

Read, Watch, Write for Pathos, Logos and Ethos

Visual literacy is an important skill in today’s visual culture. This unit plan asks students to watch and understand documentary films related to a current issue and then distill the main points of that film into a cogent argument that they then shape into three letters that differ in their pathos, logos and ethos. This lesson teaches students the importance of audience, authorial intent and letter writing skills in conjunction with visual literacy.

This process is aligned to English Language Arts Common Core Standards for 9th grade and utilizes the rich resource of *Dream of a Nation*. *Dream of a Nation* is a high Lexile level (1340), non-fiction text which aptly supports the Common Core emphasis on text range, quality and complexity. All *Dream of a Nation* chapters and articles are applicable for this Unit Plan. The standards addressed are the following:

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| Please see end of the lesson for Common Core Standards Alignment.  Learning Outcomes:   * Students will gain understanding of a topic related to a current social, political, environmental or economic issue found in *Dream of a Nation*. * Students will further explore this topic through the viewing of one or more documentary films on the subject. * Students will complete further research on the topic independently, take effective notes on the topic, and develop an action plan for business, consumers and the government in order to tackle this issue effectively. * Students will write letters to the company, local and national officials and a letter to the editor of the local newspaper in which they detail their research and their proposed solution. These letters will differ in respect to the intended audience and the scope and method of the proposed solution.   1. **Define the problem**   Students will be made aware of a current social, economic or environmental issue through reading one to three articles in *Dream of a Nation* and watching a documentary on the topic. The following is a list of documentaries and their topically aligned chapters and articles in *Dream of a Nation*. Teachers can select one issue for the whole class or students can choose their own issue and watch the film independently. Teachers can also show multiple films in class if time permits.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Gasland | Chapter 6 & Chapter 2 | | Walmart: The High Cost of Low Price | Chapter 3, Chapter 8 & Chapter 9 | | Fog of War | Chapter 11 & *Redefining Security for Strong Communities and a Safer World, Reallocating Military Spending, Taking Care of Soldiers and Increasing National Security* | | The Yes Men | Chapter 3 & Chapter 9 | | Atomic Café | Chapter 11 & *A Green Energy Future Without Expanding Nuclear* | | Supersize Me | *Strengthening the Food and Health Connection, Key Steps for a Healthy Nation* | | Food Inc. | *The Next Generation of Family Farming, Creating Food Security, Improving Health, Creating Community* | | Gideon’s Army | *Reforming Prisons, Saving Billion, Creating Opportunity* & *Ending Poverty in America* | | Sicko | *Tackling the Profit Problem in Healthcare* & *Redefining Security for Strong Communities and a Safer World* | | Waiting for Superman | Chapter 5 | | Outfoxed | Chapter 4 | | Inside Job | Chapter 3, Chapter 9 & *Getting Money out of Politics: Putting the Public First* | | Fuel | Chapter 6 | | No Impact Man | Chapter 2 | | The Garden | *Transforming Urban Injustice into Beauty and Empowerment, Creating Food Security, Improving Health, Creating Community, The Next Generation of Family Farming* | | A Snow Mobile for George | Chapter 1, Chapter 2 & Chapter 6 | | The Last Mountain | Chapter 2 & Chapter 6 | | The Times of Harvey Milk | *Envisioning an Inclusive World* | | American Blackout | Chapter 1, *Everyone a Changemaker* | | The Canary Effect: Kill the Indian Save the Man | *Supporting a Green Future in Native American Communities, Realizing our Roots and the Power of Interconnectedness* |   As students read and watch they should take notes on what they need to know in order to understand the problem/ explain the problem/ solve the problem. |
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| **2.1 Explore Current Action**  Students should then research the various responses to the issue. They can find examples of organizations on the Dream of a Nation website, the Solutions and Actions page: <http://dreamofanation.org/solutions/> In addition, students should also research other responses or claims against the proposed solutions. |
| **3.1 Purpose and Audience**  Discuss with students with idea of purpose and audience. The purpose of their letters is to inform and persuade. In order to accomplish these tasks writers use a combination of the three main strategies of rhetorical appeal:   * Logos or the appeal to reason relies on logic or reason. (Use of statistics which support a claim, evidence of why the problem is an issue) * Ethos or the ethical appeal is based on the character, credibility, or reliability of the writer. (Their personal experiences of being affected by the problem) * Pathos, or emotional appeal, appeals to an audience's needs, values, and emotional sensibilities. (Using examples of people being adversely affected by the problem)   The class should discuss examples of these strategies found in the *Dream of a Nation* articles and documentaries.  The specific combination of appeals used should be determined by the audience. Local audiences who will read the letter to the editor will succumb to claims of Pathos more so than corporate CEOs who are disconnected to the communities they’re affecting. Remind students that there are three basic types of audiences:  o Sympathetic audiences should be bolstered and arguments should be a rallying cry.  o Neutral audiences should be given information in an attempt to sway them.  o Hostile audiences should be given information in an attempt to make them acknowledge that your side at least has some truth to it.  The class should discuss which type of audience each recipient will likely be.  **4.1 Lettering Writing**    Students can use the Letter Template to format their letters correctly. Each student should write three letters that appeal to the three different audiences.  **5.1 Mailing and Publishing**    Students should find addresses for the CEO, their local newspaper and local and national officials online. Students and teachers can decide whether to use email or snail mail to deliver these letters.  Please send *Dream of a Nation* notice of your student’s publication. We appreciate your feedback and insights also. |
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Common Core Writing Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/) 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.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/a/) Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2b](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/b/) Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2c](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/c/) Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2d](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/d/) Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2e](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/e/) Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2f](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/f/) Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/9-10/2/) Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/9-10/3/) Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

Common Core Language Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/1/) Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.