



# Teaching Rhetoric to Understand the World

Kelly Danielson & Michael Harten  
The Woodstock Academy

[kdanielson@woodstockacademy.org](mailto:kdanielson@woodstockacademy.org)

[mharten@woodstockacademy.org](mailto:mharten@woodstockacademy.org)

# Introductions

On card:

- Name, Grade Level(s)
- What experience, if any, do you have teaching rhetoric?
- What do you hope to gain from today's session?



What is Rhetoric ?

The art of using language  
persuasively and effectively.

# Why Teach Rhetorical Analysis?

- Understand how media persuades—or manipulates
- Understand written, visual, oral arguments
- Understand how to persuade effectively
- Prepare for AP, SAT, college

# Ethos, Pathos, Logos

Ethos: Ethics and Credibility

Example: A testimonial in an advertisement from a trustworthy and qualified person (expert), related to the argument or product

# Ethos, Pathos, Logos

Pathos: Emotions and Feelings

Example: A sad puppy

# Ethos, Pathos, Logos

Logos: Logic

Example: Using facts or statistics to support a claim

# How do we introduce rhetoric to students?

## Advertisement or Commercial:

- High interest
- Relatable to students
- Connection/purpose is clear
- Good for discussion
- Multiple interpretations



# Try It

As you look at this ad, think about the

- Subject of the ad
- Language that is used
- Predominant images
- Audience for ad
- Purpose for ad
- Rhetoric appeals the ad is using

*Michaela*

**MICHAELA DEPRINCE**

War orphan turned ballerina shows  
that with hope, anything is possible

JOCKEY.COM ©2007 Jockey International, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



**SHOW 'EM  
WHAT'S  
UNDERNEATH**

#ShowEm your Jockey

**JOCKEY**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvRkFMPpoC8>

# Try It Again

In your groups, look at the magazine ad. Think about the

- Subject of the ad
- Language that is used
- Predominant images
- Audience for ad
- Purpose for ad
- Rhetoric appeals the ad is using

# Rhetorical Analysis of a Text

- Can be done with simple or complex texts
- Letter to the editor/op-ed
- Speech
- Scholarly article
- Excerpt from story or novel
- Can be embedded in work you're already doing

# Working with a Text

- Read the text
- Identify the main idea/purpose
- Identify the audience
- What rhetorical devices does the author use?
- Any logical fallacies

## From *To Kill a Mockingbird*

I'm no idealist to believe firmly in the integrity of our courts and in the jury system—that is no ideal to me, it is a living, working reality. Gentlemen, a court is no better than each man of you sitting before me on this jury. A court is only as sound as its jury, and a jury is only as sound as the men who make it up. I am confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence you have heard, come to a decision, and restore this defendant to his family. In the name of God, do your duty.

# Logical Fallacies

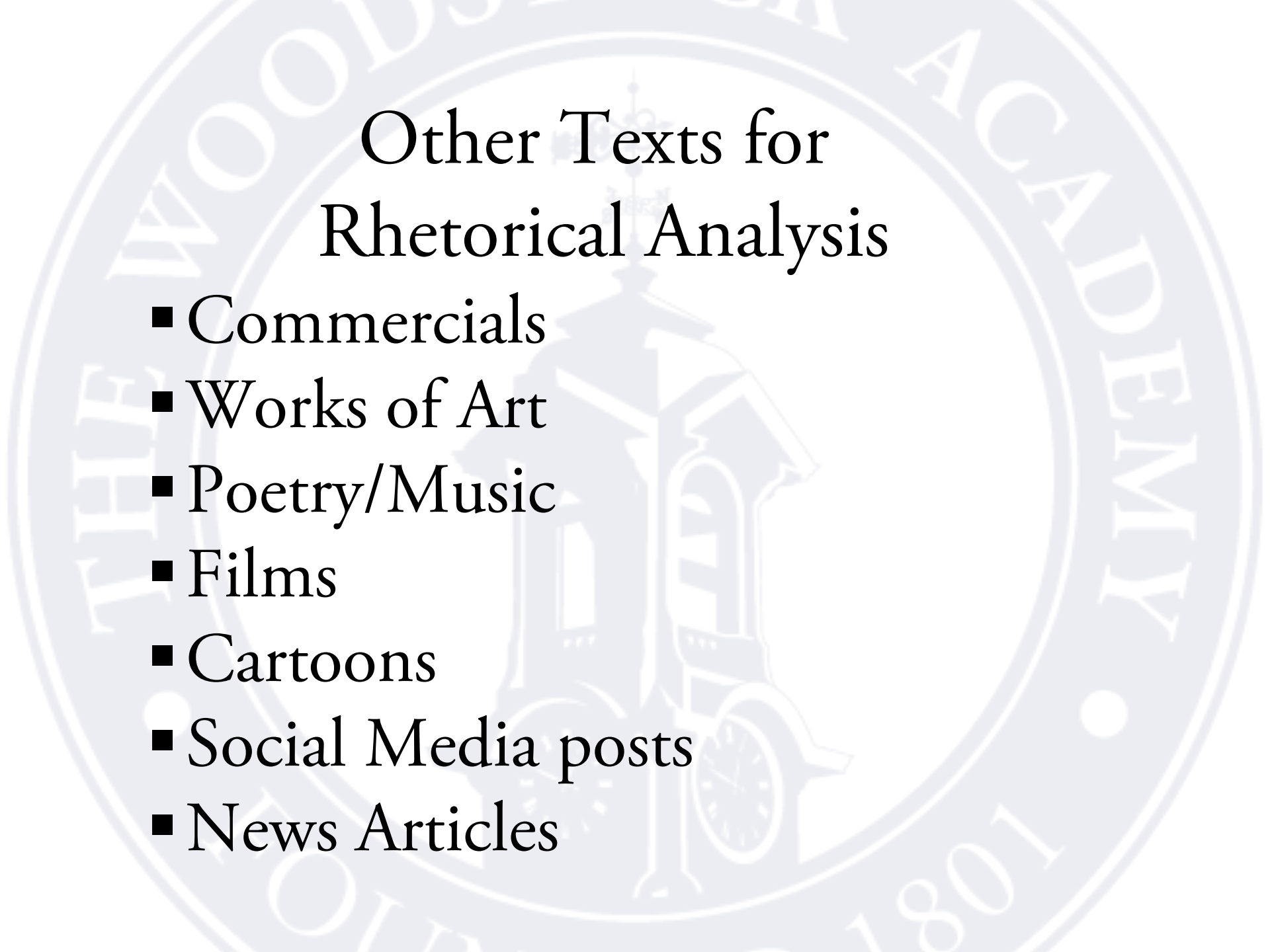
- Faulty reasoning that makes an argument questionable:
  - Ad hominem—personal attack
  - Either/or—only two sides to any issue
  - Hasty generalization—drawing conclusions based on one or two cases
  - Non-sequitur—conclusion that doesn't logically follow the evidence
  - Ad populum—widespread occurrence makes it true or right
  - Begging the question—taking something for granted that needs to be proved

## Letters to the Editor

The shootings in Las Vegas were atrocious (Oct. 3). No private citizen should own or possess an automatic or semiautomatic weapon. The U.S. government should sponsor a six-month gun buyback program for these weapons and, at the end of those six months, anyone found with such a weapon could be sentenced to five years in prison.

— Allen F. Gallagher, Watertown





# Other Texts for Rhetorical Analysis

- Commercials
- Works of Art
- Poetry/Music
- Films
- Cartoons
- Social Media posts
- News Articles

# Additional Resources

- SOAPStone
- SAT Essay
- AP Language website
- Books of art/posters/photographs
- *Everything's an Argument* (Runsford, Ruszkiewicz, & Walters)



# Final Takeaways



# Questions