

RECORDING A CHANGING NATION

Lesson Extension: Rhetorical Analysis

Duration: 40 minutes

Grade Level: 6th-12th grade

About this Resource: With its focus on truth and beauty, this activity initiates a conversation about researcher bias while also building media literacy. Consider whether your students might benefit from a refresher on bias in writing in order to reactivate this content knowledge and prepare them to apply that concept to visual texts like photographs.

Materials: This activity will require access to print or electronic reproductions of select images. There is a graphic organizer [HERE](#) to support small groups' investigation in Step Six.

Preparation:

After completing a Visual Analysis, focus students' attention onto a subset of five photographs from those that you selected. Consider selecting images that represent multiple facets of each community such as work, celebration, home, behind-the-scenes, and local flavor. Exemplar subsets from three different surveys include:

Baltimore, MD	Lawrence, KS	Los Angeles, CA
Image 1	Image 1	Image 1
Image 2	Image 2	Image 2
Image 3	Image 3	Image 3
Image 4	Image 4	Image 4
Image 5	Image 5	Image 5

Protocol:

Provide small groups of students with a graphic organizer and, after each step, bring students back together so that they may share their discoveries and you can check their understanding.

1. *Preview & Warm Up:* Working individually or with small groups, look at the [graphic organizer](#) to become familiar with its layout, then complete three warm-up questions:
 - a) What makes something true?
 - b) What makes something beautiful?
 - c) What tools or strategies might a writer use to influence their readers' opinions?
2. *Choose and Label:* Working in small groups or individually, choose three of the photographs that seem most unlike each other. Label them 1 through 3. Make note of why you find them dissimilar.
3. *Compare:* Working in small groups, compare the photographs to one another, then consider the questions below:

- a) Arrange the photographs along a scale of the one you like the most to the one you like the least. If working with a small group, decide on a final arrangement by group consensus. What makes a photograph appealing to you? Make notes on the graphic organizer.
 - b) Arrange the photographs along a scale of most to least beautiful. Why have you ordered them in this way? What do you notice about your sense of beauty? Make notes on the graphic organizer.
 - c) Arrange the photographs along a scale of most to least true. Why have you ordered them in this way? What do you notice about your sense of truth? Make notes on the graphic organizer.
4. **Reflect:** Working individually, reflect on the ideas of beauty and truth. Do you think beauty conceals or reveals truth? Might truth reveal or conceal beauty? Make notes in the graphic organizer. Return to your answers from Step One. Add any new ideas that have come up for you.
 5. **Whole Class Synthesis:** Why might it be important that we, as readers or historians, are aware of our own preferences? Why might it be important that we are aware of rhetorical strategies?

Consider following this with select questions from the Historical Analysis extension activity, particularly those that invite students to consider 1) the purpose behind the photograph and 2) how the photographer's "voice" comes through.

Note to Teacher: In preparation for Step Three consider asking students to pause and consider the difference between things that are appealing to them and things they find beautiful. This will help clarify the distinction between Tasks A and B in this step. Allocate 10 minutes for step 3, particularly with older students.

Formative Assessment: Steps Five offers a point of formative assessment. Consider introducing the rhetorical concepts of Ethos (attempts to persuade) and Pathos (attempts to induce emotion). A related lesson is available on EDSITEment [HERE](#).

Check students' understanding of this content by challenging students to draw connections between these new ideas and those that they have explored with the photographs.

Summative Assessment: In order to assess students' understanding of rhetoric, present students with an excerpted article or speech whose topic connects thematically to the photographs they analyzed. Challenge them to first identify beautiful turns of phrase as well as points of truth. Then, invite them to write a short paragraph analyzing the influence of these two components on their response to the text. In a second paragraph, challenge students to describe a 3-5-point process by which they might critically assess other such texts in order to surface the influence of the writer on the reader.