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# Lesson Plan: Selling Shakespeare: Persuasion, Power, and Macbeth's Magazine Debut

**Subject:** English Language Arts, Media Literacy

**Grade Level:** 9-12 (Homeschool Setting)

**Time Allotment:** 90-120 minutes

## Materials Needed

- A copy of or summary of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*
- Access to the internet (for viewing advertisements) or a stack of physical magazines
- Large paper or poster board (or a digital design tool like Canva, Google Slides, etc.)
- Markers, colored pencils, or collage materials (scissors, glue, old magazines)
- Notebook and pen/pencil for brainstorming
- Handout: "The Three Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, & Logos" (details below)

## 1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- **Identify and define** the three primary persuasive appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos.
- **Analyze** how these persuasive techniques are used in real-world advertisements to influence an audience.
- **Apply** these persuasive techniques to creatively design a magazine cover that "sells" a modern interpretation of the Macbeth story.

## 2. Alignment with Standards (Example: Common Core ELA Standards)

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.8:** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5:** Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

## 3. Lesson Activities & Instructional Strategies

### Part 1: The Hook - What Makes You Look? (15 minutes)

1. **Engage:** Begin by showing the student 3-4 powerful and distinct advertisements (e.g., a heartwarming Subaru commercial, a sleek Apple product launch ad, a celebrity-endorsed Nike

ad).

2. **Discuss:** Ask guiding questions:

- "What message is this ad sending?"
- "How does it make you *feel*?" (Happy, inspired, worried, hungry?)
- "Who do you think this ad is for?"
- "What makes it convincing or memorable?"

3. **Connect:** Explain that these ads aren't just selling products; they are selling ideas and emotions using ancient techniques of persuasion. Today, we're going to become masters of those techniques.

## Part 2: Direct Instruction - The Persuader's Toolkit (20 minutes)

1. **Introduce the Concepts:** Provide the student with the "Three Appeals" handout or explain the concepts directly.

- **Ethos (Credibility & Character):** Persuading through authority, trust, or character. It answers the question, "Why should I trust you?"  
*Examples: A dentist recommending a toothpaste; a famous athlete wearing a specific shoe.*
- **Pathos (Emotion):** Persuading by appealing to the audience's emotions. It makes you feel something—joy, anger, pity, fear.  
*Examples: Ads with cute puppies or babies; stories of overcoming hardship.*
- **Logos (Logic & Reason):** Persuading using facts, statistics, and logical arguments. It appeals to the audience's intellect.  
*Examples: "4 out of 5 doctors agree..."; "Saves you 30% on your energy bill."*

2. **Guided Practice - Ad Detectives:** Together, look at several magazine ads or commercials. For each one, have the student identify the primary appeal being used.

- "Is this ad using a celebrity to build trust? (Ethos)"
- "Does this ad use a sad story to make you want to donate? (Pathos)"
- "Does this ad show a graph of its effectiveness? (Logos)"
- Note that many ads use a combination of appeals. Encourage the student to find examples of this.

## Part 3: The Creative Challenge - Modern Macbeth's Magazine Cover (45-60 minutes)

1. **The Premise:** "Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is being reimagined for today. Your job is to create the cover of a popular magazine to promote this new version. You need to use persuasive techniques to make people desperate to know the story."

2. **Brainstorming (15 mins):**

- **Modernize Macbeth:** Who is the modern Macbeth? A ruthless tech CEO? A rising political star? A celebrity chef? Who are Duncan, Lady Macbeth, and Banquo in this world?
- **Choose a Magazine:** What kind of magazine would feature this story? *TIME* (serious news), *Forbes* (business), *Vanity Fair* (culture and drama), *PEOPLE* (celebrity gossip)? The magazine choice will determine the tone.
- **Headline Ideas:** Brainstorm headlines using the three appeals.
  - **Pathos Example:** "The Price of Power: The Secret Torment Behind the CEO's Smile."
  - **Ethos Example:** "An Exclusive Interview with His Top Advisor: 'I Never Trusted Him.'"
  - **Logos Example:** "By the Numbers: How Macbeth's Hostile Takeover Toppled an Empire in 7 Days."

3. **Design & Create (30-45 mins):** The student designs the cover. This should include:

- **Magazine Title:** Clearly displayed.
- **Main Image:** A powerful, central image of the modern Macbeth or another key

character.

- **Main Headline:** The most compelling, attention-grabbing headline.
- **Supporting Headlines/Taglines:** At least two smaller headlines that use different persuasive appeals to add depth and intrigue.

## Part 4: Closure & Presentation (10 minutes)

1. **Share & Explain:** The student presents their finished magazine cover.
2. **Reflection Questions:**
  - "Tell me about your modern Macbeth. Why did you choose this concept?"
  - "Which persuasive appeal do you think is strongest on your cover and why?"
  - "Point out where you used ethos, pathos, and logos in your headlines."
  - "Who is the target audience for this magazine?"

## 4. Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **Support:** Provide a pre-made magazine cover template with designated spots for the title, main image, and headlines. Offer a list of "headline starters" to help with brainstorming.
- **Extension:** Challenge the student to write a one-paragraph "Editor's Note" for the inside of the magazine, using persuasive language to further hook the reader into the cover story. Another option is to design a competing magazine cover from a different character's perspective (e.g., *The Banquo Conspiracy* on a gritty news magazine).

## 5. Assessment Methods

- **Formative (Ongoing):**
  - Student participation and responses during the initial discussion about ads.
  - Accuracy in identifying ethos, pathos, and logos during the "Ad Detectives" activity.
- **Summative (Final Product):**
  - The completed magazine cover will be evaluated based on a simple rubric:
    1. **Application of Persuasive Techniques (10 pts):** Cover clearly and effectively uses at least two of the three appeals in its headlines.
    2. **Creativity & Concept (5 pts):** The modern interpretation of Macbeth is imaginative and cohesive.
    3. **Clarity & Presentation (5 pts):** The student can clearly articulate their design choices and explain how they used persuasion during the final presentation.

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