3. Teacher then explains that for the next three weeks the students will read, listen, and examine powerful essays and speeches and will have the opportunity to create their own.
4. An information sheet on the “Power of Words Portfolio” is given and explained to the students. (Appendix B)
5. A transparency, which is a copy of Appendix C, provides students with key vocabulary pertaining to the first essay.
6. Vocabulary words numbered 6 – 10 are quickly explained before the reading begins.
7. Students are provided a copy of E.B. White’s “Death of a Pig,” and the first three paragraphs are read orally.
8. Students complete reading the essay silently or for homework.

DAY TWO

9. The topic “love” is written on a transparency, and students brainstorm (2 – 3 minutes) words/phrases which pertain to the topic.
10. Teacher facilitates as students discuss what E.B. White has to say about the death of his pig. (10 minutes)
11. Examination of White’s fine essay begins.
12. Students receive a worksheet (Appendix D) that serves as a guide to search for such writing techniques as: parallelism, allusion, imagery, sequencing, mood, etc.
13. Though each student completes a worksheet, students work in pairs to examine the essay.

DAY THREE

14. Students orally cite their worksheet findings, which provides class time for dialogue and further explanation of the various writing techniques.
15. Worksheets are due the end of class.

DAY FOUR

16. It’s personal writing time.
17. Students receive a sheet that has writing topics, a review of the writing process, and essay requirements. (Appendix E). Students will use at least two of the writing techniques studied.
18. Students are given ten minutes to brainstorm – which is checked by the teacher. They may then begin their first draft.

DAY FIVE

19. Writing Time...(Computer time here would be excellent)
20. Essays due the end of class.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Essay Writing
2. Application of specific writing techniques
3. Examination of White’s essay for specific writing techniques

Lesson Two: Environmental Protection

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will learn how to read nonfiction as an expert.
 - b. Students will understand the power of words as a palette.
 - c. Students will understand the purpose/strength of essay writing.
2. Lesson Content

- a. "The Marginal World" by Rachel Carson
 - b. Descriptive/Persuasive Writing
 - c. Writing Techniques
3. Skill Objectives
- a. Students will recognize the power of vocabulary.
 - b. Students will utilize the writing process.
 - c. Students will paint with words.
 - d. Students will identify-What is fact?
- B. *Materials*
- 1. Power of Words Portfolio
 - 2. Paper and Pen
 - 3. Copy of "The Marginal World"
 - 4. Thesaurus
 - 5. Dictionary
 - 6. Overhead
 - 7. Transparencies
 - 8. Photographs of nature
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- 1. Parallelism-repeating of phrases/sentences similar in meaning or structure
 - 2. Allusion-reference to familiar, place, or event
 - 3. Niche-a hollow or crevice, as in a rock
 - 4. Ebb-to flow/fallback, low point
 - 5. Intricate-having a complicated pattern
 - 6. Ominous-threatening
 - 7. Ephemeral-short-lived
 - 8. Obliterate-to do away with
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
- DAY ONE
- 1. Share and discuss two of the essays assigned in the Emotions lesson.
 - 2. Explain that though we are going to study yet another essay, it is an essay by which the reader/listener could use a true palette and paint several different images.
 - 3. Have students take out a piece of paper and pen.
 - 4. Students then close their eyes – but not their brains/ears. Teacher turns on a tape of sea sounds and reads the first seven paragraphs of Rachel Carson's "The Marginal World."
 - 5. After the reading, have students brainstorm a list of what they could "see" through the power of Rachel Carson's descriptive writing. (3 minutes)
 - 6. Share the brainstorming on a transparency for the class.
 - 7. Draw the students' attention to the "movement" and tide-like motion of Carson's writing.
 - 8. Give students a copy of Carson's "The Marginal World."
 - 9. Review parallelism and have students locate parallelism in the first two paragraphs of the Carson essay.
 - 10. Check student responses.
 - 11. Have students complete reading of "The Marginal World."
- DAY TWO
- 12. Facilitate discussion of "The Marginal World" with guided questions on a transparency (Appendix F)

13. Once again, pair up to examine the writing of Rachel Carson and compare it to E.B. White's style. A worksheet will assist students in the examination.
(Appendix G)

DAY THREE

14. Have students check own worksheets – then turn in. (20 minutes)
15. Show students a 10-minute nature video without the sound and have them write what they see and “think” they hear. (Play the video twice.)
16. Review students Descriptive/Persuasive brainstorming of the nature video on a transparency.

DAY FOUR

17. Using the video brainstorming, students will write a two paragraph descriptive/persuasive about the environment they witnessed and what it stirred in them. Encourage the students to: think of words as paints; to use at least four writing techniques; and to be definite about their environmental position.

DAY FIVE

18. Share a few of the writings.
19. Write examples of parallelism, imagery, allusion, etc.
20. Discuss importance and reasoning of “painting with words.”
21. Have students cite the impact of persuasion on the environment.
22. Help students become “Three-eyed writers:”
 - material eye...to check and study the subject
 - critical eye...to check the thinking process and why
 - intuitive eye...to supply emotion(Teacher will write “Three-eyed writer” information on a transparency.)

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Students write Descriptive/persuasive paragraph.
2. Students incorporate writing techniques.
3. Students examine writing techniques.

Lesson Three: Patriotic Nurturing

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will develop an appreciation for being “Three-Eyed Writers.”
 - b. Students will develop an appreciation for power of words...persuasion.
 - c. Students will develop an understanding for strength of conciseness.
 - d. Students will develop an understanding for strength of repetition.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. “Ask not what your country can do for you...” by John F. Kennedy
 - b. Writing the speech
 - c. Public Speaking Tools and Techniques
3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will articulate the power of vocabulary.
 - b. Students will practice public speaking.
 - c. Student will identify-What is fact?
 - d. Students will identify-What is fiction?

B. *Materials*

1. Power of Words Portfolio
2. Paper and Pen
3. Copy of John F. Kennedy's inaugural speech
4. Thesaurus

5. Dictionary
 6. Overhead
 7. Transparencies
 8. Video...*80 Years of Political Oratory*. Pieri and Spring Productions. 1997.
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Parallelism-repeating of phrases/sentences similar in meaning or structure
 2. Allusion-reference to familiar person, place, or event
 3. Imagery-simile, metaphor, personification, etc.
 4. Articulation-clear, distinct speaking
 5. Cadence-rhythm
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
- DAY ONE
1. Facilitate a discussion of similarities and differences between giving a speech and writing an essay and write student responses on a transparency.
 2. Share cartoon on speeches. (Appendix H)
 3. Review key vocabulary.
 4. Have students view John F. Kennedy's inaugural address.
- DAY TWO
1. Give students copy of Kennedy's speech.
 2. Have students look at the vocabulary within the speech. Contrast the vocabulary with the previously read essays.
 3. Discuss why vocabulary is less flowery.
 4. Have students examine the speech. Notice the obvious parts. Supply students with an information sheet of speech components. (Appendix I)
 5. Have students label Kennedy's speech for stylistic devices.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Students label Kennedy's stylistic devices.
 2. Class discussion of speech components.

Lesson Four: Moral Right

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will understand the power of words.
 - b. Students will understand power of repetition and parallelism.
 - c. Students will understand strength of imagery.
 - d. Students will understand the writing process of a speech.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. "I have a dream..." by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - b. Speech Writing Tools
 - c. Speech Presentation
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Students will articulate the power of vocabulary.
 - b. Students will engage in public speaking.
 - c. Students will engage in writing/speaking to persuade
- B. *Materials*
1. Power of Words Portfolio
 2. Paper and Pen
 3. Copy of Dr. Martin Luther King's "I have a dream..." speech
 4. Thesaurus
 5. Dictionary

6. Overhead
 7. Transparencies
 8. Video – *80 Years of Political Oratory*. Pieri and Spring Productions. 1997.
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Parallelism-repeating of phrases/sentences similar in meaning or structure
 2. Repetition-process of repeating
 3. Metaphor-comparison
 4. Personification-giving human qualities or characteristics to nonhumans
 5. Allusion-reference to familiar person, place, or event
 6. Antithesis-contrast of strongly opposed ideas side by side
- D. *Procedures/Activities*

DAY ONE

1. Explain the reason King gave the “I have a dream...” speech.
2. Review the Key Vocabulary
3. As students view the King speech, they should “listen” for examples of the vocabulary.

DAY TWO

1. Give students a copy of the King “I have a dream...” speech.
2. Have students go through the speech and label examples of all seven vocabulary words.

DAY THREE

1. We have written. Now, we write to speak.
2. Students are given a sheet outlining the requirements and procedures for writing and presenting a speech. (Appendix J)
3. Begin writing process of speech...completed by end of class tomorrow.

DAY FOUR

1. Students have the opportunity to complete the speech writing.
2. Students then sign up for speech presentations.

DAY FIVE

1. Students present speeches.
2. Students turn in completed Power of Words Portfolio.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Students write speeches.
2. Students present speeches.
3. Assessment of completed Power of Words Portfolio

VII. HANDOUTS/STUDENT WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A...The Power of Words
- B. Appendix B...Power of Words Portfolio Information
- C. Appendix C...Vocabulary
- D. Appendix D...“Death of a Pig”...an Examination
- E. Appendix E...Emotion Writing
- F. Appendix F...“The Marginal World”
- G. Appendix G...“The Marginal World”...Venn Diagram
- H. Appendix H...Cartoon...Making Speeches [Shown during session only]
- I. Appendix I...Speech Components
- J. Appendix J...My Speech

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX A...POWER OF WORDS

...What a babe!!!...

...What a hunk!!!...

...I hate you!...

...I love you...

...You and this car could go places together!...

“...We had been having an unseasonable spell of weather – hot, close days, with the fog shutting in every night, scaling for a few hours in midday, then creeping back again at dark, drifting in first over the trees on the point, then suddenly blowing across the fields, blotting out the world and taking possession of houses, men, and animals...”

“...He came out of the house to die...”

Appendix B...Power of Words Portfolio

Supplies:

- Folder with pockets
- Tabs/Dividers (emotion, moral right, patriotic nurturing, environmental protection)
- Notebook Paper
- Pen (blue/black)

Power of Words Portfolio will contain:

- Copies of essays and speeches
- Worksheets
- Vocabulary
- Notes
- Original Writings

Due: Completion of Power of Words Unit

APPENDIX C...VOCABULARY

Writing Techniques:

1. Parallelism...repeating of phrases/sentences similar in meaning/structure
2. Allusion...reference to familiar person, place, event
3. Mood...feeling reader gets from a work
4. Sequencing...order of events
5. Imagery...simile, metaphor, personification, etc.

Vocabulary from Essay:

6. Imminence
7. Penitence
8. Interment
9. Coy
10. Vicariously
11. Ruse

APPENDIX D...“DEATH OF A PIG”...AN EXAMINATION

After reading E.B. White’s “Death of a Pig,” examine his writing techniques which make it such a fine essay. Each student must complete this worksheet, but you may work in pairs to determine responses.

Parallelism

Define:

Cite 2 examples of parallelism. Under each example, explain why it is parallelism.

1.

2.

Imagery

Define:

Cite 5 examples of imagery (simile, metaphor, personification, etc.) and label accordingly

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Allusion

Define

Cite an example of allusion.

Sequencing

Define

Paraphrase an example of sequencing within the essay.

Vocabulary...Define the following:

Imminence

Penitence

Interment

Coy

Vicariously

Ruse

Write a paragraph explaining why E.B. White’s essay connects with so many people.

APPENDIX E...EMOTION WRITING

It's now time for you to relate an event or episode in your life which fills you with great emotion. The guidelines for the essay follow.

1. Select one of the following topics:
 - The death of...
 - The birth of...
 - The joy of...
 - The sadness of...
2. The writing process must be followed. I will initial your brainstorming once you feel you have a good start, and your ideas are FLOWING!!! Select a "partner in process." The partner must read and initial the first draft and editing process. You must initial the final writing indicating you have not only read it silently but also orally.
3. Incorporate two of the following writing techniques: parallelism, allusion, imagery.
4. Length: complete, but a minimum of five paragraphs.
5. Due: end of class tomorrow.

APPENDIX F...THE MARGINAL WORLD

1. How do we know Rachel Carson loves the sea?
2. It is obvious Ms. Carson is concerned about the changes in the shore. What passages tell us this?
3. Allusions:
Audubon
Lilliputians

APPENDIX H...A LITTLE SPEECH HUMOR

(Cartoon shown during session only)

APPENDIX I...SPEECH COMPONENTS

- I. Formal address/recognition

- II. Introduction
 - A. Gain attention of audience
 - 1. Quotation
 - 2. Anecdote
 - 3. Posing a question
 - 4. Demonstration
 - B. Make audience want to listen
 - C. State purpose clearly and concisely

- III. Body
 - A. May either crescendo or diminish to its closing
 - B. Speaking techniques
 - 1. Allusion
 - 2. Parallelism
 - 3. Repetition

- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Have your remarks come to a final focus.
 - B. Leave audience clear about your ideas

APPENDIX J...MY SPEECH

1. Select a topic that appeals to our audience of eighth grade students.
2. Write the speech utilizing the format of Appendix H.
3. Be prepared to speak a minimum of three minutes or a maximum of four minutes. Practice the timing!!
4. This is a SPEECH!!! Please do not READ it to the audience.
5. Incorporate at least three of the following and label them in your written speech.
 - parallelism
 - metaphor
 - repetition
 - antithesis
 - metaphor
 - allusion
 - simile