

English II Lessons #3 – Mr. LaBatte

Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details (2): Determine themes or central ideas of a text and analyze in detail their development over the course of the text.

Writing Standards: Text Types and Purposes 2: Write informative texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Range of Writing 10: Write routinely over extended time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences

DIRECTIONS: Read the famous speech by Mahatma Gandhi and apply persuasive techniques to your comprehension. [A digital copy to type on is available upon request at jj.labatte@crooksville.k12.oh.us](mailto:jj.labatte@crooksville.k12.oh.us)

- 1) Read the Gandhi speech (**paragraphs are in () and BOLD**)
- 2) Write a short paragraph reflection on understanding or background knowledge of the text
- 3) Apply the common persuasive techniques to the text with evidence

Gandhi's Courtroom Speech

By Mahatma Gandhi

March 18, 1921

I owe it perhaps to the Indian public and to the public in England to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up that I should explain why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. To the Court too I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government established by law in India. My public life began in 1893 in South Africa in troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that as a man and as an Indian I had no rights. On the contrary I discovered that I had no rights as a man because I was an Indian. **(1)**

But I was not baffled. I thought that this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsically and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and hearty co-operation, criticising it fully where I felt it was faulty but never wishing its destruction. **(2)**

Consequently when the existence of the Empire was threatened in 1899 by the Boer challenge, I offered my services to it, raised a volunteer ambulance corps and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Ladysmith. Similarly in 1906 at the time of the Zulu revolt I raised a stretcher-bearer party and served till the end of the 'rebellion'. On both these occasions I received medals and was even mentioned in despatches. For my work in South Africa I was given by Lord Hardinge a Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal. When the war broke out in 1914 between England and Germany I raised a volunteer ambulance corps in London consisting of the then resident Indians in London, chiefly students. Its work was acknowledged by the authorities to be valuable. Lastly in India when a special appeal was made at the War Conference in Delhi in 1917 by Lord Chelmsford for recruits, I struggled at the cost of my health to raise a corps in Kheda and the response was being made when the hostilities ceased and orders were received that no more recruits were wanted. In all those efforts at service I was actuated by the belief that it was possible by such services to gain a status of full equality in the Empire for my countrymen. **(3)**

The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act a law designed to rob the people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and culminating in brawling orders, public floggings and

other indescribable humiliations, I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Mussalmans of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled. But in spite of the foreboding and the grave warnings of friends, at the Amritsar Congress in 1919 I fought for co-operation and working the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, hoping that the Prime Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Mussalmans, that the Punjab wound would be healed and that the reforms inadequate and unsatisfactory though they were, marked a new era of hope in the life of India. But all that hope was shattered. The Khilafat promise was not to be redeemed. The Punjab crime was white-washed and most culprits went not only unpunished but remained in service and some continued to draw pensions from the Indian revenue, and in some cases were even rewarded. I saw too that not only did the reforms not mark a change of heart, but they were only a method of further draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude. **(4)**

I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically. A disarmed India has no power of resistance against any aggressor if she wanted to engage in an armed conflict with him. So much is this the case that some of our best men consider that India must take generations before she can achieve the Dominion status. **(5)**

She has become so poor that she has little power of resisting famines. Before the British advent India spun and wove in her millions of cottages just the supplement she needed for adding to her meagre agricultural resources. The cottage industry, so vital for India's existence, has been ruined by incredibly heartless and inhuman processes as described by English witnesses. Little do town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of Indians are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realise that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history. The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. My unbiased examination of the Punjab Martial Law cases had led me to believe that at least ninety-five per cent of convictions were wholly bad. My experience of political cases in India leads me to the conclusion that in nine out of every ten the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crime consisted in love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of hundred justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the Court of India. **(6)**

This is not an exaggerated picture. It is the experience of almost every Indian who has had anything to do such cases. In my opinion the administration of the law is thus prostituted consciously or unconsciously for the benefit of the exploiter. The greatest misfortune is that Englishmen and their Indian associates in the administration of the country do not know that they are engaged in the crime I have attempted to describe. I am satisfied that many English and Indian officials honestly believe that they are administering one of the best systems devised in the world and that India is making steady though slow progress. They do not know that a subtle but effective system of terrorism and an organised display of force on the one hand and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation of self-defence on the other have emasculated the people and induced in them the habit of simulation. This awful habit has added to the ignorance and the self-deception of the administrators. Section 124-A under which I am happily charged is perhaps the prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal

Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. If one has no affection for a person or thing one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection so long as he does not contemplate, promote or incite to violence. But the section under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases tried under it, and I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege therefore, to be charged under it. I have endeavoured to give in their briefest outline the reasons for my disaffection. I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have in the various articles tendered in evidence against me. (7)

In fact I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England by showing in non-co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my humble opinion, non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil and that as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violent implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the Judge and the Assessors, is either to resign your posts and thus dissociate yourselves from evil if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil and that in reality I am innocent, or to inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country and that my activity is therefore injurious to the public weal. (8)

Directions: after reading the famous speech answer one of the two questions in a 4-5 sentence paragraph in COMPLETE sentences.

1.) Describe an experience in your life when you were treated unjustly or saw another person being treated unjustly. How did you react? OR

2.) Do you believe this speech has relevance today? Is the world still an oppressive and cruel one that Gandhi is noting here? Explain your thoughts.

PART 2: Common Persuasive Techniques

Common persuasive techniques:

Logical appeal: builds an argument based on evidence, such as facts, statistics, or experts

Emotional appeal: attempts to arouse an audience's feelings, often by using loaded words.

*** **Loaded Words:** Using emotionally charged words that will produce strong positive or negative feelings.

EX: "Our miraculous new vitamin will change your life forever!"

Ethical appeal: directed at the audience's sense of morality or values. This appeal is linked to the audience's belief on what is just or fair.

Authority Appeal: shows that a higher power supports the idea (i.e. God / religion recommendation)

***Directions:** Using the Gandhi speech, identify three pieces of evidence that you deem persuasive. Note which technique is being used and justify your answer with a COMPLETE sentence. Please note which paragraph the evidence appears in.*

EVIDENCE #1: PARAGRAPH # _____ TECHNIQUE USED: _____

EXPLANATION:

EVIDENCE #2: PARAGRAPH # _____ TECHNIQUE USED: _____

EXPLANATION:

EVIDENCE #3: PARAGRAPH # _____ TECHNIQUE USED: _____

EXPLANATION: