Finding Your Voice: The Art of Speech Writing

Learning objective: To identify and analyse the features of a persuasive speech, including rhetorical devices and structural techniques.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below using evidence from the passage.

Leo the lion stood upon the great stone at the edge of the savannah, clearing his throat to address his friends. He was preparing for the annual Woodland Assembly, where he would speak about the importance of protecting their shared home. To be effective, Leo knew his speech needed more than just facts; it required passion. He began by using a rhetorical question to hook his audience: 'Do we want our beautiful forest to fade away?' He then employed the rule of three, describing the home as 'vibrant, peaceful, and precious.' By using emotive language, he hoped to stir the hearts of the animals. Leo also knew the power of repetition. He planned to emphasise the phrase 'together we can' throughout his speech to build a sense of unity. Finally, he drafted a strong call to action, urging every creature to pick up litter and plant new seeds. As he looked over his notes, Leo realised that a great speech is like a well-told story—it connects the speaker to the listener through shared values and a clear, hopeful vision for the future.

Word bank: rhetorical question · emotive language · persuasive · triad · audience · repetition

1. Identify two techniques Leo mentions that help make a speech more effective. (2 marks)

2. What specific phrase does Leo plan to repeat to encourage unity among the animals? (1 mark)

3. Why does the author suggest that a speech is 'like a well-told story'? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, why might Leo choose to use a rhetorical question at the start of his speech? (2 marks)

5. Do you think using emotive language is the most important part of writing a speech? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw Leo the lion standing on a stone addressing an audience of animals, with speech bubbles showing his key persuasive phrases.

Extension challenge: Write an opening paragraph for a speech of your own about a topic you care about, using at least one rhetorical question and one example of the rule of three.