

Activity Lesson Plan: The Hot Air Balloon Game

This ice breaker type activity is designed to get students working together to develop strategy, consider persuasive tactics and engage in public speaking. It is a fun, easy activity that can facilitate team bonding and confidence.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials and Preparation: Paper, Pencils, Timer

Objectives:

By the end of this activity, students will:

- Understand Aristotle's means of persuasion (Ethos, Pathos, Logos)
- Practice delivering short, extemporaneous speeches

Method:

Establish the scenario with students:

A hot air balloon is high up in the air with a number of important people in it. For some reason, however, the balloon gets a hole and begins to lose pressure rapidly. Only one person will be able to stay in the balloon, if anyone is to survive. The crucial question of the day is: who should stay in the balloon?

Divide your students into 3-10 groups of at least two students each. Each group is tasked with deciding which important person (you may want to suggest a role model/celebrity, etc.) their group wants to advocate for. They will then have about 5 minutes (set timer, but extend as needed) to develop a case for why their choice is best. They will have one minute to make their case to the judges. The group will have to pick the speaker to present the case.

Explain that cases will be evaluated on how persuasive they are. This means ethos (credibility/trustworthiness/believability of speaker/message), pathos (emotional appeals) and logos (logical reasoning, evidence, argumentation).

Once groups have prepared, have each representative stand at the front and take turns presenting. They should all remain standing while each person presents. Then, the seated students vote for anyone EXCEPT the candidate from their group.

Discuss the notion of persuasion:

What made one case stronger/weaker? Who was most believable? Passionate? What evidence was used? Strong presentations can be tied back to ethos/pathos/logos.