

Revolutionary Rhetoric: Paine's Common Sense

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will analyze persuasive techniques in revolutionary pamphlet writing and design their own broadside using the same techniques.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- plain paper or poster board (8.5x11 or larger)
- markers or colored pencils
- ruler
- pencil
- scissors (optional for lettering)

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

1. Read the excerpt below, adapted from Thomas Paine's Common Sense (1776): "Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil... Everything that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART.'"
2. Underline two examples of emotional appeal (pathos) and one example of a logical claim (logos) in the excerpt.
3. List three persuasive techniques Paine uses (e.g., short punchy sentences, direct address to the reader, strong emotional words).
4. Design your own one-page 'broadside' (persuasive poster) arguing for a cause you care about at school or home, using a bold headline, at least one emotional appeal, and one logical claim, in large hand-lettered text.
5. Read your broadside aloud to a family member and ask them to identify your emotional appeal and your logical claim.

QUESTIONS

1. What is pathos, and give one example of it from the Paine excerpt.
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2. What is logos, and give one example of it from the excerpt.
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3. Why might a pamphlet like Common Sense have been an effective way to spread revolutionary ideas in 1776?

4. What cause did you choose for your broadside, and which persuasive technique do you think was strongest?
