

Main Transcript
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[“Eye of the Tiger” Instrumental Music]

[Text on screen: Great Debating]

[Text on screen: In this opening scene, viewers will begin to witness some of the key features of our end-of-term debates. Students are debating the strengths and weaknesses of model papers from the previous course—from the same assignment they are working on. As I remind students of our procedures since our first debate a few days ago, you may already begin to sense my own excitement and anticipation of things to come.]

[Text on screen: As students rise and state which author and paper they wish to defend, they already begin to exhibit the same sorts of competitive attitudes and actions lauded by Quintilian (1921/95, I.1.23-25) and salutary habits of mind—curiosity, openness, engagement, persistence, creativity, flexibility, responsibility, and metacognition—advocated for today (*Framework* 2011). But this is only the beginning...]

Instructor: All right group, let’s do it this time but we’ll start right away though, okay, so we’ll have more time to play. So what we’re going to do again just like last time is you’re going to declare your side and I’m going to distribute two crayons to each person. We should be able to start with two crayons to each person this time. Okay? We should build up enough speed and momentum to have everybody use them up. Okay? Sound good?

Male: Mm-hmm.

Instructor: Okay, so again, just like last time. You’re going to – I think what we’re going to do though is have you actually move to the seats first, move to the side that you want to be on and then we’ll have you rise and state which one you’re [mumbles]. Okay? So just a slightly different – and then we’ll do the coin toss and then we’ll go from there. Okay? So slightly different. So same fighters. So let’s do the same thing, kind of the same way I think. Who’s over here?

Female: Chloe.

Instructor: Chloe. And over here is Alex. Okay, so have everybody just move to the – okay, so just move to your side. You know how this goes then. Pick your captain. Start building your topics. We’ll probably hit more topics today because we’ll have more time. So I would build about four topics deep maybe. Okay, four topics deep and pick a captain. Okay, so – [audio skips] no cute kitties.

Male: What?

Instructor: That's what I'm looking for right there. Fierce. Fierceness. Eye of the tiger, baby. Right? Eye of the tiger, that's what I'm looking for. No fluffy, cute, little nothing.

Male: I don't like confrontation. Kind of cute.

Instructor: Let's keep it professional but let's get a little bit – let's do a little bit more [inaudible] than last time you do a bit. Also we should be getting better each time we move on. Right? So we know we have to bring examples. You did a pretty good job last time but I think we could do a slightly better job of bringing those examples in. Even when you first state your statement that could be a little bit stronger as you go along each time. Right? All right, so let's do this. Let's do this real quick then. Let's go around and – let's quick – you don't even have to rise. Just give your sentence on why you chose the side that you did. We'll flip our coin and then we'll get to fight club.

Female: I liked Alex because he did better overall in [inaudible].

Female: I liked Alex with this because he compared different rhetorical strategies way more so than Chloe did.

Instructor: Ah, next.

Female: I chose Alex because I liked his overall approach on the essay and I think he did a better job with the rhetorical analysis.

Instructor: Next.

Female: I chose Chloe. I liked her medical words. I felt that she actually understood the assignment way better than Alex.

Instructor: Next.

[“Eye of the Tiger” Instrumental Music]

[Text on screen: Opening Topic: Paper Introductions]

[Text on screen: As students face off and begin to debate the topic of the two authors' introductions, viewers can begin to see and hear how this forum unites public speaking with comparative analyses of model student texts—an advanced form of teaching with student texts (see Harris, Miles, and Paine 2010).]

[Text on screen: Students begin to eloquently describe why their champion “Chloe’s” introduction sets up her paper to answer the assignment. They describe how Chloe builds a strong ethos by deploying precise audience adherence strategies: the seeming simplicity of a tasty food metaphor, how readers’ imaginations are stirred by a thoughtful, strategic title.]

Instructor: And so it begins.

Female: All right, so our first topic is obviously the introduction’s the first thing that you see and I felt that Chloe’s introduction was way better than Alex’s introduction because she does a better job of setting up what exactly the assignment was. The assignment was to rhetorically analyze but it’s also important to bring in the audience and the readers. He says a lot of I kind of like his last paper. He says, “I will demonstrate my current abilities,” and he also says that it will strengthen his own abilities in writing and he says a lot of I. I feel like Chloe does a better job of setting up what she’s going to talk about and she brings the reader in right away.

Female: Also in Chloe’s her title talks about format and rhetoric and I think her introduction has more of a focus and a theme that she’s heading towards, the format as it says. Also she automatically brings in metaphors that she uses like the 2x4s that make up the walls of her house and the guts and whatnot. I know we’ve briefly talked about that but I think that’s a good strategy and like weaving a visual image so that like what a paper is consisted of and how she’s going to set it up for her readers.

Instructor: Okay, over here and then Lisa.

Female: I feel like her introduction’s way better – I mean her title is way better than Alex’s. She automatically brings in the audience by saying “Is format important,” with a question and then tells what the paper will be about. By having a question in the title makes people think, “Oh well that makes them think,” and then they try and relate to it. I just think that her title completely washes Alex’s paper out of the water.

Instructor: Woo, strong words.

[“Eye of the Tiger” Instrumental Music]

[Text on screen: Rebuttal]

[Text on screen: On the defense now, students showcase how fiery habits of mind are fueled by this light-hearted yet competitive arena. Students are motivated toward authentic (re)searches for counterclaims, using specific evidence.]

[Text on screen: Refusing to be outshined, students from team “Alex” muster specific counterstatements attempting to show how their exemplar’s paper is more reader friendly and

rhetorically sound. Students begin to bring us to exact spots in both authors' introductions for closer comparative analytical interrogation. Viewers also begin to sense how students are defending or attacking the living, breathing characters of Alex and Chloe, rather than critiquing lifeless papers—causing author intention to take center stage.]

Instructor: Good enough? Holy cow. They just let loose. Okay, I want to take a minute [*crosstalk*]. Go ahead. Take a minute, okay?

Male: I can take away the first – do you want to do the titles instead of...

Female: Yeah, sure.

Male: Okay.

Female: Alex's title is really strong because he articulates by putting "The finest" in quotes, that he's not only going to be discussing rhetoric in the essay comparing the two essays but he's also going to be comparing what works best for each style of essay rhetorically.

Instructor: Okay, what else group.

Male: Want to throw some thesis in there?

Male: Yeah. I want to talk about the thesis. So Chloe's thesis is, "By figuring out what the introduction and conclusion are doing, how the topic sentences and subheadings are used, how the claim or argument is constructed in a delay the essay was written compliments the information being given," but she doesn't really say why. Why is rhetoric important? She does say, "Understanding that rhetoric is the structure of writing. We can use it to analyze and respond to someone else's writing." That's kind of a general statement that it kind of implies. What Alex says is, "This assignment should strengthen the students' abilities as well as my own to analyze multiple pieces of literature at a time while comparing them to one another rhetorically in turn aiding us in becoming better writers for the future." That's basically the why. It's a general statement about rhetoric to say that understanding rhetoric will help us become better writers for the future.

Female: I was just going to add that I think Chloe's title is a little bit misleading as compared to Alex's because she says, "Is format important?" Well she's not really talking about format. She's talking about rhetoric used through language use, structure, format, all different ways throughout writing a paper, not just the format.

Instructor: Ooo, mama.

[“Eye of the Tiger” Instrumental Music]

[Text on screen: Counter Rebuttals]

[Text on screen: As student (and teacher) energies are in full boil now, competitive strategy and passion reach a climax. The sorts of uncritical, unhelpful, vague comments students and teachers bemoan in peer review and response—“I like this paper” or “Good job!”—are nowhere to be found.]

[Text on screen: Students have roused each other’s passions and energies toward even closer scrutiny of titles and other introductory features. Students discuss the title in even more detail, relating it back to the assignment. Students go even further in their tie-ins to the authors as creators of their texts, creators who should be held responsible for their rhetorical choices, decisions, and resulting effects on reader reception.]

Female: Okay, somebody talked about the title, Alex’s title and it says, “Rhetoric at its finest,” and finest is in quotes. So I feel like that word is above, like you’re going to go your hardest to explain what rhetoric is. I feel like he’s trying to come at the readers like a tiger but he’s really coming at the readers like a kitten like I feel like it [inaudible].

[Cheering and clapping in background]

[Crosstalk]

Male: That’s all right. I got a [inaudible].

Female: But yeah, it just lacks. The title is like this huge title but when his paper comes at the end it’s just like, “Wow, this is [inaudible due to crosstalk].” Take it or leave it.

[Crosstalk]

Instructor: What else? What else? We good?

Female: Hold on just a second.

[Audio skips]

Female: In the assignment sheet it said that if you wanted to add different sources so I felt like she actually brought that in. I know it’s on the – I don’t know – task or like purpose [inaudible].

Female: That’s what I was trying to say about the webs. You know [inaudible] going to be trouble.

Instructor: What else? We good on the counter? Do you need another counter or we played out?

Male: I mean...

Instructor: Okay, one more. One more counter and then we're going to move to the new *[inaudible]*.

Male: All right, my team doesn't want a rebuttal but this talk about tigers and kittens and all this B.S., let me tell you something. I've read her title a bunch of times. I'm sitting here staring at her title, "Is format important? Rhetoric and its use in written structure." All I'm saying is Chloe's title doesn't even try to be a lion or a tiger. Her title is like a wounded buffalo struggling at the back of the pack waiting to be devoured by Alex's masterful and great piece. Growl.

Instructor: Anything else? All I'm saying *[inaudible]*.

Male: Take my *[inaudible]*. That's cash money.

[Crosstalk]

Instructor: You good? You good?

Male: I'm good. I'm real good.

Instructor: Do you want to just do one last little one?

Female: Sentence, one sentence.

Instructor: One sentence.

Female: There's one thing to say you're a tiger and there's another thing to be a tiger. He says he's going to talk about it at its finest and he doesn't show it at its finest.

Male: She showed...

[Crosstalk]

Instructor: I think this is going to be the next segue into the next topic *[laughter]*.

["Eye of the Tiger" Instrumental Music]

[Text on screen: Closing Statements]

[*Text on screen:* Our collective adrenaline still high, students reflect on their good-natured (sometimes hyperbolic) argumentation. I am left with the tough task of choosing a “winner.” Victory often hinges on the smallest of things. A team might “lose” due to a weaker closing statement, for example. Teams have lost due to a technicality—like someone speaking when they don’t have a straw, or a team that talks too much (rather than listening) while the other team has the floor.]

[*Text on screen:* But I think students understand the arbitrary drama of a winning side that I’ve concocted. As Quintilian (1921/95) wrote so many centuries ago: “if he [she] speaks well, he [she] has lived up to the ideals of his [her] art, even if he [she] is defeated” (II.17.23). All of these students—to the best of their abilities—have spoken and argued smartly, passionately, creatively, energetically. They’ve spoken well. In the end, they’ve all won.]

Instructor: Okay, so closing comments. I need two people who have not spoken. I need somebody who has not spoken over here. You guys have no crayons left?

Female: No crayons.

Instructor: Really?

Female: Everybody has spoken.

Instructor: Anybody can speak then. Anybody can do your final. You need to pick somebody who hasn’t spoken yet to do your...

[*Crosstalk*]

[*Audio skips*]

Female: I think that Chloe’s paper was overall better organized, better written and better delivered than Alex’s paper. So you not only have a better overall analysis of the paper but she also brought in other sources and brought more imagery to the paper that really engaged the reader. When I was reading Alex’s paper I literally wanted to fall asleep. He did not stick to what he was going to say and his paper was literally all over the place. The assignment said to use a fair amount of quotes to back up her stuff and she truly did that. I feel that Alex’s quotes were not only lacking but his analysis was very weak when he analyzed them afterwards. So as well as he – even if he had more sentences afterwards, after his quotes they weren’t good sentences and they weren’t good analysis. So just because there’s more there doesn’t mean that it’s better.

Male: At the end of the day her better imagery was referred back to and correlated with throughout the entire paper if you bring up the appetizer, the desserts and all the other things, the guts. She also did a better job in

following through what she said. In her introduction she said she was going to do a bunch of different things. She explained and analyzed each one of those different things. Alex was able to do that same thing and his final quote even says, “In the end both writers are concluding about two completely different subjects. One author’s concluding on factual evidence while the other is summing up in his own opinion. Well they both have a bit of mixed facts and fiction so the comparison between the two pieces can only be commented on in the areas of structure.” Come on.

Instructor: Okay, one minute.

Female: I think Chloe [*inaudible*] a bunch of her own rhetoric rather than the way the two writers used it in their essays. I feel like she didn’t analyze rhetoric as well as Alex did. She was kind of schizophrenic the way she wrote her paper by using 2x4s and appetizers and desserts and rainbows and it just didn’t flow. It’s just all over the place.

Female: You don’t have to [*inaudible*].

[*Crosstalk*]

Male: [*Inaudible*] sentence structure.

[*Laughter*]

Instructor: What else you got? Hold on. Hold on. Ebby, hold on. What else you got? Is that it?

Male: We don’t need a long complete [*inaudible*].

Female: That’s it.

Male: You ready?

Instructor: Winners.

[*Cheering*]

Female: What? Whoa.

[*Music*]

[*Text on screen:* Credits. Director, Steven Corbett. Producer, Steven Corbett. Producer, Destini Murphy. Producer, Shayan Mahmoudi.

[*Text on screen:* Thanks for watching!!!]

[End of Audio]