

Narrator Bias with Swift and Chaucer



A Block-Schedule Conceptual Unit
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Rationale

The 12th grade English classroom has typically involved the teaching of classic canonical British literary texts, and we have decided to continue on in this tradition. “A Modest Proposal” by Jonathan Swift and excerpts from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* are classic examples of quality literature valued over time. While we are staying with the “typical” selections for a senior year course, we are putting an original spin on these texts by examining them through the lens of narrator bias. Although these texts are complex, we believe that, by senior year, students should be given the opportunity to struggle with more intricate narratives.

The texts selected are traditionally significant in the British literary canon; their literary significance is of value to students as it provides cultural literacy in relation to the early British era. Each of these texts provides a different perspective on the historic British culture as a whole. This period has historical and cultural significance to Western writing, as these works represent the roots of the modern day writing our students encounter in their education.

In addition to aligning with classic, canonical standards for 12th grade British literature courses, the study of “Narrator Bias” has an important place in the Georgia Reading Content Standard B.5 for high adult secondary reading: Students should be able to “Evaluate the author’s use of bias and use of persuasive strategies to elicit a desired response from the reader” and “use appropriate resources to identify the impact of bias and persuasion on the reader,” (Georgia Reading Content Standards).

The subject of Narrator Bias itself is an important element to teach students because of its general effect on students' understanding of difficult texts and the influence the narrator has on their perspective. Having the ability to recognize narrator bias allows for a deeper understanding of the authors of the texts and their intentions. Additionally, learning how other authors use narrator bias in their own works can help students to formulate ideas about the potential use of narrator bias in their own writing.

Some would argue that narrator bias in centuries-old texts holds little meaning for the students of today; however students need to realize that narrator bias is still alive and well and used frequently by people in positions of power to influence the thinking of other individuals. This use of bias is particularly true in the news media today, where narrator/speaker bias is everywhere. While authors such as Chaucer and Swift influenced reader opinion through word choice and ironic imagery, news media today uses narrator bias both verbally and visually. As the Indiana University IU News Room notes in their article "Liberal Bias?": "Reporters do exercise control over production decisions... The internal structure of news stories -- their placement in the newscast, editing techniques and manipulations related to camera angles, shot lengths, eyewitness perspectives and zoom movements -- is at the volition of news workers, free of the influence of image handlers," (IU News Room, 2009).

Some concerns regarding our choice of texts might include the perceived "bawdiness" of some elements of *The Canterbury Tales*. We argue that by the time students have reached the 12th grade, they have most likely encountered content on television and in readings that is at least as provocative as the tales that we have selected. Additionally, students will eventually encounter much more 'racy' material as they leave

high school and enter the next stage of their development, so it is best for them to encounter these topics in a safe, respectful environment.

The disturbing imagery in Swift's "A Modest Proposal" could be a cause for alarm for some, especially the portion in which human babies are put forth as a source of sustenance. We believe that 12th grade students should be able to understand the ridiculous, overblown irony of the work. We will help them to understand that Swift isn't actually promoting such a heinous act, but is instead using his bias to set forth his attack on the British government.

One final concern from administrators might relate to our use of a board-game as a form of assessment. However as George Hillocks reminds us, "there are better reasons for teaching narrative than preparing for state assessments," (Hillocks, 2007). We believe that it adequately demonstrates knowledge of the texts because it requires students to creatively identify several important elements of the text: themes, plot, and character with a particular emphasis on narrator bias. Additionally, the rest of our assessments directly involve writing.

We acknowledge that these texts are difficult and frequently taught in college courses; however, we believe that by senior year of high school, students should get to experience a preview of the types of texts they are likely to encounter as they continue on in their education. For students who do not plan to further their education, we believe it is vital that they gain an understanding of narrator bias before they go out into the world and encounter it in their every day experiences, especially in the media.

Citations:

Hillocks, George. "Narrative Writing: Learning a New Model for Teaching." Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007.

Georgia Reading Content Standards.

<<http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov/ReferenceFiles/GAReading.htm>>

IU News Room. *Newsinfo.com*. Indiana University. Feb 24, 2009.

<<http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/9993.html>>

Goals & Rubrics

12th Grade British Lit: Looking at popular British Lit authors through the lens of Narrator/ Character Bias

- Works to be included:

- (1) Modest Proposal (Swift)
- (2) Canterbury Tales (Chaucer)

General Overview:

Our hope is that by the end of this course (12th grade senior year), our students will have gained solid insight into narrator and character bias in these texts as demonstrated through their three projects.

Goals:

- Formal: In 4 to 6 typed pages, analyze the bias demonstrated by the narrator towards a main figure or topic and how that bias affects audience opinion of that character or topic.

- Discuss the general audience opinion of a character/ topic absent of narrator bias
- Make claims about narrator bias relating to the character/ topic
- Use examples from text (cite specific passages)
- Explain why the example illustrates the claim (warrant)
- Draw a conclusion about how the bias affects the audience based on the discussion

- Informal:

Divide (in class) into two groups, each group being assigned a different text. Within your group, create your own “Board Game.” Each board game should include the following:

- Traditional elements of literature (plot, setting, character, theme, etc)
- The board should provide the setting for the action, the pieces should represent the characters, and the path should symbolize the plot.
- The game’s goal is related to the literature’s theme
- Be sure to include author/character bias in some way in your construction of the board game

- Creative: In 5 to 10 typed pages, either imitate, parody, or create your own bias as you complete one of the following assignments:

- (1) Write your own Canterbury Tale
- (2) Write your own Modest Proposal
 - The author’s style (either imitated or parodied) should be recognizable in your work
 - Create your own topic and unique aspects of your stance
 - Be original and have FUN!

Rubrics:- Formal: (Modeled off the 6+1 Writing Rubric)

	5	3	1
Content (50%)	This paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant details and quotations enrich the central theme. Clearly presents a discussion of the bias of an author or narrator, citing specific examples to back up the points made in the argument.	The paper is largely clear, but at times strays from the topic. Quotations either do not fully back up points or are scarce in the final product. The narrator/author bias is discussed, but at times claims are made without proper support.	The paper often strays from the topic, and using little or no quotations to back up the central theme. Author bias is discussed on a superficial level, and textual examples do apply to the topic on the whole.
Organization (20%)	The writing flows well, involving thoughtful transitions, a clear introduction and conclusion, a clear thesis, and a thoughtful argument progression.	The writing often flows well, but can have issues disrupting the reader. A clear intro and conclusion with an adequate thesis. Transitions are adequate, but may be either abrupt or nonexistent.	The writing is jarring, forcing the reader to stop and reread in order to understand the text. Possesses an intro and a conclusion, but they may be undeveloped. The thesis does not reflect well on the paper as a whole.
Style (20%)	The writer speaks in an individual, compelling, and unique way involving a personal voice that reflects their own style. The words are powerful and engaging.	The writer seems sincere but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant or even personable, but not compelling. The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy.	The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience. The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary, searching for words to convey meaning.
Mechanics (10%)	The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling,	The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions.	Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage, and grammar and/or paragraphing

	punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few that just minor touchups would get this piece ready to publish.	Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting and impair readability.	repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read.
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- Informal:

	5	3	1
Use of Work (50%)	Traditional elements of literature (plot, setting, character, theme, etc) are integrated cleverly into the game. The game's goal is clearly related to the literature's theme and the characters' movements have thematic value. Narrator Bias has been incorporated somehow into the game.	One or two of the elements constituting a "5" are missing: Only some of the elements of literature are present, the game's goal only somewhat relates to the literature's theme, or narrator bias is forgotten or used improperly.	The work is hardly evident in the game. The board is only a façade representing the original work. Few if any traditional elements of literature are included and the game's goal is not clearly related to the literature's theme. Narrator Bias is not incorporated into the game.
Creativity (40%)	The Board Game is completely unique. It has a lot of ideas, but they all come together clearly in the finished product.	The Board Game has some new creative elements, but most of them are simply borrowed from or modeled after existing board games.	Little originality was used. The Board Game is mostly copied from an existing board game and not much effort was put in to making the board original.
Aesthetics (10%)	The Board Game looks appealing, nearly professional given their materials.	The Board Game looks pretty decent, but less effort was put into how it looks.	The Board Game looks like it was thrown together in a rushed few hours.

- Creative:

	5	3	1
Content (45%)	This writing is clear and focused. The creativity holds the reader's attention. The original author's style is clear in the new work. The author incorporates at least three key elements of the central work.	The writing is less focused and rambles occasionally. The original author's style can be detected, but is not followed throughout the piece. The author incorporates two or fewer key elements of the central work.	The writing is unclear and unfocused. The original author's style is hardly present. The author incorporates one or fewer key elements of the central work.
Style/ Voice (40%)	The stylistic presentation and word choice are reminiscent of the original author. The student clearly has gotten "into the mindset" of the original writer.	The stylistic presentation and word choice vaguely mimics the original author. The student only partially has adopted the original author's mindset.	The stylistic presentation and word choice do not represent the original author. The student has not clearly jumped into the original author's shoes.
Organization (10%)	The writing flows in such a way that it makes sense for the story. The flow/ organization of the writing itself is reminiscent of the original author.	The writing's flow is not reminiscent of the original author, but makes sense for the story,	The writing does not constitute an actual story. The flow and organization is not reminiscent of the original author.
Mechanics (5%)	Conventions of regular English grammar are adequate to the point where they do not interfere with the reading of the work.	Conventions of regular English grammar are less than adequate and occasionally trip up the reader.	Conventions of regular English grammar are poor and regularly interfere with the reading of the work.

Weekly Activity Schedule for Narrator Bias
 → Block Scheduling Version (90 Minute Class) ←

Day 1: Biased Advertising

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 5 minutes) We will start by showing a series of slides to the class depicting fast food ads which clearly show Biased Advertising: <http://alphaila.com/articles/?p=452>
- (Time: 10 minutes) We will conduct a whole-group discussion of these ads, prompting students to talk about what they see in the ad, what they don't see in the ad, and how these depictions compare to reality.
- (Time: 3 minutes) First, we will ask the class what they think "Bias" means.
- (Time: 10 minutes) After they have given their definitions, we will write on the board the formal definition of "Bias" – (1) a particular tendency or inclination, esp. one that prevents unprejudiced consideration of a question (2) to cause partiality or favoritism in (a person); influence, esp. unfairly – and ask students for questions, then clarify.
- (Time: 5 minute) Once we are certain that we have demonstrated the concept clearly, we will divide the class up into small groups and hand out a different advertisement that similarly demonstrates narrator bias to the students
 - Some examples of these we found and might use include:
 - The Verizon vs. AT&T ads:
(http://www.rroarm.com/2009_11_01_archive.html)
 - Fur and Vegetarian Extremists ads: (http://www.maplejuice.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/_christina_applegate_peta_fur_ad.jpg)
 - coke v. pepsu ads:
(<http://pics.livejournal.com/jvincent4/pic/000070qh/s320x240>)
 - "Smarter than Botox" ads
(<http://www.provocativeplanet.com/SkinAd.JPG>)
- (Time: 20 minutes) We will ask the students to discuss these advertisements in their small groups just as we did in the whole-group discussion asking them to talk with each other about the following Discussion Questions:
 - What do you see in the ad?
 - What don't you see in the ad?
 - How do these depictions compare to reality?
 - How are these advertisements examples of bias?
- (Time: 15 minutes) Once they have finished, we will once again come back together as a group and ask one person from each group to present to the class their advertisement and what the group discovered about it.
- (Time: 10 minutes) Tie this back to "Narrator Bias" by explaining how the concept of biased advertising related to biased viewpoints and bias of the narrator in order to lead into next week's class and the general concept for the unit
- (Time: 5 minutes) We will finish the first day by assigning very minimal homework asking the students to look for ads on their own that similarly demonstrate bias and to bring them in for the next class.

Day 2: A “Modest Proposal”

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 10 minutes) Show political cartoons on the screen dealing with today’s economic crisis.
- (Time: 25 minutes) Class Activity: Political Cartoons (use of Satire)
 - Have students make their own political cartoon relating to today’s economic crisis. We will give them the option to work individually or in pairs (so that people who have ideas, but cannot draw can find a partner to help them)
- (Time: 10 minutes) Share and discuss in small groups
 - Discussion Questions:
 - What was the political cartoon about?
 - What point was it trying to make?
 - How did it make that point?
 - What role did humor play?
- (Time: 8 minutes) To return to whole group and have a whole-class follow-up.
- (Time: 10 minutes) Provide a background for Swift’s Modest Proposal by bringing up images on a screen of that time period as we discuss what life in the 1600s was like and what led up to Swift writing his proposal (the Irish economic troubles)
- (Time: 20 minutes) Read “A Modest Proposal” in class aloud and discuss Swift’s use of “Narrator Bias” and Satire; we will instruct the students to take notes to help them with their Creative Writing Assignment later
 - Discussion Questions: “What is the text doing?”
 - What is Swift’s point? What is his goal?
 - How is Swift using Satire here to accomplish his goal?
 - What are particular points where you see his “bias” come out?
 - Analyze the features of this story that makes it effective satire.
- (Time: 5 minutes) Assign Homework – In class we discussed how Swift’s “Modest Proposal” could relate to our own current day economic crisis, for homework go home and brainstorm a page written work of your own “Modest Proposal” on a topic of your own choosing.

Day 3: What is Parody? How do you imitate an author?

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 10) Partner discussion of brainstorm
 - Discussion Questions:
 - How did the brainstorm go?
 - What were some of the ideas you came up with?
 - How did you come up with those ideas?
 - Did you think about how you are going to “Parody” them?
- (Time: 5) Read article imitating Swift’s style: <http://www.helium.com/items/128881-how-to-combat-womens-rights-a-parody-of-swifts-a-modest-proposal>
- (Time: 10) Class discussion of article:
 - Discussion Questions:
 - How are their styles similar?
 - What tactics to they use to achieve their goals?

- Why does taking the seemingly opposite stance help prove their point?
- (Time: 35) Class Activity: Extended Definition
 - Class divides into 4 groups and asked the question “What makes a Parody?”
 - Object: Write your own definition of the word “Parody”
 - The students are instructed to look at both Swift’s “Modest Proposal” and the article for this activity
 - We give them question prompts to help them create their definition:
 - What are the common elements?
 - How is style being used?
 - How is mimicry or imitation being used?
 - How is humor being used?
 - How is the subject being used?
 - What is the aim of the work and how do you know?
 - At the end of the time, the students write their own definition and one member of each group writes their definition up on the board
- (Time: 15) The class re-convenes and we read each of the definitions up on the board, examining commonalities and differences until we come to a class-wide and teacher-approved definition.
- (Time: 10) Return to Brainstorm Discussion (and applying what we’ve learned)

Using what they’ve learned from today’s lesson, the students are instructed to get into pairs again and discuss their brainstorms for the second time. The goal of the revisitation is for them to re-think their initial ideas incorporating their new-found definition of parody and how they will incorporate it’s elements in their own writing assignment.

Discussion Questions:

 - Re-visit some of the ideas you had in your brainstorm
 - Which ones work and don’t work and why?
 - What are some new ideas you have that might work “better” as a parody?
 - What are some of the “opposing stances” that you can adopt?
- (Time: 3) HW: For homework, write a paragraph in imitation of Swift’s style on a topic from your re-visited brainstorm, using the definition of “Parody” discussed in class

Day 4: Chaucer’s Prologue

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 35 minutes) Class Activity: “Chalk Talk” on Paper
 - We divide the class up into six groups
 - We give each group a giant sheet of paper with the role of a character in the prologue on it that they would understand prior to having read the text (Knight, Priest, Lawyer, Doctor, Cook, Widow) and tell the students to write any thoughts, feeling, opinions and impressions they have of each of these characters/professions
 - We allow 5 minutes for each group to write on each sheet before the sheets are passed on to the next group and the cycle continues until all groups have written on each sheet
- (Time: 10 minutes) We hang the sheets on the walls and have a big class discussion of what the students thought about the characters and decide “What were the common threads?”

- (Time: 20 minutes) Read Chaucer's Prologue (translated) aloud in class as a class conducted as a "pop-corn reading" (each student reads a few lines, then another picks up where the last left off)
- (Time: 20 minutes) Discuss as a class how Chaucer depicts the characters that they discussed in the "Chalk Talk" – How has Chaucer changed these characters? How have your opinions of these characters changed after having heard Chaucer's rendition of them? How has his "Bias" (point of view) changed the characters?
- (Time: 3 minute) Tell students to re-read prologue for homework, asking them to focus specifically on the depictions of characters whose tales we will be reading: The Miller, The Pardoner, The Wife of Bath. For written homework take notes on each of those characters (a paragraph of our own observation for each) to be turned in for class the next day.

Day 5: Intro to Chaucer

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 15 minutes—five for each character) Continue yesterday's discussion of prologue, but specifically focusing on the three characters we asked them to take notes on for homework: The Miller, The Pardoner, The Wife of Bath
 - We will conduct a short discussion of these characters in the prologue based on the notes from the previous night's homework
- (Time: 25 minutes) Discussion of History of Chaucer (accompanied by pictures, as we did with Swift) followed by a specific discussion of each of the three characters whose tales we will be reading, discussing what their jobs actually entailed, their position in society, etc.
- (Time: 30 minutes) Class Activity: "Coat of Arms"
 - Break the students up into three groups
 - Each group is assigned one of the three characters -- The Miller, The Pardoner, The Wife of Bath – and asked to make a Coat of Arms for them based on Chaucer's depiction of that character
 - Each group puts their Coat of Arms up on the classroom wall
- (Time: 10 minutes) We reconvene as a whole class and each group presents to the whole class their Coat of Arms and discusses their choices
- (Time: 8 minutes); We will instruct the student to bring in a written paragraph-long proposal for the next class on which they plan to choose and what they plan to write on (the final Creative Writing Assignment is due on Day 8).

Day 6: Chaucer's Writing Style

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 23 minutes) Discussion of Chaucer's writing style
 - We pull the students' attention to Chaucer's writing style and ask them what they think makes it "unique" (meter, couplets, rhyme, pentameter, etc)
 - Discussion Question:
 - Just as we discussed the specific elements of Swift's style that made his writing unique, if you were to imitate Chaucer's style, what are the important elements you would need to include?
- (Time: 30 minutes) Couplet Assignment:

- We will have them do an imitation of the prologue
- The assignment is for each student to write 10 couplets (or as many as they can in the time allotted) in a Chaucerian-style on a topic or person of their own choosing
- (Time: 20 minutes) The students will then get into pairs to read out loud and discuss their writing
 - The students are instructed to think about the following:
 - Does this meet the criteria for “Chaucer’s Style”?
 - Does it have the correct meter?
 - Rhyme?
- (Time: 10 minutes) We will then conduct a whole-class discussion of the activity and what, specifically, they should keep in mind for the Creative Writing Assignment if they choose to imitate Chaucer
- (Time: 5 minutes) Give the students a little background on the first tale they will be reading and assign the Miller’s Prologue and Tale for homework w/ discussion questions

Day 7: The Miller’s Tale

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 17 minutes) Class Activity: Group Discussion
 - Divide the students into four groups and have the students discuss the tale they read for homework. Specifically, we will ask them to help with each others’ understanding of the tale – what parts did they understand? What parts didn’t they understand?
- (Time: 17 minutes) In those same four groups, we will then ask the students to discuss a specific character from the tale -- Nicholas, John, Alison, and Absalon – Asking the students a series of questions to discuss: What were his/ her motivation? Which characters do you sympathize with, why or why not?
- (Time: 17 minutes) Class Activity: Jigsaw
 - From those four groups, the students will now “Jigsaw” so that each student becomes an expert in a specific character and now, with the new group, the students can teach each other the character they studied in relation to the other three characters
- (Time: 20 minutes) Reconvene as a large-class discussion and talk about The Miller’s Tale with a specific emphasis of relating the tale back to the teller -- Discussing his “Bias” and the second of layer of Bias provided by Chaucer himself
- (Time: 17 minutes) Homework: Assign the Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale for homework w/ discussion questions & Assign “Formal Writing Assignment” – We will hand out the rubric, clearly defining the parameters of the essay assignment and we will provide time to answer any questions the students may have

Day 8: The Pardoner’s Tale

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 5 minutes) Collect Creative Writing Assignments
- (Time: 10 minutes) Activity: Body Biography
 - Divide the class up into 3 groups
 - Each group is assigned to do a body biography of either Death, one of the three young men (or all three), or the Pardoner himself

- While they are being divided up into groups and being given their assignment, we will discuss with the class what a “Body Biography” is and put an emphasis on the items that they hold and on what that means for the character
- (Time: 30 minutes) Students work in their three groups on completing the body biographies
- (Time: 20 minutes) We will re-convene as a group to discuss the body biographies. Each group will present theirs to the class and explain their choices. Then each group will open the floor to the rest of the class to give more ideas for additions to each body biography.
- (Time: 20 minutes) Wrap-up: “The critic A. C. Spearing has written that "much of the individual coloring of the actual tale is drawn from its teller." This is true of many of the tales and their tellers, but the Pardoner's motives are woven even more tightly into his tale than most.” (Wikipedia). We will present this quote to the class and open the floor for the tale as a whole and the particular role of Bias in the Pardoner’s Tale; urging them to connect Chaucer’s portrayal of the Pardoner with this tale.
- (Time: 3 minutes) HW: Give the students a little background on the Wife of Bath’s tale and assign her prologue and tale for homework w/ discussion questions.

Day 9: The Wife of Bath’s Tale

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 45 minutes) Class Activity: “Fishbowl”
 - We will divide the class up into boys and girls (3 minutes for set-up & switch)
 - The boys will sit on the inside circle and the girls will sit on the outside circle
 - The inner circle will be asked questions and allowed to discuss and respond, while the outer circle can only listen and take notes
 - After half the time has elapsed, the circles will reverse with girls on the inside and boys on the outside and the girls will be asked questions to discuss while the boys sit on the outside and listen and take notes
- Discussion Questions:
 - For boys:
 - Which would you prefer: An old woman with money or a penniless young woman?
 - What do you think of a woman who has had “many husbands” or been with “many men”? Does that devalue her as a woman in your eyes?
 - Much of this story is about “submission” – Which sex do you think should submit to the other and why? What does the narrator of the tale believe?
 - For girls:
 - Do you think to be a “lusty woman” is to be an evil woman? (Madonna / Whore Complex – is there a middle ground that is acceptable?)
 - The wife of Bath launches a whole host of attacks on husbands – do you think they are fair? Why or why not?
 - Many of the men in this text are very “possessive” of women – do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing? What does the narrator of this story have to say on the subject?

- (Time: 40) We will re-convene as a whole class and discuss the activity (and get to any questions we didn't get to in the first part)

Discussion Questions:

- How did it feel being on the inside circle being asked questions that had to do with the opposing sex, who were both watching and unable to respond?

- How did it feel being on the outside circle only being allowed to watch and not respond?

- What were some of the issues brought up when you were unable to respond that you would like to discuss now?

- (Time: 8 minutes) HW: Explain what a "claim" is – an assertion as truth or fact – and provide examples. For homework, the students are to listen to a claim that their parents make (examples of things your parents say: "if you make faces like that, your face will get stuck that way" or "if you sit in front of the TV all day, you'll lose your eye-sight" or "The president doesn't know what he's doing") and then have the students ask their parents to give proof of their claim. Write down both the claim that's made and whatever reasoning/ support is given for the claim that's made. Bring these, written down, to class.

Day 10: Warrants and Arguments (Formal Essay Prep)

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll

- (Time: 10 minutes) Class Activity: Ads Revisited

We will display the AT&T/Verizon Ad from the first day of class on the screen

Discussion Questions:

- What are the "Claims" that these ads are making?

- What is their "evidence" – in other words, what data backs up their claim?

- Is there any given in the ad itself?

- Is it obvious or not obvious?

- Is it non-existent?

- Does their evidence prove their claim?

- How do we know?

- The teacher provides an example of a warrant

- (Time: 15 minutes) Break the class up into small groups and give each group a few of the Ads that we showed on the first day of class, and even some of the ads that the students brought in for homework. We will then instruct the students to do the same activity we did with the whole class, specifically asking them to (1) identify a claim (2) find the evidence, or lack thereof (3) answer the question: "Does the evidence prove the claim?" with "because..."

- (Time: 15 minutes) Class Discussion:

We ask the students what they learned from the activity and ask...

- Why is a claim by itself "worthless"?

- Why is evidence necessary to prove your point?

- Explain that answering the question "Does the evidence prove the claim?" is a necessary step and that the answer is the "warrant" of the argument

We will then relate this to their formal papers:

- We will explain that a paper is an argument, like any other, just more formulated

- You need (1) a claim (2) evidence to support your claim and (3) a warrant, which answers the question "because"

- (Time: 23 minutes) Class Activity: Pull the Warrant out of the Hat
 - We will ask the students to bring the claims and evidence their parents gave for homework, write them on a slip of paper, and put them in a hat
 - The teacher will then pass the hat around the room and each student will draw out a claim and evidence to read aloud to the class. The teacher will then ask “Does the evidence support the claim? Why or why not?” The student will then construct a warrant for the claim & evidence, or, if the evidence does not support the claim, then the student must explain why a warrant cannot be constructed.
- (Time: 25 minutes) HW: Discuss tomorrow’s class activity (Put an Author on Trial): The Author Chaucer is being put on trial for Libel (Bias and Slander) against his own characters. In order to prepare, we will assign roles for tomorrow’s activity:
 - Breakdown of roles:
 - Defendant:
 - 2 Chaucers (each must be able to defend themselves with textual support and will be called on at various times to testify – one will be called for the prosecution; one for the defense)
 - Witnesses:
 - 2 The Millers (one for the defense, one for the prosecution)
 - 2 The Pardoners (one for the defense, one for the prosecution)
 - 2 The Wives of Bath (one for the defense, one for the prosecution)
 - Lawyers:
 - 5 Prosecution Lawyers (one for opening argument, one for each witness, one for closing arguments)
 - 5 Defense Lawyers (one for opening argument, one for each witness, one for closing arguments)
 - The Jury
 - 10 Jurors (must have review all the material the night before and come in impartial)
 - 1 or 2 Judge(s) (the teacher(s) serve as Judge)
 - The students must come to class prepared with research done and notes written out to fulfill their role; costumes are a bonus
 - Students meet for 10 minutes in their groups to discuss who will do what and their plan of attack

Day 11: Chaucer on Trial

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 62 minutes) Activity: Put an Author on Trial

“The Author Chaucer is being put on trial for Libel (Bias and Slander) against his own characters”

 - (Time: 6 minutes) Opening Remarks
 - Prosecution’s opening remarks (3 min)
 - Defense’s opening remarks (3 min)
 - (Time: 10 minutes) The Miller is called to the stand
 - Prosecution Examination (5 min)
 - Defense Rebuttal (5 min)

- (Time: 10 minutes) The Pardoner is called to the stand
 - Prosecution Examination (5 min)
 - Defense Rebuttal (5 min)
- (Time: 10 minutes) The Wife of Bath is called to the stand
 - Prosecution Examination (5 min)
 - Defense Rebuttal (5 min)
- (Time: 10 minutes) The Chaucer is called to the stand
 - Prosecution Examination (5 min)
 - Defense Rebuttal (5 min)
- (Time: 6 minutes) Closing Remarks
 - Prosecution's closing remarks (3 min)
 - Defense's closing remarks (3 min)
- (Time: 10 minutes) Jury excused for debate
 - Jury's Decision
- (Time: 20 minutes) Class Discussion of the Trial

Here are some possible discussion questions if needed:

 - How does the class think the trial went?
 - Do they think the Jury's decision was "right"? Was it "fair"?
 - What does the class, in general, think of Chaucer's bias?
- (Time: 6 minutes) HW: Finish up Formal Writing Assignment (Due Day 10)

Day 12: Final Day (Board Game...)

- (Time: 2 minutes) Roll
- (Time: 2) Collect Formal Writing Assignment
- (Time: 10) We will hand out the rubric for the Board Game Assignment, explaining the instructions clearly to the class (letting them know that, though it is graded, it is meant to be a fun reward for their hard work)
- (Time: 55 minutes) Class Activity: Board Game (Informal Assignment)
 - Most of the class period will be given to the students to create the board games
- (Time: 20 minutes) At the end of the period, we will give the students the opportunity to play their own, or their classmates' board games (teachers will join in)
- (Time: 1 minute) Farewell to the class and "Thanks!"

Appendix

Day 6 (Miller's Tale) Homework Discussion Questions:

- Why did the town think that the carpenter is crazy?
- What does Absalon do to get revenge?
- What does Nicholas claim himself to be in order to trick the carpenter?
- What does the carpenter believe is going to happen?
- What is Alison's role in the deception?

Day 7 (Pardoner's Tale) Homework Discussion Questions:

- Why did the men want to kill death?
- How did the three men die?
- What is odd/ supernatural about the old man?
- Why did the men stop seeking death?
- What was the Pardoner's goal in telling that tale?

Day 8 (Wife of Bath's Tale) Homework Discussion Questions:

- How many husbands did the Wife of Bath have?
- What is the Knight's quest?
- Why does he have to go on it?
- How does he "solve" the quest?
- What does the Wife of Bath say that women want?