### *Making “Sense” of Rhetoric:*

***A Lesson on Persuasion***

**Overview of the Lesson:** During this lesson, students will evaluate persuasion (specifically ethos, logos, and pathos) in modern day speeches in order to make connections to Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense.”

**Materials Needed:**

* Access to Youtube for viewing of modern speeches
* Handouts on persuasion and other rhetorical devices
* Classroom copies of Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense”

**Part 1:**

1) Introduce the lesson by engaging students in a brief discussion about advertising. Ask the students:

* Where do you encounter advertising? (Television, billboards, radio, websites, social media, smart phone ads, school hallways, etc)
* Which specific advertisements “stick in your head?”
* What makes these advertisements memorable? (They might mention the music behind them (positive or negative), catchy slogans, celebrity appearances, the appeal of the actual product itself, humor, etc).
* Do you think that advertisements have an effect on buying the product?
* Do you think advertisements have an effect on your personal interests?

2) Discuss with the students how advertisers construct their ads very carefully in order to make them memorable and appealing. They take many things into account in order to convince consumers to buy their products. They may try to appeal to a specific audience or demographic and they have been taught ways in which to write persuasively in order to appeal to them.

3) Distribute the Persuasive Techniques in Advertising handout (from Read Write Think at the following link:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1166/PersuasiveTechniques.pdf>

4) Students should understand that Ethos, Logos, and Pathos are used in persuasive writing, advertising, speeches, etc. Divide the students into groups and have them create an advertisement/skit for something they possess in their book bag, purse, or locker. Have them present these to the class and discuss.

**Part 2:**

Have students analyze speeches for ethos, logos, and pathos. There are a variety of amounts of speeches that work for this! A few examples include:

View the following speeches and discuss what rhetorical devices are present:

* George Bush 9/11 Speech:
* Dwight’s Speech (from the popular TV show The Office)

**Part 3:**

Students will have read “Common Sense” in their Social Studies class and will (hopefully) have worked on understanding the content. Now they can apply rhetorical devices, theme, and purpose.