



Trace the Architecture

Persuasion & Influence · Tier 2 · Synthesis — instructor overview

Grades: 9–10 **Time:** 50–60 min (or homework + one period) **Format:** individual, then share

The Tier 2 capstone. Students take one real influence attempt — an ad campaign, a sales funnel, a persuasive video, a recruiting pitch — and map its moves *in order*, showing how each sets up the next. Not "name the trick," but "trace the blueprint."

WHAT STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO DO

- Identify the individual moves in a real, multi-step influence attempt.
- Sequence those moves and explain how each one sets up the next.
- Locate the attempt's strongest move and its weakest, most resistible point.
- Produce a clear written or spoken account of the whole architecture.

WHY IT MATTERS

A single tactic is easy to name; a real campaign chains many together so that no one move looks manipulative on its own. This synthesis moves students from spotting tricks to reading structure — the habit that makes the whole tier durable.

It reviews rather than teaches, so there's no new concept. Run it after any three or more Tier 2 components.

PACING

SEGMENT	TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
Choose	homework or 10 min	Each student picks one real, multi-step influence attempt.
Map	25–30 min	Students sequence the moves and how each sets up the next (Student pp. 2–3).
Present	15–20 min	Students walk the class through one architecture.

MATERIALS

The 3 Student pages per student. Optional: project one artifact and model the first two moves together.



Trace the Architecture

Discussion guide — modular; assemble to fit your period

These blocks are timed so you can build a lesson from them: a single period, or a full unit day. Run the activity with an opener before and a debrief after — pick what fits.

TIME BUDGET — MIX AND MATCH

BLOCK	TIME	USE
Opener (before)	5–8 min	Pick one, below.
Activity	25–30 min (mapping)	The student pages.
Debrief (after)	~5 min each	Pick 1–4 prompts.
Close	3 min	The takeaway.

Single period: opener + activity + one debrief + close. **Full lesson:** opener + activity + two or three debriefs + an extension.

BEFORE — THE OPENER (PICK ONE · 5–8 MIN)

FORMAT: think-pair-share or a quick hands-up. GOAL: surface what students already notice and pose the question. END RESULT: every student has committed to a prediction or named a real example you can return to in the debrief.

- **Predict.** Project one short ad or funnel and model the first two moves aloud together before students choose their own.
- **From their world.** Have students name a campaign or funnel they'll analyze; a few shared aloud seed ideas for the class.

THE ACTIVITY (BUDGET 25–30 MIN (MAPPING))

CONCRETE GOAL — STUDENTS CAN: map a real influence attempt move-by-move and show how each step sets up the next.

AFTER — THE DEBRIEF (PICK 1–4 · ~5 MIN EACH)

FORMAT: whole-class; call on the examples students generated in the opener and activity. END RESULT: students can state the takeaway in their own words and back it with one concrete example from their own life or the activity.

- What was the first move, and why start there?
- Show one place where a move set up the next — remove it, does the next still work?
- Which move did the most work? Where was the architecture weakest?
- At which step was it easiest to step off, and what would that take?

CLOSE (3 MIN)

Have a few students state the takeaway in their own words: **Persuasion at scale isn't one trick — it's a sequence. See the blueprint and it loses its spell.**



Trace the Architecture

Leading the discussion — pacing, redirects, and warm-ups

The previous page is the plan; this page is for running it. Budget the period from the total below, and keep the redirect moves handy — most discussions falter in one of these four ways.

DOES IT FIT THE PERIOD?

ONE PERIOD (~45–50 MIN): opener 6 + activity 25–30 + one debrief 5 + close 3 = **39–44 min.** BLOCK (~90 MIN): add two more debriefs and a differentiation extension from the facilitation page.

WHEN DISCUSSION STALLS OR DERAILS

IF...	MOVE
Silence, or “I don’t know”	Shrink the question: “Just name the first thing you noticed.” Give 30 seconds of silent think-time, then call on a pair, not an individual.
One or two voices dominate	“Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t gone yet.” Run it as think-pair-share first, so every student has an answer ready to offer.
It turns personal or heated	Move the trial from the person to the message: “What in the text makes you say that?” Keep the claim on trial, never the classmate.
Answers stay on the surface	Push for evidence: “Where exactly — quote the line.” Then “What would change your mind?” to surface the reasoning underneath.

WARM-UP BANK (SWAP IN FOR ANY OPENER)

Interchangeable with the opener on the previous page. Vary them across a unit so the hook stays fresh.

- **Two-minute hunt.** Find one real example of today’s move on your phone right now; keep the best one for the debrief.
- **Steelman it.** What’s the most honest reason someone would use this technique? Persuasion isn’t always dishonest — name the legitimate version first.
- **Rate and defend.** Put one message on the board; everyone rates it 1–5 for how persuasive, then defends the spread of answers.
- **Odd one out.** Three short examples, one isn’t the move — which, and how can you tell?



Trace the Architecture

Facilitation, presentation prompts & a rubric

ANTICIPATED STUDENT RESPONSES & MISCONCEPTIONS

- **A list, not a sequence.** The most common miss — students name moves but not the *order* or how one enables the next. Push for causation between rungs.
- **Everything looks like every tactic.** If a student labels one line with four tactics, ask which is doing the most work there.
- **"There's no first move."** There usually is — often a frame or a small yes. Have them find where the setup begins.
- **Can't find a weak point.** Every architecture has one; ask where a careful person could step off, and what that would take.

DIFFERENTIATION & EXTENSIONS

Support: give the "first / then / then" scaffold and a word bank of Tier 2 moves. **Stretch:** students compare two campaigns for the same product, or redesign one artifact to be more honest and assess what it loses. **Cross-curricular:** rhetorical analysis in ELA; funnel design in media/marketing.

ANSWER KEY — ACTIVITY

ITEM	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Ordering	<i>Moves placed in a defensible sequence, with causation between them.</i>
Naming	<i>Each move named with evidence from the artifact, not just labels.</i>
Strongest/weakest	<i>Identifies the load-bearing move and a real point of resistance.</i>
(No single key)	<i>Students analyze self-chosen artifacts; assess the reasoning, treat ordering disputes as discussion.</i>



Trace the Architecture

How to read a blueprint, not just spot a trick

You can now name the moves from Tier 2 — framing, authority, social proof, identity, reciprocity and escalation. This capstone asks for something harder and more useful: to take one real influence attempt and trace how its moves are *built together*, in order, each one setting up the next. Persuasion at scale is rarely a single trick. It's a sequence, an architecture — and once you can see the blueprint, it loses most of its power.

WHAT "ARCHITECTURE" MEANS HERE

Think about how a good sales funnel or campaign actually runs. It doesn't open by asking for the big commitment. It opens with a **frame** that makes the whole topic tilt a certain way. Then maybe an **authority** signal so you lower your guard, then **social proof** so it feels safe to join, then an **identity** hook so agreeing feels like belonging, then a small **first yes** that escalates. No single step looks like manipulation. The manipulation is in the *order* — each move is placed exactly where it makes the next one land.

HOW TO TRACE IT

Three questions do the work. **What's the first move?** Find where the setup begins, before any ask. **How does each move set up the next?** For every step, ask what it makes possible that wasn't possible before it. **Where is it strongest, and where could you step off?** Every architecture has a load-bearing move and a weakest joint — the point where someone paying attention could walk away. Name both.

On the next pages, pick one real attempt you can examine closely and map it. You're not just listing what's there — you're showing how it was *engineered* to move someone from "not interested" to "yes."



Trace the Architecture

Name: _____ Date: _____

Your toolkit: Framing/priming · authority · social proof · identity leverage · reciprocity & escalation

WHAT ARE YOU ANALYZING?

Name the artifact, where it's from, and what it's trying to get people to do.

THE MOVES, IN ORDER

List each move as it happens. For each: what is it, and how does it set up the *next* one?

MOVE (IN ORDER)	WHAT IT IS · HOW IT SETS UP THE NEXT
First	
Then	
Then	
Then	



THE STRONGEST MOVE

Which single move was doing the most work? What made it land?

THE WEAK POINT

Where was the architecture weakest — the step where someone paying attention could step off? What would stepping off take?

ONE SENTENCE

Sum up the whole blueprint: what was it trying to get you to do, and how was it built to get there?
