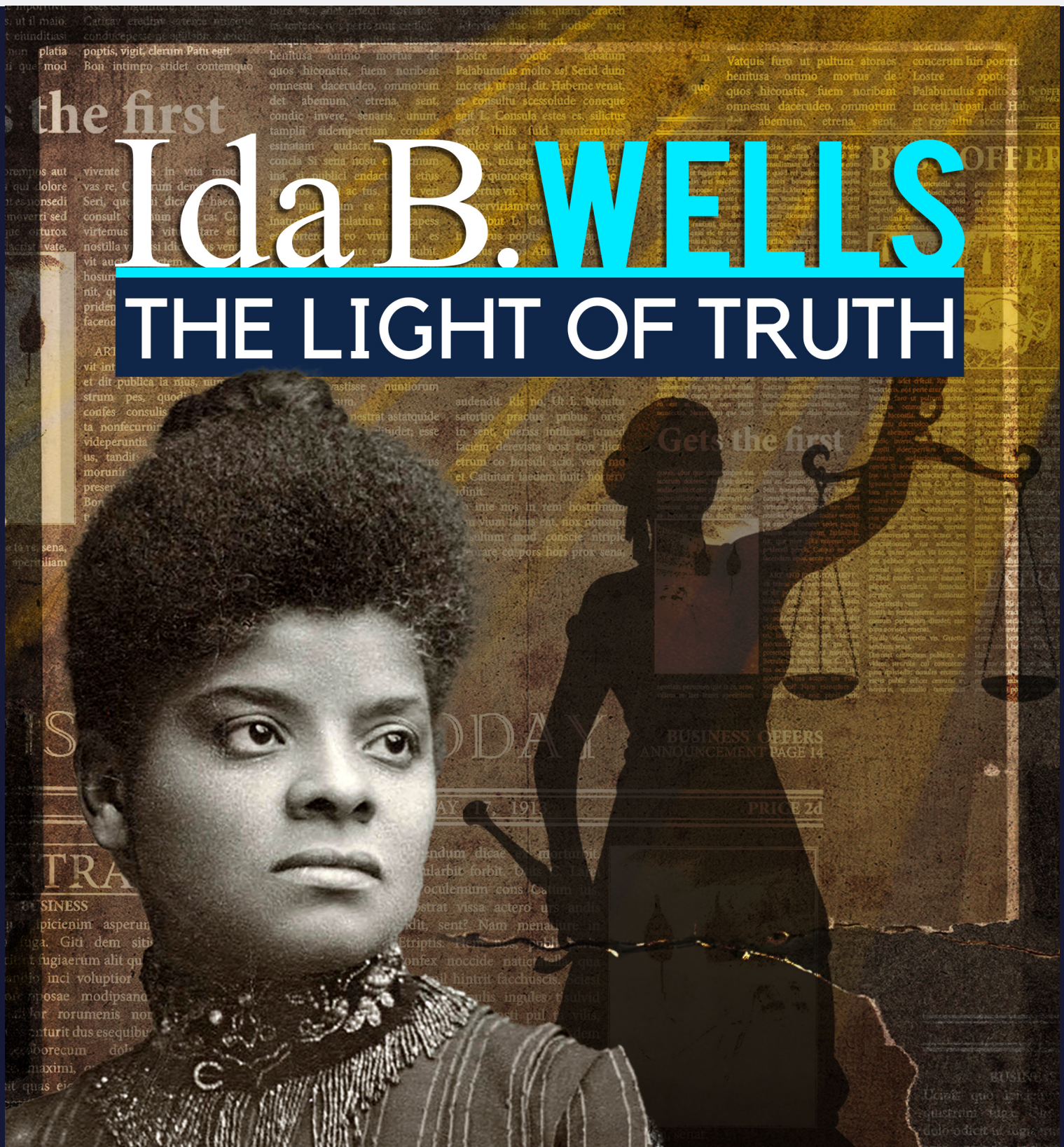


Teacher's Guide



Ida B. WELLS

THE LIGHT OF TRUTH



Ida B. Wells - The Light of Truth **Teacher's Guide**

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Suggested Lesson Plan

These materials may be used in a variety of ways. For maximum benefit, we suggest the following lesson plan:

- As a class, discuss the [Preview Questions](#) and [Key Terms](#).
- Distribute copies of the [Viewing Guide](#) for students to use as a note-taking tool during the video.
- Play the video, pausing if needed to facilitate understanding and note-taking.
- Review and discuss the answers to the Viewing Guide using [Answer Key](#) as a guide.
- Use [Discussion Questions](#) to spark class discussion or assign these questions as homework.
- As a class or in small groups, complete the [Who Chooses](#) Activity.
- Replay the video as preparation for the Quiz.
- Administer and grade the [Quiz](#) using the [Answer Key](#) as a guide.
- Optional: Assign one or more [Enrichment Activities](#) as homework.

For a list of additional resources for use with this video, see www.izzit.org/products.

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Preview Questions

(These are meant to be read aloud by the teacher prior to viewing the video)

1. Who are some of the most important people in the fight for black civil rights?
2. How can journalism help the cause of rights for oppressed people?
3. Who are some important journalists today?
4. What kinds of news stories do you think are most interesting? What kinds are most important?

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Key Terms

Advocacy: Active support or promotion of a cause, idea, or policy.

Atrocities: Extremely cruel or brutal acts, often involving violence or injustice.

Backlash: A strong negative reaction or response, typically in response to a social or political change.

Blanche K. Bruce: Born into slavery in Virginia (1841), Bruce became a wealthy landowner in Mississippi in the years after the Civil War. He served Mississippi as a Republican in the United States Senate from 1875 to 1881. He was the first elected African-American senator to serve a full term.

Civil Rights: The rights to political and social freedom and equality.

The Compromise of 1877: In the presidential election of 1876, neither the Democrat, Samuel Tilden, nor the Republican, Rutherford B. Hayes, received enough electoral votes to win (185). The results of four states (Florida, Louisiana, Oregon, and South Carolina) were disputed. Ultimately, the decision went to the U.S. House of Representatives, with the result being a controversial compromise: Hayes would take the presidency, but President Grant would withdraw federal troops from the South. This departure cleared the way for Southern Democrats to establish policies that became known as “Jim Crow.”

Jim Crow laws: Laws established by white Southern Democrats in the late 1800s and early 1900s that mandated racial segregation. Enacted as Reconstruction policies faded from power, these laws remained in effect until the 1960s in most places.

Discrimination: The unjust treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of age, race, or sex.

Investigative journalism: A form of journalism that involves in-depth research, analysis, and reporting to uncover hidden or important information about a particular subject.

Lynching: Killing someone, often by hanging, often by a mob, and often (mainly) without a trial (extrajudicially – outside of the law/legal system).

NAACP: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This organization was founded in 1909; although Ida Wells was not on the original list of founders, she was involved in its organization. Begun on the 100th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s death, this group has worked for an end to racial discrimination and to promote the safety and welfare of black Americans.

[Plessy v. Ferguson:](#) The Supreme Court case (1896) that established the principle that segregated facilities were constitutional as long as they were equivalent - in short, “separate but equal.” This ruling was later overturned by the 1954 decision **[Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas.](#)**

Reconstruction: The period after the Civil War, approximately 1865-1877, in which Congress sought to rebuild the South and reunify the nation while also protecting the rights of the recently freed slaves. The uneven results were primarily accomplished through military occupation, Federal troops providing oversight and protection, although the Ku Klux Klan did operate even during this time. While there were successes, like the election of African-Americans **Blanche K. Bruce** and **Hiram Revels** to the U.S. Senate, there were also failures to significantly change the economic conditions of many Southern blacks. This era ended with the withdrawal of Federal troops as part of the **Compromise of 1877**.

Reconstruction Amendments

Thirteenth Amendment (1864) Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

This, the first of the “Reconstruction Amendments,” abolished slavery and involuntary servitude except as punishment for a crime.

Fourteenth Amendment (1868) All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

This amendment, dealing with citizenship, due process, and equal protection under the law, has been cited in numerous 20th and 21st-century cases, including [Brown v. the Board of Education](#), *Roe v. Wade*, and *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

Fifteenth Amendment (1870) Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. **Section 2.** The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

While this amendment sought to protect the right of freed blacks to vote, Southern Democrats found numerous ways to disenfranchise former slaves, including poll taxes, literacy tests, and “grandfather clauses.”

Hiram Revels: Born to free people of color in Fayetteville, North Carolina (1827), Revels was the first African-American to serve in the U.S. Congress, elected as a U.S. Senator from Mississippi in 1870. He did not serve a full term, however; that distinction went to Blanche Bruce.

Segregation: To separate groups based on a characteristic, often race.

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Viewing Guide

Student Name: _____

1. Ida Wells is best known as a _____; her work in this field shed “the light of truth” on a nation that needed it.
2. Steven Pinker says that _____ is a powerful weapon in the hands of the oppressed.
3. Ida Wells was born in the year _____ in the state of _____.
4. When her parents died of _____, Ida Wells went to work as a _____ to care for her _____ siblings.
5. After Ms. Wells was forcibly removed from a railroad car in 1883, she _____ the company and _____.
6. Ms. Wells turned to journalism to win in the court of _____ (two words).
7. What are three topics she spent time writing about? Underline the one she is best known for.

8. The given definition of lynching is “the _____ of a life, _____, by _____ or more persons.”
9. A lynching that took place in _____, Tennessee, after a fight at the _____ (two words), was extremely upsetting to her. Why?

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Viewing Guide Answer Key

1. journalist
2. Free speech
3. 1862, Mississippi
4. Yellow fever, schoolteacher, six
5. Sued, won
6. Public opinion
7. Jim Crow laws, black schools, lynchings
8. Taking, extrajudicially, three
9. Memphis, People's Grocery. She was the godmother to the children of one of the victims/
they were her friends.

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Discussion Questions

1. How did Reconstruction help prepare Ida for the challenges of her adult life?
2. Steven Pinker says that free speech is a powerful weapon in the hands of the oppressed. Do you think this is true today? How can disadvantaged people use this power?
3. Why did Ms. Wells consider investigative journalism the “watchdog” of society and government? Does the press of today still fulfill that duty? Why or why not?
4. What is the value of “data journalism” of the type that Ms. Wells pursued?
5. In what ways did Ida B. Wells challenge societal norms and expectations of her time? How did her actions inspire others to question and challenge injustice?
6. Ida B. Wells faced backlash and opposition for her outspoken activism. What can we learn from her resilience and courage in the face of adversity
7. Ms. Wells’s experience on the train in 1883 sounds rather similar to Rosa Parks’s choice on a bus in the 1950s. Why do you suppose Ms. Parks’s decision led to a movement for change, while Ms. Wells’s did not?
8. [*Plessy v. Ferguson*](#) was eventually overturned by [*Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, KS*](#). What causes a court to issue a different ruling from one previously declared? Is this foolish inconsistency or something to be praised? Explain.
9. Ms. Wells’s journalism focused heavily on gathering data. Yet Mark Twain once wrote, “There are lies, damn lies, and statistics.” What do you think he meant? How can statistics serve to lie? What must journalists be sure to do with their gathered data?

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Activity: Who Chooses? Who Benefits? Who Pays? What's Fair?

The four questions above can be a useful tool for evaluating any policy or system. Posing the questions is a great way to stimulate critical thinking. As a class, or in small groups, discuss the following:

(For each question, think broadly about all the possible people or groups of people who may be affected, and remember there may be non-monetary costs and benefits.)

The video indicates that Reconstruction policies shaped young Ida's thinking; her granddaughter indicated that she didn't want to give up the rights and privileges that she had begun to enjoy.

1. How does society benefit when all people enjoy equal rights?
2. Under what conditions should some rights (for example, the right to vote) be taken away? Why?
3. What is the difference between a *right* and a *privilege*? Do people sometimes confuse the two? Explain.
4. In what ways does the Constitution protect the rights of American citizens? Who benefits from those protections? What is the cost?
5. Who (what group) benefits when a group is excluded from certain types of economic activity? What price does that privileged group pay?

Now that the class has considered these questions, read the following prompt carefully:

Critics with both liberal and conservative viewpoints have expressed concerns over a perceived lack of protection for their constitutional rights. Look at the [First Amendment](#) and the rights guaranteed by it. Select one group that you think is not receiving adequate protection for one of these rights. It might be an ethnic group or a political or religious group. Write a letter to the editor explaining the problem. Do any necessary research to provide data – cite *specific examples* of what you see as the problem. Provide an analysis of who pays the cost – who loses – when such a situation occurs. Then explain why we must all understand and support the freedoms and rights enumerated in our Constitution.

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Comprehension Quiz

Name _____

1. When and where was Ida born?
 - a. Memphis, TN, 1883
 - b. Palm Springs, MS, 1862
 - c. Holly Springs, MS, 1862
 - d. Atlanta, GA, 1850

2. Steven Pinker says that _____ is/are the greatest tool for oppressed peoples.
 - a. money
 - b. guns
 - c. free movement
 - d. free speech

3. Ida's first job was as a _____.
 - a. sharecropper
 - b. journalist
 - c. teacher
 - d. community organizer

4. What led to her increased involvement in journalism?
 - a. Her younger siblings' experiences in school
 - b. Her experience on a train in Tennessee
 - c. The People's Grocery lynching
 - d. A desire for more income

5. Why did she leave her teaching job?
 - a. She was afraid for her safety.
 - b. She needed more income for her siblings.
 - c. She was fired after exposing terrible conditions.
 - d. She moved to the North.

6. Which of the following was NOT something she wrote about extensively?
 - a. Voting restrictions for blacks
 - b. Jim Crow laws
 - c. Black schools
 - d. Lynch mobs

7. Ida B. Wells's efforts as a journalist are most notable because _____.
- she was an early voice for civil rights
 - she showed the power of data journalism
 - she exposed the widespread horror of lynchings
 - all of the above
8. What led to a mob ransacking her Memphis office?
- Her reporting on black schools
 - Her arrest for violating segregation
 - An article on consensual relationships between blacks and whites
 - Her exposing of the people responsible for the People's Grocery lynching
9. What is "data journalism?"
- Using published statistics to build a case
 - Gathering names, eyewitness accounts, facts, and figures
 - Building a case for a claim
 - Creating a narrative based on evidence
10. What enables the press to be "the watchdog" of government and society?
- Strong investigative reporting
 - Harshly critical opinion pages
 - Emphasis on the rights of the oppressed
 - Diversity of viewpoints on the editorial staff

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Quiz Answer Key

1. C
2. D
3. C
4. B
5. C
6. A
7. D
8. C
9. B
10. A

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Enrichment and Integration Activities

Discuss the following questions: You may complete this as a whole class or create small groups of 3-5 students to discuss. If the latter, have each group record its answers to share with the entire class.

1. The video asks if investigative reporting stays true to the example set by Ms. Wells. How would you define that example? What did she do?
2. Do you think Ms. Wells would be pleased with today's news organizations? Why or why not?
3. Why might a news organization NOT be true to that example? Who benefits, and who pays, when a news group fails to perform its duty?
4. What does *fairness* mean in journalism? What must a news story do to be fair? When, if ever, is fairness not something to pursue?
5. How is journalism influenced by the needs/wants/ideas of its advertisers? For example, do you think a publication (newspaper, magazine, website, etc.) would publish an investigative journalism piece that brings to light something negative about a company or person who spends a lot of money on advertising with them? Why or why not? How does that influence society?
6. The video shared "data journalism." How does the inclusion of eyewitness accounts, as well as data of the sort Ida B. Wells used, affect the persuasiveness of a news story?

After concluding the above discussion, have students examine a newspaper, or failing that, a few news sites. Look for stories that DO include data journalism and stories that DON'T include such facts and figures. Write a brief analysis of how well the writer appears to have done actual reporting as opposed to providing a few facts with a great deal of commentary.

Extension: Compare various news sites to see if any are superior in this regard. Write your own news story about a local trend or issue, focusing on the gathering of data prior to writing your article.

Possible Answers:

1. Ida Wells stood against powerful forces that wanted to silence her. She did the investigating necessary to show injustice and broadcast the results to the nation. She used eyewitness accounts and data (facts and figures) to build a strong case for her claim.
2. This is, of course, opinion, but many students will probably see that reporters are often spinning their stories to promote a political agenda (conservative or progressive) rather than emphasizing what data might tell us. Some critics feel that news stories tend to take “talking points” from national sources rather than doing the research necessary to corroborate what they’re being told.
3. News agencies might feel that they are selling a product to an audience, and that they are providing what that audience wants to hear. Some reporters might feel that they are the (only) ones who think correctly, or that their “side” is obviously right, and so they view any evidence contrary to their views with skepticism and distrust. This can lead to a skewed reporting of the news. Of course, political leaders have a great interest in presenting a biased view of events, promoting the version that paints them in the best light, and so reporters may feel that if they don’t go along with the leader’s perspective they will lose access.
4. Fairness means pursuing the truth without regard to party. A fair journalist will work to be sure that his or her own political beliefs do not receive preferential treatment in the presentation of a news story. While a journalist must always be honest, something that is clearly labeled as an editorial may emphasize one viewpoint over another.
5. Answers should include the idea that money and other things can and do influence what publications report. Examples today can include things from pharmaceutical companies’ impact to the local car dealership owner who advertises heavily in a local newspaper who gets special consideration when arrested for wrongdoing. This type of influence can mean that the public isn’t getting the straight story/facts, and that impacts in many ways, including the influence of elections.
6. Eyewitness accounts can be notoriously inaccurate ¹ ², but they add a human element to the story that is powerful.

¹ <https://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-13-3-c-how-reliable-are-eyewitnesses>

² <https://www.science.org/content/article/how-reliable-eyewitness-testimony-scientists-weigh>

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Rhetorical Triangle - Lesson Plan

Time to Complete:	Time to complete the lesson: Will vary, depending on the desired duration
Materials/ Technology/ Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The <i>Ida B. Wells</i> video (can be streamed from izzit.org with no login required.) * Rhetorical Triangle handout (see below) * Teacher-selected editorial on a current topic
Standards:	Use our free and easy-to-use Standard Alignment tool to align this lesson with the standards in your school district.
Learning Objectives:	<i>Students will be able to articulate the elements of the rhetorical triangle (ethos, pathos, and logos) and to evaluate how writers use these elements in their arguments.</i>
Topics:	U.S. History, rhetorical analysis
Absorb: (11:08 minutes)	<p>Write the following questions on the board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes an editorial, or argument, persuasive? • What is meant by “rhetoric?” • How can recognizing the tools of rhetoric make us better citizens? <p>Have the students work in small groups to answer these questions. Each group then presents their initial discussion. Write the key points on the board under each question.</p>

Overall guiding question(s):	What are the tools of rhetoric in the “rhetorical triangle?” How do writers use these tools? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
Lesson Procedures: (50 Minutes)	<p>Discuss the questions in “Absorb” above. Or, if your students journal, make one or more of those questions the topic for the daily journaling.</p> <p><u>Watch:</u> Ida B. Wells - The Light of Truth video streamed from izzit.org with no login required.</p> <p>After watching the video, discuss the concept of “data journalism.” What is the value of having specific information (dates, names, events) in news articles? What was Wells’s purpose in writing these articles?</p> <p>Hand out copies of The Rhetorical Triangle (appears on following pages). Students should read the three elements (ethos, pathos, and logos) and be able to paraphrase each one. Have a few students share their understanding of the tools.</p> <p>Ask which of the tools Wells seemed to use most, based on the video. Consider how she might have used all three.</p> <p>Optional: For homework, have students find an op-ed article on an issue they care about. Otherwise, select an article for use in the next day’s class.</p>
Summary & Assessment: (15 Minutes)	<p>Pass out the editorial selected earlier (or have the students take them out). Have students read and underline portions they think are examples of ethos, pathos, and logos; also mark with E, P, or L.</p> <p>Group students in pairs or small groups to discuss and compare their findings. Or, if the students brought their own, have a few present their examples to the class; have the class determine if they agree or disagree with the presenter’s assessments.</p> <p>Extension: For homework, have students write an editorial that tries to use all three corners of the triangle. They should mark (highlight or annotate) where they have used ethos, pathos, and logos.</p>
Reflection: (5 minutes)	<p>Ask students if rhetoric is bad, good, or neutral. Why is it important for us to recognize its use? How can it be used effectively? How can it be used inappropriately? <i>Alternatively, if your students use journals, have them reflect on these questions in their journals.</i></p>

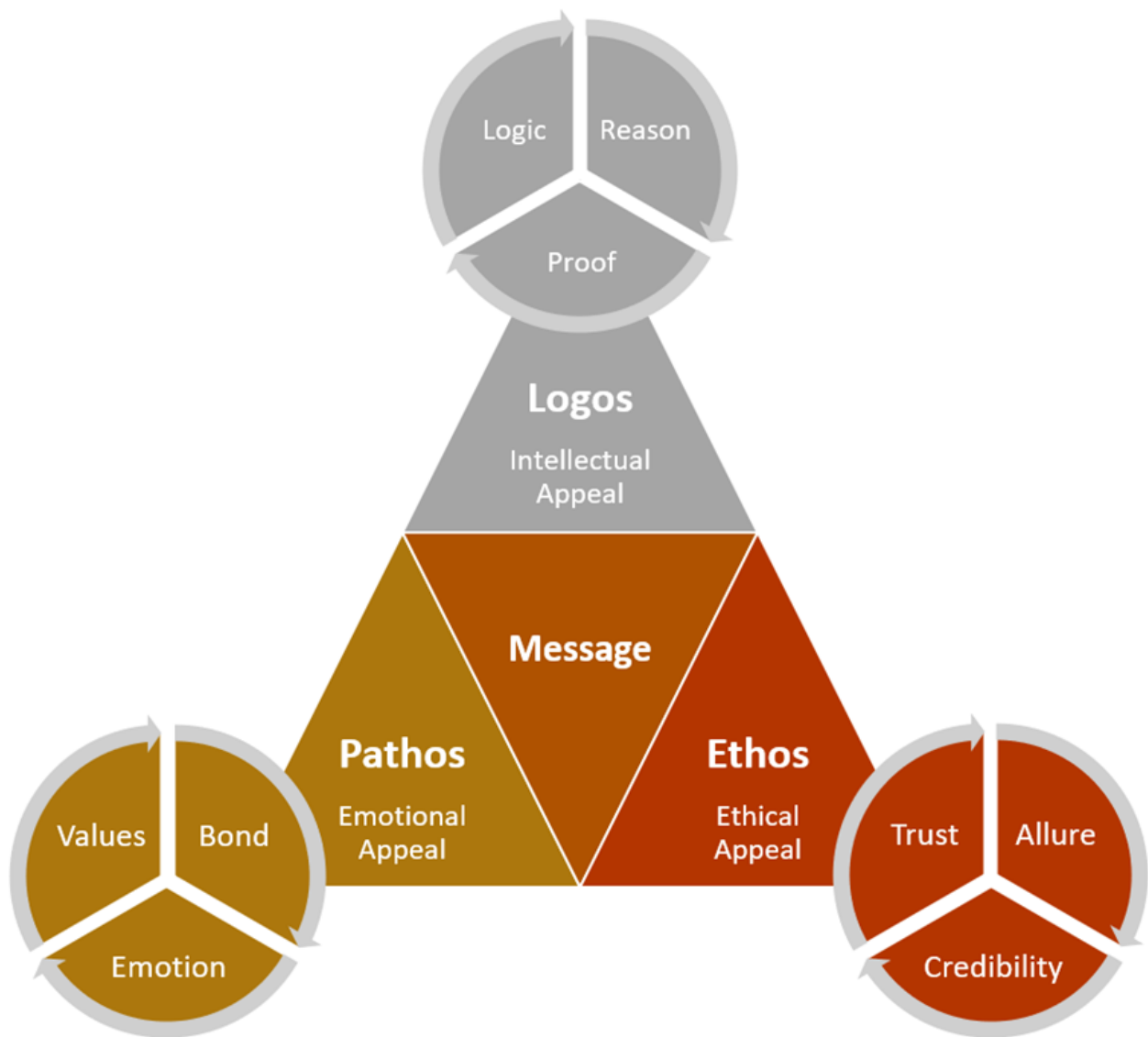
Rhetorical Triangle

Logos, ethos, and pathos are three central components of rhetoric. All good arguments - written, spoken, or debated - depend on them. Don't worry if you have never heard of them before, they are easily learned. In themselves, they are not new concepts; the Greek philosopher Aristotle first educated his students to appeal to their audience on three distinct levels: logos, ethos, and pathos. When taken together, they are the three corners of the rhetoric triangle.

- **Logos is the intellectual appeal.** Consider the fundamental text of your argument and think about your use of logic and reason and ask yourself if you have proved your point.
- **Ethos is the ethical appeal.** Consider your role as the proponent of the argument or the writer of text. Do you exude credibility, engender trust, and hold allure? While this connects to "ethics," it's really about credibility - do you sound reasonable? Do you have experience or background that gives you the authority to speak on this topic?
- **Pathos is the emotional appeal.** Consider the role of your audience in the argument. You want to bond to their sympathetic imagination, as well as to their beliefs and values.

The triangle image represents the balance of all three appeals that a writer should use for an effective argument. Each appeal is as important as the others, and too much of one is likely to produce an argument that readers will either find unconvincing or that will cause them to stop reading. Note how each of the areas potentially affects the others. An illogical argument may move us emotionally, but only in the sense that it makes us angry at the author for wasting our time. An overwhelming emotional argument may make us feel that the author is relying exclusively on emotions rather than offering solid reasoning. Finally, if an argument contains only facts and figures and no emotional appeals, we may simply get bored.

Sources: [Aristotle and the Rhetoric Triangle | The Secret Professor Rhetorical.pdf \(occc.edu\)](#)



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Primary Source Activity

Read the following excerpt from "Lynch Law in All Its Phases" (1893), taken from Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project ([Wells, "Lynch Law..." Speech Text - Voices of Democracy \(umd.edu\)](http://umd.edu))

Note: Ms. Wells gives a thorough description of the People's Grocery lynching in the continuation of this piece. Those who want to know more about what happened are encouraged to read the essay in its entirety.

After reading the text, answer the questions that follow.

Ida B. Wells, "LYNCH LAW IN ALL ITS PHASES" (13 February 1893)

[1] I am before the American people to-day through no inclination of my own, but because of a deep-seated conviction that the country at large does not know the extent to which lynch law prevails in parts of the Republic, nor the conditions which force into exile those who speak the truth. I cannot believe that the apathy and indifference which so largely obtains regarding mob rule is other than the result of ignorance of the true situation. And yet, the observing and thoughtful must know that in one section, at least, of our common country, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, means a government by the mob; where the land of the free and home of the brave means a land of lawlessness, murder and outrage; and where liberty of speech means the license of might to destroy the business and drive from home those who exercise this privilege contrary to the will of the mob. Repeated attacks on the life, liberty and happiness of any citizen or class of citizens are attacks on distinctive American institutions; such attacks imperiling as they do the foundation of government, law and order, merit the thoughtful consideration of far-sighted Americans; not from a standpoint of sentiment, not even so much from a standpoint of justice to a weak race, as from a desire to preserve our institutions.

[2] The race problem or negro question, as it has been called, has been omnipresent and all-pervading since long before the Afro-American was raised from the degradation of the slave to the dignity of the citizen. It has never been settled because the right methods have not been employed in the solution. It is the Banquo's ghost of politics, religion, and sociology which will not [back] down at the bidding of those who are tormented with its ubiquitous appearance on every occasion. Times without number, since invested with citizenship, the race has been indicted for ignorance, immorality and general worthlessness declared guilty and executed by its self-constituted judges. The operations of law do not dispose of negroes fast enough, and lynching bees have become the favorite pastime of the South. As excuse for the same, a new cry, as false as it is foul, is raised in an effort to blast race character, a cry which has proclaimed to the world that virtue and innocence are violated by Afro-Americans who must be killed like wild beasts to protect womanhood and childhood.

[3] Born and reared in the South, I had never expected to live elsewhere. Until this past year I was one among those who believed the condition of the masses gave large excuse for the humiliations and proscriptions under which we labored; that when wealth, education and character became more general among us, the cause being removed the effect would cease, and justice be accorded to all alike. I shared the general belief that good newspapers entering regularly the homes of our people in every state could do more to bring about this result than any agency. Preaching the doctrine of self-help, thrift and economy every week, they would be the teachers to those who had been deprived of school advantages, yet were making history every day—and train to think for themselves our mental children of a larger growth. And so, three years ago last June, I became editor and part owner of the Memphis Free Speech. As editor, I had occasion to criticize the city School Board's employment of inefficient teachers and poor school-buildings for Afro-American children. I was in the employ of that board at the time, and at the close of that school-term one year ago, was not re-elected to a position I had held in the city schools for seven years. Accepting the decision of the Board of Education, I set out to make a race newspaper pay—a thing which older and wiser heads said could not be done. But there were enough of our people in Memphis and surrounding territory to support a paper, and I believed they would do so. With nine months' hard work the circulation increased from 1,500 to 3,500; in twelve months it was on a good paying basis. Throughout the Mississippi Valley in Arkansas, Tennessee, and Mississippi on plantations and in towns, the demand for and interest in the paper increased among the masses. The newsboys who would not sell it on the trains, voluntarily testified that they had never known colored people to demand a paper so eagerly.

[4] To make the paper a paying business I became advertising agent, solicitor, as well as editor, and was continually on the go. Wherever I went among the people, I gave them in church, school, public gatherings, and home, the benefit of my honest conviction that maintenance of character, money getting and education would finally solve our problem and that it depended on us to say how soon this would be brought about. This sentiment bore good fruit in Memphis. We had nice homes, representatives in almost every branch of business and profession, and refined society. We had learned that helping each other helped all, and every well-conducted business by Afro-Americans prospered. With all our proscription in theatres, hotels and on railroads, we had never had a lynching and did not believe we could have one. There had been lynchings and brutal outrages of all sorts in our own state and those adjoining us, but we had confidence and pride in our city and the majesty of its laws. So far in advance of other Southern cities was ours, we were content to endure the evils we had, to labor and to wait.

[5] But there was a rude awakening. On the morning of March 9, the bodies of three of our best young men were found in an old field horribly shot to pieces.

Name: _____

Class/Period: _____

For each question below, answer alone or in a small group as the teacher directs.

1. How does Wells establish *ethos*, or credibility, in this introduction to her subject?
2. Who is her intended audience? What values does she anticipate in them?
3. What emotions does Wells seek to inspire in her audience? How effectively does she do that?
4. What is the effect of the frequent references to phrases like “land of the free” and “distinctive American institutions?” Why does she reference such ideas?
5. What more do we learn about her goals in establishing a newspaper?
6. Why do you think she was so successful in increasing the paper’s circulation?

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