



Brevitas: Lesson Plan

Topic	
Brevitas is a rhetorical technique in which something is expressed in as few words as possible. Very simply, brevitatis is a concise expression. It should imply a lot more than what is strictly said.	
Possible subjects/classes	Time needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Public Speaking 	30-45 minutes
Video link:	
https://academy4sc.org/topic/brevitas-keep-it-concise/	
Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i>	
<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define brevitatis. Explain the potential benefits and drawbacks of using concise expressions. Demonstrate the proper use of brevitatis in their own work for maximum effectiveness. 	
Key Concepts & Vocabulary	
Concise expression, elevator pitch, succinctly	
Materials Needed	
Worksheet	
Before you watch	
<p>Demonstrate the use of a concise statement to the class. Here's an example using the phrase "really something" but you can choose a different one if you want.</p> <p>Pick up a book or describe a movie or tv show you've seen recently as "really something" in a tone that conveys that you enjoyed it. Ask students if they can tell</p>	

if you liked the movie/book/show or not.

Now say that it (or another show/book/movie) was “really something” in a way that conveys that you did not like it. Ask students if they can tell your opinion and how it was different from the first time.

While you watch

Answer questions 1-4 on the Worksheet

After you watch/discussion questions

1. What are some common examples of brevitas?
2. What are some benefits to using concise expressions? What are some drawbacks?
3. When do you find yourself using brevitas? Where do you see brevitas used? Why do you think it's used in these situations?

Activity Ideas

- Have students complete questions 5 on the Worksheet and share their answers. You can also turn it into a role-play activity where students act out saying the same short phrase with a different tone to show how it changes the meaning.
- Have students pretend that they met a local or national politician and they have one minute to convince them to vote a certain way on an issue. Design an “elevator pitch” about an issue or current event you care about.
- If students are currently working on an essay or writing assignment, have them read over their writing and see if they can simplify any sentences to make them more concise.

Sources/places to learn more

1. Bezerra, Burna M., Antonio S. Souto, Andrew N. Radford and Gareth Jones. “Brevity is not always a virtue in primate communication.” *Biology letters*, vol 7, issue 1, 2010. Doi: 10.1098/rsbl.2010.0455.
2. Goldstein, Laurence. *Brevity*. Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-19-966498-6.
3. Marschak, Jacob. “Economics of language.” *Behavioral Science: Journal of the Society for General Systems Research*, 1965. Doi: 10.1002/bs.3830100203.