

Grades 9–10 Playlist: Analyze How an Author Unfolds an Argument

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3*:

- Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

Welcome

When encountering a text for the first time, a reader can pay attention to each section in order to analyze how the text unfolds. Analyzing a text requires the reader to move slowly and methodically through the text. While reading, one should look for main ideas and supporting details and pay attention to how the author unfolds these ideas and details throughout the text.

Objective

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- analyze how the author unfolds an argument or analysis.

A Closer Look: Unfolding an Argument or Analysis

Read the following excerpt from Patrick Henry's famous speech from March 1775, "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death." Henry was a revolutionary involved with the American colonies' efforts to become independent from Britain. This speech was delivered just before the beginning of the Revolutionary War and is meant to be persuasive. Henry hopes to convince the colonists that active resistance against the British is necessary in order to gain their freedom. He develops his speech through two interconnected points: that hope for peace is dangerous and that the war is coming, despite the colonists' attempts at peaceful separation from the British crown. Henry supports these points through several ideas carefully developed throughout the speech. For example, consider how he develops the idea that hope for peace is dangerous.

Example

...These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us: they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves. Sir, we have done everything that could be done



to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne! In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending—if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained—we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of hosts is all that is left us!

Read!

Read Patrick Henry's entire speech:

- <http://www.history.org/almanack/life/politics/giveme.cfm>

Listen!

Listen to Patrick Henry's speech:

- <https://librivox.org/give-me-liberty-by-patrick-henry/>

First, look at how Henry introduces his idea.

- He points out that there is a British military presence on American soil and poses the question: "What means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission?" Then, he answers the question, describing Great Britain's purpose for these navies and armies: "No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us: they can be meant for no other." Thus, Henry makes it clear that he does not believe peaceful separation is possible. The next sentence, "They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging," emphasizes Henry's belief that Britain seeks to control the colonists by force.
- Henry poses another question that introduces the idea that hope is futile: how the colonists should defend themselves. He answers his own question once again by making suggestions and explaining how these suggestions did not work in the past. For example, he emphasizes the fact that the colonists' attempts at conversation have been futile. Henry reminds the colonists that they have been arguing for ten years with little result and that they have already considered every other possible peaceful avenue. The years of talking and petitioning show Henry that there is no hope left for peaceful separation.

