

# School Response to Hate: A Genre Analysis of Letters

(One 75-90 minute class, or it may be broken into TWO smaller lessons)

<b>Unit Summary &amp; Guiding Questions</b>	<p><b>Unit Summary:</b> In this unit, students will examine school administration letters that respond to swastika hate acts. In particular, they will focus on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do various administrations or school officials respond to swastika hate acts?</li> <li>• What are some patterns found in these letters?</li> <li>• Where did some letters redesign and approach the swastika hate act in a unique or different way?</li> <li>• Why might some responses be more effective than others?</li> </ul>
<b>Student Learning Objectives</b>	<p><b>What will you do today?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visualize reading.</li> <li>• Critically read a variety of texts in order to analyze rhetorical situations within the discipline, including audience expectations and genre conventions</li> <li>• Define a rhetorical genre in order to compose that rhetorical genre.</li> </ul>
<b>Common Core</b>	<p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5</b> Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4</b> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5</b> Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6</b> Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.</p>
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• copies of 3-5 letters depending on how big your class is and how large you want your groups             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Suggested letter links here:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">William &amp; Mary College Letter</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Columbia College Letter</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">NC State University Letter</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">San Jose State University Letter</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Lesley College Letter</a></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● post-its and/or markers</li> <li>● poster paper or whiteboard space where you can post the various letters and students can write or put post-it notes</li> <li>● <a href="#">POWERPOINT SLIDES LINKED HERE</a></li> </ul> <p><b>ACCESSIBILITY:</b> For access and diversity of learners, you may choose to make the letters available digitally or in a modified print format of 14pt or larger. You may also choose to allow students access to the PowerPoint slide presentation.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Because you are discussing hate and hate acts, be sensitive to the various historically marginalized identities that may make up your classroom. This topic may bring up feelings of fear, anger, or hurt, so make space for those historically targeted by hate to feel safe and heard.</p>
<b>Introduction</b> (5 min)	<p><b>SHARE (SLIDE) What will we do today?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Visualize reading.</li> <li>● Critically read a variety of texts in order to analyze rhetorical situations within the discipline, including audience expectations and genre conventions</li> <li>● Define a rhetorical genre in order to compose that rhetorical genre.</li> </ul> <p><i>Say: What we are going to do today is a form of social annotation to explore a genre before you will create that same genre as a summative assessment in our course.</i></p> <p><b>SHARE (SLIDE) Genre analysis</b></p> <p><i>Say: Genre analysis allows readers to understand the various similarities and differences within written products such that they can use that knowledge to inform their own choices when they write in a similar/the same genre.</i></p> <p><i>We will use these letters to explore these linguistic texts as a genre to determine their genre expectations as well as where they push back on those expectations to "redesign" how we think about typical responses (New London Group).</i></p> <p><i>Doing so will allow us to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Figure out what the genre expectations are. (Available designs)</li> <li>2. See where individuals make choices that “redesign” the expectations.</li> </ol> <p><b>SHARE (SLIDE) Content Warning and Care</b></p>

**Activity**  
(70+ min)

**Say:** *Today we are going to use letters from administrators that respond to swastika hate acts on college campuses. Because these letters deal with hate acts, be kind to yourself and others when discussing this topic, which has historically and disproportionately harmed BIPOC, Jewish, Muslim, and LGBTQIA communities.*

**SHARE (SLIDE) Letters**

**Say:** *Take five-seven (7-10) minutes to read through the letter you have and note directly on the paper:*

- Who is the letter intended for?
  - Primary audience?
  - Secondary audiences?
  - How do you know this aside from the salutation?
- What does the author value, or feel is important?
  - How do you know this?
- What caught your attention?
  - Why?
- What gave you pause?
  - Why?
- What questions do you have for the author?

**Say:** *We are going to get into small groups for you to discuss what you noticed in the letters. Then I am going to ask you to add a layer to your discussion.*

**SHARE (SLIDE) Home Group Discussion and Large Letter Markup**

**Say:** *Take 12-15 minutes to discuss your answers to the questions and **label with sticky notes the posters of your letters:***

- What does the author focus their attention on (and therefore the reader's attention)?
  - How does this appeal to the audience?
  - How does this establish credibility?
- Break the letter down and label the rhetorical moves you notice:
  - For example:
    - condemnation of the perpetrator
    - creating community
    - describing procedure
    - asking for help
    - others you see????

**Say:** *After you discuss what you noticed in your first reading, take some time to break the letter down and analyze what the author is doing (rhetorical moves). Label the rhetorical moves with sticky notes.*

**THIS MAY A NATURAL BREAK IF YOU ARE DOING TWO SMALLER SESSIONS.**

**SHARE (SLIDE) Gallery Walk (10 min)**

*Say: Rotate, and read the letter and the notations noting similarities and differences between your original letter and this one. (Take notes about what you notice.) This is just a time to read and notice patterns and breaks from patterns. No need to talk; just take it all in.*

**SHARE (SLIDE) Large Class Debrief: What did you notice? (25 minutes)**

*Say: In looking at the various letters in your Gallery Walk, what did you notice to be patterns (genre expectations)?*

- audience considerations
- types of language
- focal points
- actions emphasized

Share out as a class. (Again here the instructor can have a notetaker, or the instructor can be a notetaker.)

*Say: What you noticed: the form, the moves, the language, all tie into the expectations that a discourse community would have for a genre, and in this case it is a letter from a school administrator, so let's take time to talk about these genre expectations.*

Genre Expectations for a Letter from a School Administrator to their Campus Community: (Here you can have a notetaker, or you can be a notetaker.)

*Say: Now we are going to talk about things that the author did that were different from the other letters. I am calling those choices that the author made "redesigns."*

Share out as a class. (Again here the instructor can have a notetaker, or the instructor can be a notetaker.)

**SHARE (SLIDE) Elbow Partner: How did the letters create a "redesigns" of the genre? (2 min)**

*Say: Turn to a partner and share with them your thoughts on this question.*

- In other words, where did they break from the genre expectations? do something unexpected? Different?
- How did those rhetorical choices create affordances or constraints?

(3 min) Share out as a class. (Again here the instructor can have a notetaker, or the instructor can be a notetaker.)

<p><b>Closing</b> (5 mins)</p>	<p><b>SHARE (SLIDE) Elbow Partner: What can we learn from these letters about how we/institutions write about trauma or traumatic moments on our campuses? (2 min)</b>  <i>Say: Spend a few minutes discussing what you learned about how we/institutions write about trauma or traumatic moments on our campuses?</i></p> <p>(3 min) Share out as a class. (Again here the instructor can have a notetaker, or the instructor can be a notetaker.)</p> <p><b>SHARE (SLIDE) On Your Own: What are some rhetorical choices you will make when you write to a particular audience about something traumatic that has happened on campus? (5 min)</b>  <i>Say: Take a minute or two to reflect on the kinds of choices you will make, if you are asked to write a letter about trauma that has happened on your campus.</i></p> <p>Share this in an exit slip (or instructor can create a Google form).</p>
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