

Stage 4 Unit starter

TED's secret to great public speaking

Rationale

This unit starter looks closely at the codes and conventions associated with public speaking, and more specifically the TED talk formula for sharing 'ideas worth spreading'. Students consider the construction of argument, along with thesis writing and the building of authority in texts to support arguments further. They also explore the impact of our perspectives in both composing and responding to texts and how they convey their world view and values through their ideas as well as their language use. Students are asked to work collaboratively to present their own TED talk, culminating in a class TED conference. The activities in this unit starter could easily be interwoven into a larger unit of work or stand alone.

Outcomes

EN4-1A, EN4-2A, EN4-3B, EN4-4B, EN4-5C, EN4-6C, EN4-7D, EN4-8D, EN4-9E

Concept/s

Argument: Students understand that argument is the deliberate staging of ideas and feelings, through spoken, visual and written language, in the development of a thesis to influence a response. They learn that

- argument can be a projection of the individual voice in an individual style
- judicious choice of evidence and language develop the strength of an argument
- a thesis and supporting evidence of an argument provide the framework on which its conclusions are based

Authority: Students understand that a sense of authority may be constructed and that it resides, in varying degrees, with composers and responders. They learn that

- particular language structures add a sense of authority to a text
- authority of a text may be questioned through comparison with other texts offering different perspectives
- authority may not reside with only one person but certain types of texts are the result of collaboration

Code & Convention: Students recognise that codes and conventions are social practices and are adapted in response to different purposes, effects, audiences, contexts and media. Students learn that



- social practices, technology and mode determine appropriate codes and conventions
- groups use codes and conventions differently and this may become a marker of identity

Perspective: Students understand that views of the world are framed by language, experience and culture and convey values. Students learn that

- language shapes our perspective of people, events, groups and ideas
- perspectives convey values

Exemplar texts

- [*TED's secret to great public speaking*](#)
- A range of other TED talks of interest to your students or related to a greater/previous unit of work

Focus questions for responding and composing



- How do we develop an argument and thesis that influences our audience?
- How do we establish authority in our texts?
- What are the codes and conventions associated with great public speaking?
- How can language shape our view of the world and convey values?




Assessment

Students work collaboratively to create a TED talk on an idea worth spreading. Working in teams students decide on an idea and then decide how they will all contribute to the development of their argument and its presentation. The talk is expected to provide alternative perspectives on the idea for consideration. (NB. All team members must speak for 1 minute or more during the recording). Students support one another with video/ sound recording and special effects, development of the arguments, research etc. focussing on their specific skills and/or development needs. Hold a class TED conference where all group presentations (live or pre-recorded) are viewed with special guests from outside of the class if possible. (**Argument, Authority, Code and Convention, Perspective**)

The intention of this unit starter is to illustrate teaching and learning activities for each of the processes.

The processes may be taught in any order to cater for the needs of all learners and further differentiation can be included in your full version of the unit.

	Processes	Lessons and evidence of learning
	<p>Understanding</p> <p>Students analyse texts and in their responding and composing explain information and ideas for particular audiences and purposes. They use their knowledge of texts to make generalisations about how texts work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the TED talk and discuss students' opinions on the text. Ask students to consider whether he takes his own advice in his talk by considering each of the four guidelines (1. Limit your talk to just one major idea. 2. Give your listeners a reason to care. 3. Build your idea, piece by piece, out of concepts that your audience already understands. 4. Make your idea worth sharing.) (Code and Convention, Argument) • Look closely at the discussion of 'ideas' in the text. Ask students to answer questions to help them focus on the views presented, such as, 'What does he think ideas are?' 'Why does he believe ideas are important?' 'How are ideas and world views connected?' 'What is the TED catchphrase?' 'What is his role at TED?' After answering the questions ask students to focus on the language used to convey these opinions. Are the opinions stated or implied? What level of modality is being used and what is the effect? What values are presented in this text? Does this talk convey the values of the speaker or the TED community? Ask students to consider their own values and whether they match those of the speaker and what impact this has on their opinion of the talk. (Code and Convention, Perspective) • Explain to students what the thesis of an argument is. Ask students to see if they can identify a statement made in this talk that could be the thesis. It occurs at 52 seconds, 'Your number one task as a speaker is to transfer into your listeners' minds an extraordinary gift – a strange and beautiful object that we call an idea.' (It may be helpful to have the transcript printed for students for this exercise.) Then look at how it is prioritised in the speech. Compare the visual techniques to the language techniques. Focus on the special effects, the camera work, the body language and then the inclusive language, emotive language and the build-up of both credibility of the speaker and the intrigue surrounding the word 'secret'. Ask students to write a short explanation of the term 'thesis', with body paragraphs focussing on associated language and visual techniques and their effects in public speaking. (Argument, Code and Convention)
	<p>Engaging personally</p> <p>Students respond to and compose texts reflecting their widening world. They identify ways in which their own experiences, perspectives and contexts influence their responses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the opening 36 seconds of the TED talk. This is where Anderson introduces his topic by stating all the stereotypical thoughts about what makes a good TED talk and then states they are wrong and why they shouldn't be used. Discuss the effectiveness of this as a technique for building an argument and creating authority in a text. Ask students to think of a topic they know a lot about and copy this structure to create their own opening. Perform it for a small group of peers and discuss the apparent effectiveness of each opening and share ideas on how it could possibly be improved. (Argument, Authority, Code and convention)

Processes		Lessons and evidence of learning
	<p>Connecting</p> <p>Through responding and composing students make connections between information, ideas and texts. They compare texts to understand the effects of different choices of language, form, mode and medium for various audiences and purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch some other TED talks that are of interest to the class or link to a larger/previous unit of work and ask students to consider each of the four guidelines given by Chris Anderson. Do these talks fit the formula and add authority to Anderson's talk and his views? Talk to students about the ways they can verify claims in a text in different ways such as conducting some research like this to test the points, or investigating his quotes/ references further or by using his advice themselves and seeing the results. Ask students to write a paragraph about the way this activity adds or subtracts from the authority of the original text, referencing the texts to support their view, and reflecting on how they, as responders, also contribute to levels of authority of a text. (Code and Convention, Argument, Authority)
	<p>Engaging Critically</p> <p>Through responding and composing students explore the different ways texts can be interpreted. They identify ways in which composers position the audience to accept particular views and perspectives and make judgements about these.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the techniques Anderson uses in building his argument and authority. Have students identify examples of different techniques such as scientific language and examples, examples of different world views, quoting experts, inclusive language, rhetorical questions, strong modality, reference to his experience, emotive language, camera work, special effects, video, voice over, tone, definitions, gestures, facial expressions etc. Conduct a class survey asking students to vote on the top 3 techniques they believe contribute to his argument. Then vote on the top 3 techniques that build authority in the text. Discuss the results, noting differences of the impact of the techniques as well as the different opinions expressed by class members, coming to some conclusions as to why a range of techniques are used. (Argument, Authority) • Create a table to explore the ways that purpose, audience and context have affected the choices of content, language forms and features, and structures of text with students. Then ask students to change the purpose, audience or context and say how this would impact their choices if they were delivering this same talk. Ask them to identify their personal perspective that underlies the changes they made. (Argument, Perspective)
	<p>Experimenting</p> <p>Students use, adapt or subvert particular textual conventions across modes and media to experiment with a range of meanings and textual concepts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work collaboratively to create a TED talk on an idea worth spreading. Working in teams students decide on an idea and then decide how they will all contribute to the development of their argument and its presentation. The talk is expected to provide alternative perspectives on the idea for consideration. (NB. All team members must speak for 1 minute or more during the recording). Students support one another with video/ sound recording and special effects, development of the arguments, research etc. focussing on their specific skills and/or development needs. Hold a class TED conference where all group presentations are viewed with special guests from outside of the class if possible. (Argument, Code and Convention, Perspective, Authority)

Processes

Lessons and evidence of learning



Reflecting

Students begin to personalise their metacognitive processes, identifying their own pleasures and difficulties in responding, composing and learning. They are able to plan and monitor their work, articulate their own learning processes and begin to assess which learning processes may suit them and will suit particular tasks and why.

- In reflecting on their collaborative TED talk students are asked to:
 - recognise how they practised responsible and ethical digital communication and how they avoided plagiarism in their text
 - assess the success of their individual and collaborative processes in performing their allocated roles
 - discuss the techniques used and the differing responsibilities they had for developing the authority in their own work and comment on their success
 - reflect on the ways different perspectives of group members influenced the final product
- (Authority, Perspective, Code and convention)**