This handout is designed to help you use Rhetorical Peaks in your classroom to teach stasis theory in conjunction with group work. Below, you can find a handout that can be given directly to students after you have revised it to meet your own needs.

This assignment asks students to consider how arguments made by the various characters in Rhetorical Peaks can be mapped using stasis theory. Keep in mind that there is not a correct answer built into the game. To accumulate enough information to map the points of stasis, your students should interview at least one character from the game and perhaps all three. You might have your students look at Lisa’s scrapbook as well. This depends on how much time you want your students to spend on the game and what other ways you would like to incorporate the game into your class. Since you will be having your students work in groups, you might consider limiting them to one character per group. In other words, one group would focus on Aristo, another on Gorgias, and another on Leonora. This would allow each group to share their findings with the rest of the class. You might also consider having each group look at all three characters. This would allow each group to get a clearer sense for the conversation overall.

In terms of time requirements, you should keep the following in mind: if you would like students to talk to only one character, they would need 10-15 minutes to do so; if you would like students to talk to all three characters, they would need 30-45 minutes to do so. It would help to give students at least 10-15 minutes (and possibly more) to discuss their findings with their groups and then at least 15 minutes or so for the groups to come together and share their thoughts. With all of these possibilities, this activity might take one or two class periods.
**Rhetorical Peaks Group Activity**

In class today, you will be playing *Rhetorical Peaks* and then working with your group to practice analysis using stasis theory. In the game, you will be confronted with the mysterious death of Lisa Sophist, the best speaker in the town of Rhetorical Peaks. After listening to the testimony of various characters in the game, you will be able to map the various arguments made by the characters. As you perform your analysis, you should provide specific evidence and even specific quotes from the game. Keep in mind that there is not a correct answer built into the game, but your analysis should be supported by the evidence you find.

You can find the game here:

http://rhetoricalpeaks.dwrl.utexas.edu/

As you play, it will help to write down answers to the following questions. These notes will help you organize your analysis and the evidence supporting it.

1. What arguments does each character make about Lisa, her death, or the town generally?

   Aristo:

   Gorgias:

   Leonora:
Over the next few questions, consider the ways we can use stasis theory to understand the various aspects of the critical situation in *Rhetorical Peaks*.

2. The category of *conjecture* focuses on questions of whether something exists, where it comes from, what causes it, whether it can be changed, and what has changed because of it. How can you frame some of the issues and conversations happening in *Rhetorical Peaks* in the form of questions of conjecture? What answers does the game offer in response to these questions? What answers can you offer based on your experience playing the game?

3. The category of *definition* focuses on questions of what kind of thing or event something is, what larger class of things it belongs to, what its component parts are, and how they are related. How can you frame some of the issues and conversations happening in *Rhetorical Peaks* in the form of questions of definition? What answers does the game offer in response to these questions? What answers can you offer based on your experience playing the game?
4. The category of value focuses on questions of whether something is good/bad, right/wrong, etc., as well as questions of how something compares to something else. How can you frame some of the issues and conversations happening in Rhetorical Peaks in the form of questions of value? What answers does the game offer in response to these questions? What answers can you offer based on your experience playing the game?

5. The category of policy focuses on questions of what actions are possible and should be taken as well as questions of how these actions will change the current situation. How can you frame some of the issues and conversations happening in Rhetorical Peaks in the form of questions of policy? What answers does the game offer in response to these questions? What answers can you offer based on your experience playing the game?