



Featured Web Site
Get My Vote

3.3 Lesson Plan: Express Your View in a Vlog or Podcast

Overview

Students choose a campaign issue and develop a persuasive extemporaneous speech that they record as an audio or video file and post to their blogs and/or NPR's Get My Vote site (www.npr.org/getmyvote).

Key Skills

NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations: Articulate an informed personal position on a civic issue based on reasoned arguments resulting from consulting multiple sources; share policy positions in such forms as position statements, editorials, or political cartoons

McREL Language Arts Standards: Make an oral presentation (e.g., using notes and outlines; using organizational pattern that includes preview, introduction, body, transitions, conclusion; maintaining a clear point of view; using evidence and arguments to support opinions; uses visual media); use appropriate verbal and nonverbal techniques for oral presentations (e.g., inflection/modulation of voice, tempo, word choice, grammar, feeling, expression, tone, volume, enunciation, physical gestures, body movement, eye contact, posture); use production elements that contribute to the effectiveness of a visual medium

ISTE NETS Standards: 2d: Communication and Collaboration: contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems; 3c: Research and Information Fluency: evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks; **5b:** Digital Citizenship: exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity

Grades 7–12

Time Estimate Two 45-minute class periods, plus homework

Required Resources Video recording devices (video camera, web cam, video phone, etc.) and/or digital sound recording devices (computer with microphone), computers with Internet access

Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us (del.icio.us). Preview all of the Web sites and video clips used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students. Make copies of Worksheet 3.3 for all students.

Procedure

1. **Grab interest.** Play “The Government Promises Too Much”

(getmyvote.npr.org/kickapps/_The-Government-Promises-Too-Much/VIDEO/159145/18920.html) on Get My Vote.

Discuss: What are the strengths and weaknesses of this speech?

Explain that an extemporaneous speech is a short talk on a topic of public interest. It is planned and organized in advance but not written out word-for-word like a manuscript speech. Through extemporaneous speeches, people illustrate how political topics are part of their everyday conversation with regular folks—it's not just information and conversation for experts and civics students. The direct, conversational style mimics interpersonal communication and does not use sophisticated editing techniques.

This is the most common type of video blog (or vlog) and is very common in audio posts as well. Vlog entries usually feature the blogger speaking directly to the camera about his or her views or experience in a direct, often conversational tone. Audio posts tend to use a similar conversational and spontaneous tone are generally recorded in a continuous take.

Political vlogs and podcasts most often express views in order to persuade viewers with so-called “plain talk” about issues. This style of speech has become an important, popular form of civic engagement online. Students will benefit from producing their own extemporaneous speeches, as they deepen their understanding of how this authentic simulation of interpersonal speech communicates powerfully, but differently, from the highly produced and edited pieces of other genres they analyzed in previous lessons.

2. **Evaluate speeches.** Handout **Worksheet 3.3** and discuss the evaluation criteria with students. Then view “The Government Promises Too Much” again. Have students give a score for the speech and ask them to justify their reasoning. You may wish to compare how extemporaneous speeches by ordinary people differ from speeches by politicians or experts. Students will likely pick up on how pauses and uncut, poorly produced video lend an air of credibility to amateur work. Online, authenticity may be as important as authority, which is the standard for mass media messages.

Suggestion: Be open to adding or adjusting items on the rubric according to student discussion. You could also try constructing the rubric itself during the discussion of student ideas about what is effective and convincing.

3. **Research and develop talking points.** Explain to students that creating an effective persuasive argument often involves anticipating and refuting counter-arguments. Tell students that as they craft their argument, they should look for ways that opponents might seek to undercut it and find effective ways to argue against opponents' claims. You may wish to use the sample video as an example and have students brainstorm and share possible counter-arguments. Then, as a class, you can discuss effective ways of addressing these counter-arguments.

Students should begin to gather information and prepare notes for their original speeches. If students have not previously researched election-related issues, you will need to allot time for them to do so. If they have completed lesson 2.3 or 2.4, they may use their notes to supplement their research. Since an extemporaneous speech is planned and organized but not written out word-for-word, talking points are key for maintaining students' focus. In brief phrases, students prepare ideas for their hook, thesis, introduction, supporting statements and concluding thoughts. Require students to include key facts that they have learned to support their view on an issue. Students should also consider using persuasive appeals (see Lesson 2.2). Speeches should be 2–3 minutes long.

4. **Perform and record speeches.** In pairs, allow students to rehearse their speeches once or twice with their partners (but remember, extemporaneous speeches can't sound too planned!). Students should be mindful of their pace, cadence, tone, clarity, emotion, and eye contact. For vlogs, the speaker should look at the camera as though looking another person in the eye. Finally, students record their speeches as audio or video files.

For video, remind students to make mindful choices about backdrop, lighting, focus and distance—most vlog entries are medium to close-up shots in a spontaneous setting. Likewise, students recording audio should think about the background noise and consider mentioning the setting in their speeches—it adds to an audio post’s authenticity when the speaker identifies herself or himself and the location. To manage time constraints, you may want to limit students to two or three takes.

- 5. Upload to the Internet.** The final steps involve getting your students’ speeches from the video or audio recording devices into computers and then up onto the Internet. First, import audio and/or video to a computer and save the files in a compressed format that can be uploaded to student blogs. File types that work with most blogs are: AVI, MPEG, QuickTime, Real, and Windows Media. For audio files, m-peg or MP3 formats are easiest to transfer. Once they’re imported, students can easily upload their videos and audio files to their blogs. They can submit their videos to Get My Vote by following the directions on the site (www.npr.org/getmyvote/sharestory.html). (**Note:** Individuals must be 18 years of age to post to Get My Vote. Therefore, you may need to post your students’ work for them. You might consider having students vote on the best video or videos and submitting their favorites.)
- 6. BLOG THIS!** Once students have uploaded their vlogs and/or audio posts to their blogs, encourage them to comment on each others’ posts. Invite them to respond to these questions: **(1)** How do their classmates’ audio/vlogs illustrate unique personalities and points of view? **(2)** Which vloggers/podcasters have shared particularly powerful evidence and reasoning?

Assessment

Utilize the rubric below, or one you design with your students, to assess students’ speeches. Use their blog posts and/or their submissions on the Get My Vote site to assess their communication, collaboration, and technology skills as well as their understanding of the rights and responsibilities of digital citizenship.

Name:

Date:

Class:

Worksheet 3.3 Take a Stand

Rubric

Assessing an Extemporaneous Speech

Student Name: _____

For each item, score 0 to 5 points,

0=missing

1=very weak/ineffective

2=slightly effective

3=effective/satisfactory

4=strong/very effective

5=outstanding/utterly persuasive

| Organization | Content | Speech Delivery | Technical—Video/Audio |
|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Hook | relevant | pace/cadence | shot focus |
| Thesis | expresses clear opinion | tone | shot distance |
| Introduction | uses evidence for support | clarity | shot angle/movement |
| Support | shows knowledge of issue | eye contact | shot composition |
| Conclusion | information is credible | emotion | sound clarity |
| Subtotal = | Subtotal = | Subtotal = | Subtotal = |

Total_/100