



# #LETTERS OF HOPE CLASSROOM

*An interactive curriculum on refugees*

Lesson 3: Identifying Rhetoric

Time: 50 Minutes

In collaboration with



GENERATION HUMAN RIGHTS

FALL 2017

**Essential Question**

How can one identify rhetoric and accept the responsibility to construct a counterclaim to it?

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights:** Article 3: Right to Life, Liberty and Security of Person. Article 9: Right to Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile. Article 13: Right to Freedom of Movement, including the right to leave one's own country, and to return. Article 14: Right to Seek Asylum. Article 15: Right to Nationality.

**Common Core Learning Standards**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.A](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.B](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.C U](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.E](#)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.A](#)

**Assessment**

The educator is able to rotate the classroom and check for understanding by having ongoing discussions with small groups as students brainstorm and fill in their charts.

**Overview**

Students will be supported as they examine statements they have read or seen in the news or have heard in their communities and create counterclaims to them. This lesson equips students with this fundamental tool that they can build upon if they choose to become advocates for refugees.

**Learning Goals**

Students will be able to:

- Identify rhetoric by its unique characteristics.
- Deconstruct rhetoric they have read or seen in the media or heard in their communities about refugees.
- Apply their critical-thinking skills in small groups to construct counterclaims to negative statements and rhetoric.

**Materials for Instructor**

- Sample of Rhetoric & Counterclaim Chart written within lesson plan
- Blank Rhetoric & Counterclaim Chart for students (available for download at [care.org/lettersofhope](http://care.org/lettersofhope))

**Materials for Students**

- Pencil and pen
- Journal

## Vocabulary

- Rhetoric: (in writing or speech) the undue use of exaggeration or display; bombast.
- Counterclaim: A claim made to rebut a previous claim.

### I. Opening Discussion (5-7 min)

Begin the class by reminding students what the class learned in the first two lesson plans. Entry points to consider include:

- An open class discussion.
- Reading some of the Post-it Notes from the Idea Map.
- Reading the names of the different countries and languages that students identified in their family trees.

### II. Rhetoric Discussion (20 min)

As a homework assignment, students were asked to recollect and write down different remarks they have heard or read about refugees. Begin the discussion by defining *rhetoric*.

Write *rhetoric* on the board with its definition. Include an example such as: “*They need to go back to their own countries.*”

Explain that the class will integrate new knowledge of the word *rhetoric* into the next activity.

#### Step One:

- Tell students the class will begin by creating a list of positive statements they have on their lists.
- Example of Positive list:
  - They bring new foods from their culture into our community.
  - They bring languages into our community that are not normally heard here and it brings us closer to the world community.
  - They discuss things about the world that we never knew before their arrival

#### Step Two:

- Most likely the feedback they have heard and read will also include rhetoric. Ask students to share rhetoric they have listed in their homework assignment and write the list separately on the board.
- Examples include:
  - “They are only here for our jobs.”
  - “They should go back to their own countries.”
  - “They are different from us.”
- When you have at least several samples of rhetoric, add a second column parallel to the Rhetoric column and title it: *Counterclaim*
- Share the definition of *counterclaim* with the students.
- Ask students whether anyone has a counterclaim they would like to add to the chart. Share the following examples:

<i>Rhetoric</i>	<i>Counterclaim</i>
1. "They are only here for our jobs."	1. They may have had jobs they had to give up due to war. But they will need jobs when they get here to support their families.
2. "They should go back to their own countries."	2. Many would like to go back, but there is war going on or there has been a natural disaster in their country.
3. "They are different from us."	3. We have differences and commonalities. We can learn from one another.

**III. Group Activity: Counterclaim (15 min.)**

Step One:

- Divide students into small groups of three to four students. Explain to students that they will now work together on their own Rhetoric & Counterclaim charts, one chart per group.

Step Two:

- Ask each group to share examples the students have written in their charts.

**IV: Closing Discussion (7 min.)**

Lead a closing discussion with the class focusing on the positive and negative attitudes about refugees and how they may affect the refugees themselves.

Entry-point questions can include:

- How do you think refugees feel when this rhetoric is spoken about them?
- What can you do to support refugees?
- When you hear rhetoric, is there something you can say or do in that moment to advocate for refugees?

Let the students know that in this lesson they have learned a skill they will be able to use as part of their personal activist tool kit. They have learned how to create a counterclaim and advocate for refugees. Let them know this new skill can be used in many situations they encounter.

**Homework:**

Ask students to reflect on the following question before the next class and write it on the board:

*Do we have shared rights as human beings?*

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