

## Grades 11–12 Playlist: Premises, Purposes, and Arguments in Works of Public Advocacy

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.8*:

- Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., *The Federalist*, presidential addresses).

### Welcome

Political leaders advocate for the interests and welfare of the public by publishing official statements or delivering speeches. This playlist includes an excerpt from *The Federalist Papers* and an excerpt from President George Washington’s “Farewell Address.”

### Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- explain the reasoning in a work of public advocacy.
- evaluate the premises, purposes, and arguments in a work of public advocacy.

### Review

#### Key Terms

- To **delineate** means to describe accurately in detail.
- To **evaluate** means to judge the validity, relevance, and sufficiency of evidence in an argument on a scale from best to worst.
- A **seminal U.S. text** is a primary source document of great historical significance to the democratic values of the United States.
- A **premise** is a proposition on which an argument is based.
- **Works of public advocacy** examine the meaning of democratic ideals, civic virtue, or the “common good” for society. A speech by President Obama to the American people and *The Federalist Papers* are two examples.



**Watch!**

For a review of determining author's point of view in an informational text, watch this video. Students participate in a discussion about determining author's point of view and the author's use of rhetoric.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHCJnzB5y0Q>

**Practice!**

To practice determining an author's point of view or purpose in a text, complete this activity:

- <https://www.opened.com/assessment/author-s-point-of-view-and-purpose-in-texts/1074036>

**Exploring the Standard**

In works of public advocacy, political leaders assert what they want their audience to accept as true. This assertion is their premise. Then, they develop an argument to convince their audience to accept their premise. If their audience understands the argument's reasoning, they can evaluate how convincing it is.

**A Closer Look: Works of Public Advocacy**

Throughout U.S. history, political leaders have created works of public advocacy to persuade the American people. These works include sermons, petitions, speeches, and circulated pamphlets. The exact purpose of each work depends on its context and audience. Is it meant to convince the people to take a greater role in civic participation? Is it meant to encourage the people to support or reject a proposed law? Is it meant to explore the best approach to government based on democratic values?

**Example 1**

*The Federalist Papers* are a collection of essays written by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison to persuade Americans to support ratification of the U.S. Constitution. They were published between October 1787 and May 1788 in New York-based newspapers. Madison wrote "*Federalist* No. 10," one of the most famous essays, although it is signed using the pseudonym Publius, Latin for "the people."

To the People of the State of New York:

<sup>1</sup>AMONG the numerous advantages promised by a well constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction. ...

<sup>2</sup>By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community. ...

<sup>3</sup>If a faction consists of less than a majority, relief is supplied by the republican principle, which enables the majority to defeat its sinister views by regular vote. It may clog the administration, it may convulse the society; but it will be unable to execute and mask its violence under the forms of the Constitution. When a majority is included in a



## Teaching Notes: Premises, Purposes, and Arguments in Works of Public Advocacy

The goal of RI.11-12.8 is for students to be able to **delineate** and **evaluate** the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts. This playlist focuses on premises, purposes, and arguments in **works of public advocacy** in excerpts from *The Federalist Papers* and from President George Washington’s “Farewell Address.”

This standard specifies the type of texts to examine, as does RI.11-12.9 (seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance), and suggests some texts: *The Federalist* and presidential addresses.

If possible, coordinate with the social studies department to see whether students have already studied ratification of the U.S. Constitution, the role *The Federalist Papers* play, and George Washington’s presidency. Students will be more engaged in this playlist’s excerpts if they have been exposed to these topics, have some background on their historical context, and understand their importance in U.S. history.

This study guide provides additional assistance with teaching the historical significance of Washington’s “Farewell Address”:

- [http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/washington\\_farewell\\_study\\_guide.pdf](http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/washington_farewell_study_guide.pdf)

### Activities

1. Students may find the style and vocabulary of each text difficult to decipher, especially the compound sentences. Ask students to rewrite each paragraph in their own words, and help them find synonyms for the difficult vocabulary words. This activity will help them delineate the reasoning in each text if they can understand the author’s original meaning.
2. Based on the texts provided, have students write a work of public advocacy. It could be an editorial piece in a newspaper or a speech to the American people. First, students should determine their audience and purpose. Then, they should establish a premise for the argument. Have them outline their argument before they write the full work. After they complete their works, students can conduct a debate or read their speeches to the class.

### Applying the Standard

If students choose to analyze *Federalist* No. 51, this lesson plan includes many helpful suggestions:

- <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/lessonplans/fed51/>

If students choose to analyze Lincoln’s speech, this lesson plan incorporates this and other primary sources:

- <http://www.huntington.org/uploadedFiles/Files/PDFs/LHTHslavery.pdf>

