

CHIEF LESCHI

Perspective and the telling of history

KEY CONCEPTS

Critically evaluate, analyze, and interpret various sources of information around a particular topic.

Question what in history is worth telling and understand the struggle required to preserve alternative versions.

Understand the role of perspective in the telling of history

Critically evaluate, analyze, and interpret various sources of information around a particular topic.

PART
1

In the first two parts of this activity, you will work collaboratively with people who have the same article as you do.

read article:

- All team members should take notes.

Each member of your team has received an article concerning the story of Chief Leschi. *It will be your job to defend the version of events presented in your version.*

- Your first task is to *evaluate*, *analyze* and *interpret* the information.
- As a group, discuss your answers to the following questions.

answer
questions

evaluate

what is your impression of the author (who is it, when writing, why)?
what is your impression of the author's sources? do they seem credible?
how detailed and accurate does the information seem?
what questions are answered and what left unanswered by the account?
what are the circumstances surrounding the author that might affect his/her perception of events?

are primary sources (articles, first hand accounts, records of speeches) used well?

analyze

what kind of story is the author telling? (tragedy, revenge, war, family, spiritual...)
what word-choices seem to subtly affect our experience of the story?
how does the author assert his/her authority?
how does the author control what we focus on as readers?

How does the story relate to your perception of history as it has been taught to you?

interpret

if you could assign a "goal" to this narrative, what would it be?
what values or beliefs underlie the author's choices?

believe & summarize

Once you've gotten a handle on the material, you may or may not find yourself in actual agreement with the author.

Nonetheless, it is your job to role-play a belief in the history as presented in your packet.

—Pretend belief requires more than just an adherence to the facts; it involves thoroughly investing yourself in the matter, adding your own imaginative, emotional, and intellectual capacities to the support of the ideas presented. It also means being appropriately skeptical and even suspicious of views that are discordant with your own. **In order to develop your perspective, you will take on a particular identity. Depending on the type of information in your packet, you can choose to act (and write) as an actual participant in the events (Gov. Stevens, for instance), a near-contemporary recorder of events, or a historian from our own time piecing together the history from artifacts, documents, and first-hand accounts.**

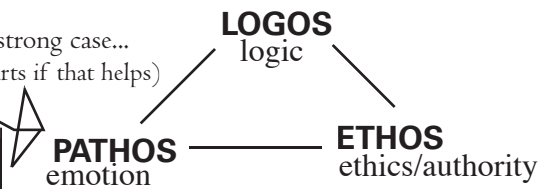
The best way to do this is to tell the story over in your own words. Doing so will lead us into the next part of the project.

•As a group, discuss various ideas, facts, values, and beliefs that support a firm belief in the story represented in your packet.

•In your notes, record an approximately two page summary of the events described in your packet in the most convincing way from the perspective you have chosen as a group.

•In your summary, utilize the rhetorical triangle to make a strong case...
(you may even divide your summary into these three parts if that helps)

EACH GROUP MEMBER SHOULD TAKE THEIR OWN NOTES&RECORDTHEIROWN VERSION OF THE SUMMARY



PART 2

PRESENTATION

Question what in history is worth telling and understand the struggle required to preserve alternative versions.

Based on your summary and on your feelings about the following questions, your team will present your version of events in an effort to convince others of your authority, accuracy, and generally your hold on the "truth." Clearly, it is wise to designate one or two people as the speakers for your group. *Remember, you are role playing, not simply reading off your answers to questions.*

QUESTIONS

1. Who are you? (ethnic identity, occupation, time period, age, gender, etc)
2. Why would it be important for you as the teller of the story to preserve this particular version of events? Who benefits?
3. Does your version of events preserve, create, or remove the power that you and/or others possess? What might you gain or lose in the struggle to establish the accepted history?
4. What would happen if you compromised your version of the story to accomodate other perspectives?

you will have exactly 5 minutes to present on Thursday, November 6th.

The rhetorical triangle is really quite simple. It is an attempt to break down the ways that an idea appeals to us and seems convincing. Imagine a political speech. To be successful it must first have a convincing logical basis, including ideas that follow one to the other in some sensible way, conclusions that match the facts, etc. That is LOGOS. Those facts and conclusions must be based on ethically gathered information, diverse experts, and sound methods of research. So, the speaker will cite authoritative sources, use facts that all experts agree upon, and will not herself distort or misrepresent that information. That's ETHOS. Finally, the speaker will pull on our heartstrings, stir up our fervor, make us want to cry, cheer, laugh, and hug. That, of course, is PATHOS. Altogether, LOGOS, ETHOS, and PATHOS make an argument strong, honest, and effective.

PART 3 — HOMEWORK

At home, you will complete one of the tasks below according to the article you have read. If you choose to collaborate, you must together present a coherent view of history. When you collaborate, you are responsible for a work that responds to the challenges of each person's team.

This project is due on Thursday, November 13.

Your AUDIENCE is 8th Graders

G O A L S

- to practice freely and creatively creating an exhibit element
- to experience first hand the complexity of creating history.

CONTENT *choose an option below*

- Write a page or two summary of the events from your perspective, modeling your work after the exhibition labels/panels you've seen. Writing may blur the line between fiction and non-fiction styles, may include poetry, dialogue, etc., thus straying from the cold hard facts in order to "tell a good story." Do be sure to include meaningful and significant points that convey your perspective on the history.
- Create a detailed and attractive timeline or graph that represents your interpretation of events.
- In some form, compare & contrast different versions of events (narrative, graph, chart)
- Create an educational game that promotes your version of history. Remember your audience.

2D/3D DESIGN *choose an option below*

- Sketch a short self-guided tour as the booklet-companion to a hypothetical exhibition about your view of the history. Include questions, sketches, references to artifacts, images, and art in the exhibition. Your booklet may be done by hand but should be in booklet form and have completed text. Remember your audience.
- Seek out or create images through which you can convey your historical narrative. Each image should be sufficiently captioned. Images do not need to be historically correct; they may even be anachronistic. Use your imagination; focus on conveying emotion and ideas equal to facts/events. Find an appropriate way to present the images and text together.
- Create on computer (and print--b&w fine) a panel using text and image to convey your historical perspective.

PRODUCTION *choose an option below*

- Create a detailed floor plan of an exhibition that conveys your perspective on the history. This means knowing what each object in the room is, having a sense of the different parts of the narrative, a spatial flow that visitors are expected to follow, and generally designing the space to suit the overall perspective you are advocating. Present your plan with descriptive labels outlining your story in either a three dimensional model or a two dimensional image. You may invent whatever artifacts are likely to be available.
- Create an artifact or three dimensional element for an exhibition (potentially interactive) promoting your perspective. The element should be key, that is, central to establishing the importance of your view of history. It should be accompanied by descriptive labels. Remember your audience.

Please use this assignment as an opportunity for serious play.

Be imaginative, be wild, take risks, have fun with it, but be attentive to the history you are presenting. Dive in. As a group, going through this exercise quickly should give you a wealth of ideas that will feed your project and get your creative juices flowing.

Collaborate if you desire, but not to share the workload. Collaborate to make something truly more than you could have alone.