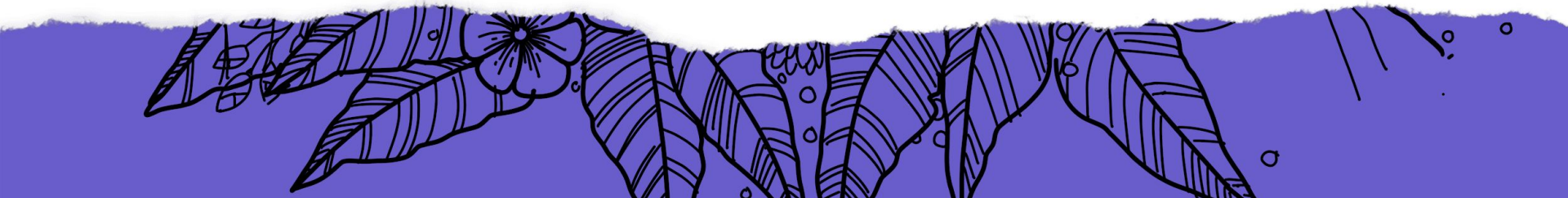


Grade 8: Reading Benchmark

Purpose and Perspective

8.R.2.3: Explain how an author establishes and achieves purpose(s) through rhetorical appeals and/or figurative language.



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Benchmark Introduction



Benchmark:

Explain how an author establishes and achieves purpose(s) through rhetorical appeals (pathos, logos, or ethos) and/or figurative language (metaphors, similes, etc.).



Definition of Author's Purpose

The author's purpose is the reason an author writes a text. Authors may have more than one purpose for writing.



Author's Purpose

There are three main reasons why an author writes a text:

- To inform
- To persuade
- To entertain



Author's Purpose

If the author's purpose is **to inform**, they may do the following:

- Include factual information or statistics
- Provide quotes from experts
- Explain the steps in a process or procedure

Example of Author's Purpose

Ada, Countess of Lovelace **informs** readers about Lord Byron's daughter, Ada, and her contributions to the field of computer programming. Author Walter Isaacson includes facts about important dates and relationships, information about the time in which Ada lived, and quotes from experts.



Author's Purpose

If the author's purpose is **to persuade**, they may do the following:

- Present their opinion or perspective on a topic
- Use reason and logic to convince the reader
- Use powerful language that inspires emotion or other reactions

Example of Author's Purpose

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass works **to persuade** readers to abolish slavery. Douglass fills his pages with powerful language and heartbreaking personal stories of his captivity and his journey to freedom, inspiring readers to take up the cause of abolition.



Author's Purpose

If the author's purpose is **to entertain**, they may do the following:

- Tell a story that captivates the reader
- Include interesting details that engage the reader
- Write in a humorous or suspenseful style

Example of Author's Purpose

Amy Tan's story "Fish Cheeks" **entertains** readers with the tale of a teenage girl's mortifying evening with her family and her crush. Tan includes vivid descriptions and a great deal of humor to engage readers in a relatable experience.



Definition of Rhetoric

Rhetoric is the art or skill of speaking or writing formally and effectively, especially as a way **to persuade** or **influence** people.

When an author's purpose is to persuade, they carefully choose details that will make an impact on the reader. These details could make the reader feel an emotion, think logically about an issue, or agree with an authority or shared values.



Definition of Rhetorical Appeals

Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, defined three types of **rhetorical appeals**:

- **Pathos** is an appeal to emotion.
- **Logos** is an appeal to logical reasoning.
- **Ethos** is an appeal to a shared source of authority or values.

Authors may include details such as figurative language to enhance their rhetorical appeals.



Definition of Figurative Language

Figurative language expresses something other than the literal, or usual, meaning of the words. Examples include similes, metaphors, and personification.



Figurative Language, Rhetorical Appeals, and Purpose

“It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was **the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery**, through which I was about to pass.” (*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*)

Douglass uses **figurative language** (a **metaphor**) to help readers understand that seeing this attack was Douglass’s initiation into the horrors of slavery. This creates an appeal to **pathos**: it prompts an **emotional response** as readers imagine the horrors that lie beyond that threshold.



Figurative Language, Rhetorical Appeals, and Purpose

"It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass." (*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*)

By provoking an emotional response in readers through his use of figurative language and pathos, Douglass achieves his **purpose—to persuade** people to fight for abolition.

Benchmark Skill Routine



How to explain an author's use of figurative language and rhetorical appeals to achieve a purpose

Read closely, highlight, and annotate details that are used to make an impact on the audience.

Notice:

- Figurative language, imagery, and powerful language
- Allusions to shared beliefs, values, or authority
- Facts, observations, and logical reasons

How to explain an author's use of figurative language and rhetorical appeals to achieve a purpose

Ask yourself: How are the author's choices meant to impact the audience?

- Do they provoke an emotional response (appeal to pathos)?
- Do they make the audience think logically (appeal to logos)?
- Do they encourage the audience to agree with an authority or a shared value (appeal to ethos)?

How to explain an author's use of figurative language and rhetorical appeals to achieve a purpose

Draw a conclusion about how the author achieves their purpose(s):

- What does the author want their audience to do or believe?
- How does the author's use of figurative language and rhetorical appeals achieve that purpose?

Remember

1. Read closely, highlight, and annotate details that are used to make an impact on the audience.
2. Ask yourself: How are the author's choices meant to impact the audience?
3. Draw a conclusion about how the author achieves their purpose(s): What does the author want their audience to do or believe? How does the author's use of figurative language and rhetorical appeals achieve that purpose?

Benchmark in Action: Example of how to explain an author's use of figurative language and rhetorical appeals to achieve a purpose



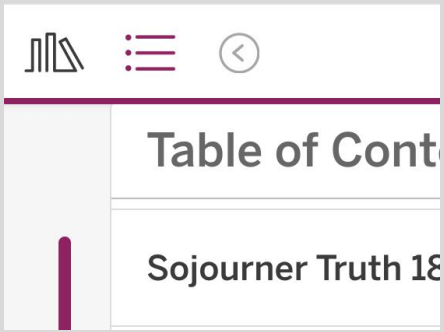
Get ready to read two passages in “On Woman’s Rights” by Sojourner Truth.



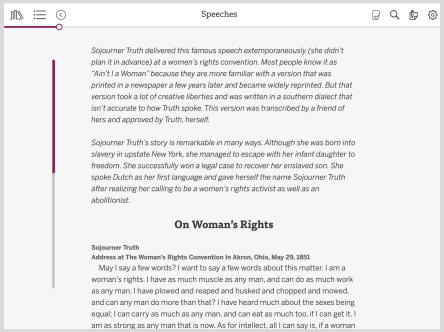
1. Open the Library app.



2. Type “Great Speeches from US History” into the search bar. Click on the title of the book to open it.



3. Click on the Table of Contents. Find and click on “Sojourner Truth 1851.”



4. Read lines 1–10 in “On Woman’s Rights.”

“On Woman’s Rights”

Context for Passage 1

Twelve years before the Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery, and sixty-nine years before women could vote, Sojourner Truth, a formerly enslaved person, stood before a crowd and gave a speech arguing for gender equality. Truth was unable to read or write, so the Reverend Marius Robinson transcribed her speech and published it in *The Anti-Slavery Bugle*. This is part of her rationale for why all women should be given their rights.

Read lines 1–10 in “On Woman’s Rights.”

As you read…

- notice how the author uses figurative language to make an impact on the audience.
- look for details that indicate the author’s use of rhetorical appeals (appeals to pathos, logos, or ethos).

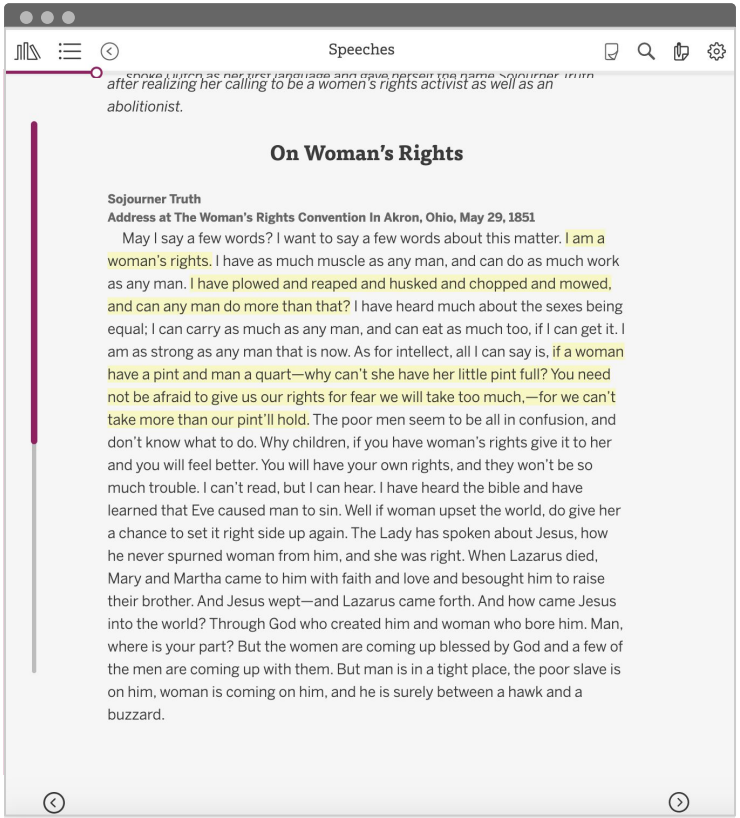
Practice Step 1

Read closely, highlight, and annotate details that are used to make an impact on the audience.

Notice:

- Figurative language, imagery, and powerful language
- Allusions to shared beliefs, values, or authority
- Facts, observations, and logical reasons

Practice Step 1



Highlight details that are used to make an impact on the audience.

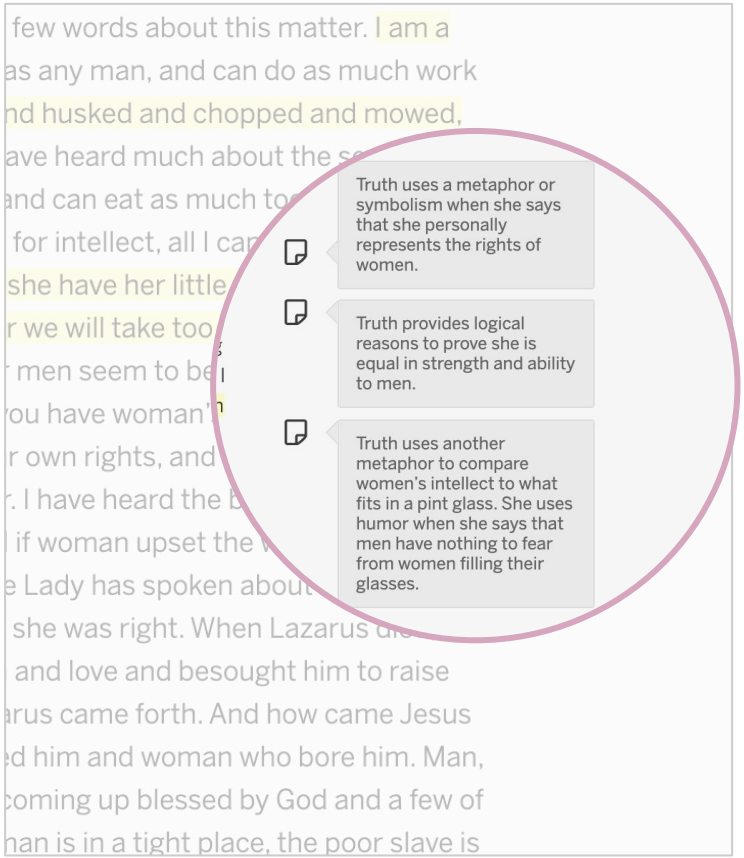
“I am a woman’s rights.”

“I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that?”

“if a woman have a pint and man a quart—why can’t she have her little pint full?”

“You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will take too much,—for we can’t take more than our pint’ll hold.”

Practice Step 1



Annotate to explain and identify the details that impact the audience.

- Truth uses a **metaphor** or **symbolism** when she says that she personally represents the rights of women.
- Truth provides **logical reasons** to prove she is equal in strength and ability to men.
- Truth uses another **metaphor** to compare women's intellect to what fits in a pint glass. She uses **humor** when she says that men have nothing to fear from women filling their glasses.

Practice Step 2

Ask yourself: How are the author's choices meant to impact the audience?

- Do they provoke an emotional response (appeal to pathos)?
- Do they make the audience think logically (appeal to logos)?
- Do they encourage the audience to agree with an authority or a shared value (appeal to ethos)?

Practice Step 2 Example:

By comparing her physical capabilities to those of "any man," Truth appeals to her audience's logical reasoning (logos). She shows that it makes sense for people who can do equal work to get equal rights. When she uses the metaphor about women's intellect only being a "little pint" and tells her audience they "need not be afraid" if women "have [their] little pint full," she creates a humorous emotional response (pathos). She suggests that giving women equal rights would not be a big deal and should not be threatening to men.

Practice Step 3

Draw a conclusion about how the author achieves their purpose(s):

- What does the author want their audience to do or believe?
- How does the author’s use of figurative language and rhetorical appeals achieve that purpose?

Practice Step 3 Examples:

- Truth's purpose is **to persuade** her audience to believe that women deserve equal rights and to take action for gender equality.

- She uses details about how her physical strength compares to a man's to create an appeal to logos and support her claim that men and women have equal abilities. She also uses figurative language to appeal to pathos and make her audience laugh. This helps persuade her reader by downplaying the seriousness of any counterarguments about why giving women equal rights would be bad for men.

Remember

1. Read closely, highlight, and annotate details that are used to make an impact on the audience.
2. Ask yourself: How are the author's choices meant to impact the audience?
3. Draw a conclusion about how the author achieves their purpose(s): What does the author want their audience to do or believe? How does the author's use of figurative language and rhetorical appeals achieve that purpose?

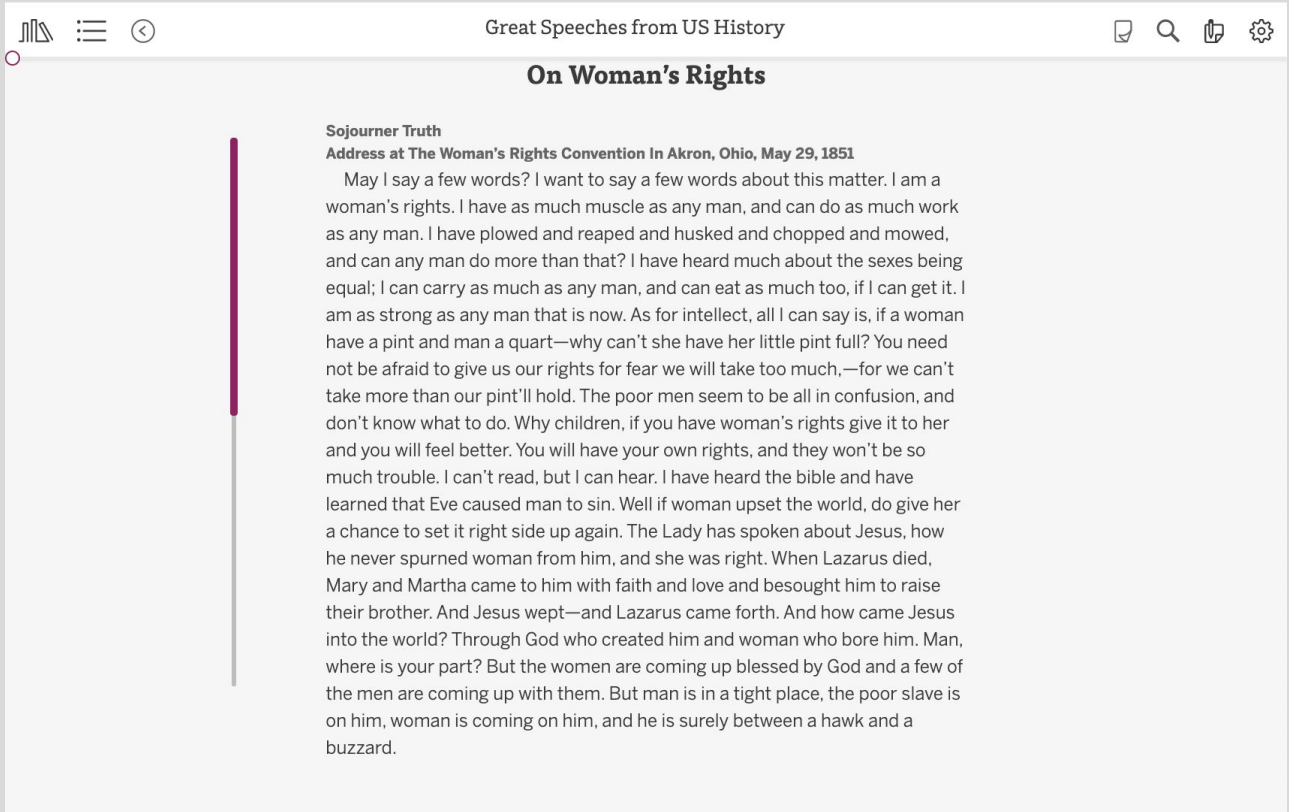
Independent Practice



Benchmark:

Explain how an author establishes and achieves purpose(s) through rhetorical appeals (pathos, logos, or ethos) and/or figurative language (metaphors, similes, etc.).

Now read from line 16 (“The Lady has spoken…”) to the end of “On Woman’s Rights.”



“On Woman’s Rights”

Context for Passage 2

As Truth continued her argument for all women’s rights, she called upon what was likely the audience’s common faith, invoking the role of women in the Bible. Though she acknowledged the reckoning that white men faced at the time, Truth did not back down from her position.

Practice reading to explain how an author uses figurative language and rhetorical appeals to achieve a purpose

Step 1
Read closely, highlight, and annotate details that are used to make an impact on the audience.

Step 2
Ask yourself: How are the author's choices meant to impact the audience?

Step 3
Draw a conclusion about how the author achieves their purpose(s): What does the author want their audience to do or believe? How does the author's use of figurative language and rhetorical appeals achieve that purpose?

Check for Understanding



Share and Discuss

1. Read closely, highlight, and annotate details that are used to make an impact on the audience.

Share and Discuss

2. How are the author’s choices meant to impact the audience?

Share and Discuss

3. What does the author want the audience to do or believe? How does the author’s use of figurative language and rhetorical appeals achieve that purpose?