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Speaking to Persuade



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Ramon Trujillo started that particular school day by stopping at the library to return an overdue book. “Look,” he explained to the librarian, “I know this book was due last week, but I was sick with the flu and couldn’t even get out of bed. Do I still have to pay the fine? I can get you a note from the doctor if you need one.” The librarian hemmed and hawed. Then he said, “Okay. You don’t have a record of any other fines. Just this once.”

With a sigh of relief, Ramon went on to his morning classes. At noon he was dashing across campus when a friend stopped him. “How about some lunch?” she asked. “I really can’t,” replied Ramon. “I have to stand at the table and get signatures on the tuition petition. I’ll see you later, though.”

During the afternoon, Ramon went to his job at a computer sales company. He arrived just in time for the weekly staff meeting, where he presented his ideas on how to increase customer satisfaction. “One thing I’ve noticed,” he said, “is that most people don’t realize they only have 14 days to return unopened merchandise for a full refund. Most stores have a 30-day return policy, and I know we’ve lost some customers because ours is shorter. Changing it might be inconvenient at first, but it will definitely help business in the long run.” After listening to Ramon, the sales manager said, “I’ve always thought 14 days was plenty of time, but you’ve convinced me that we ought to change. Let’s give it a try.”

If you asked Ramon how he spent his day, he might say, “I returned a book, I went to class, I worked the tuition-petition table, I had a staff meeting at my job.” In fact, he spent a large part of his day *persuading*—persuading people to do things they were reluctant to do or that had not occurred to them.

The Importance of Persuasion

persuasion

The process of creating, reinforcing, or changing people’s beliefs or actions.

Persuasion is the process of creating, reinforcing, or changing people’s beliefs or actions.¹ The ability to speak (and write) persuasively will benefit you in every part of your life, from personal relations to community activities to career aspirations. When economists added up the number of people—lawyers, sales representatives, public relations specialists, counselors, administrators, and others—whose jobs depend largely on persuading people to adopt their point of view, they concluded that persuasion accounts for 26 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product!²

Understanding the principles of persuasion is also vital to being an informed citizen and consumer. By age 20, the average American has been exposed to 1 million television commercials—an average of 150 every day. Politicians and advertisers, salespeople and interest groups, fund-raisers and community activists—all vie for your attention, votes, money, time, and support. The more you know about persuasion, the more effective you can be in using your powers of critical thinking to assess the barrage of persuasive messages you are exposed to every day.

Although persuasion has been studied for more than 2,000 years, it is still the subject of lively debate among scholars. There are a number of scientific models of the persuasive process and a wide range of respected theories about how persuasion works. In this chapter and the next, we will explore the principles of persuasion as they apply to public speaking.

When you speak to persuade, you act as an advocate. Your job is to get listeners to agree with you and, perhaps, to act on that belief. Your goal may

be to defend an idea, to refute an opponent, to sell a program, or to inspire people to action. Because persuasive speakers must communicate information clearly and concisely, you will need all the skills you used in speaking to inform. But you will also need new skills that take you from giving information to affecting your listeners' attitudes, beliefs, or actions.

Ethics and Persuasion

No matter what the speaking situation, you need to make sure your goals are ethically sound and that you use ethical methods to communicate your ideas. Meeting these obligations can be especially challenging when you speak to persuade. Would you be willing to shade the truth “just a bit” if it would guarantee a successful speech? How about juggling statistics, doctoring quotations, passing off opinions as facts, or pandering to prejudice and stereotypes?

Unfortunately, there is no shortage of speakers—and other persuaders—who are willing to take ethical shortcuts to achieve their objectives. Yet, as Martin Luther King stated years ago, it is not possible to bring about a truly beneficial result by using unethical methods. Maintaining the bond of trust with listeners is also vital to a speaker's credibility. As in other kinds of public speaking, the ideal of effective persuasion is the good person speaking well.

When you work on your persuasive speech, keep in mind the guidelines for ethical speaking discussed in Chapter 2. Make sure your goals are ethically sound and that you can defend them if they are questioned or challenged. Study the topic thoroughly so you won't mislead your audience through shoddy research or muddled thinking. Learn about all sides of an issue, seek out competing viewpoints, and get your facts right.

But knowing the facts is not enough. You also need to be honest in what you say. There is no place in ethical speechmaking for deliberately false or deceptive statements. Also be on guard against more subtle forms of dishonesty such as quoting out of context, portraying a few details as the whole story, and misrepresenting the sources of facts and figures. Take care to present statistics, testimony, and other kinds of evidence fairly and accurately.

Keep in mind as well the power of language and use it responsibly. Show respect for the rights of free speech and expression, and stay away from name-calling and other forms of abusive language. Finally, check the section of Chapter 16 that discusses the role of emotional appeal (pages 370–373). Make sure that any emotional appeal you use is appropriate to the topic and that you build your speech on a firm base of facts and logic before appealing to your audience's emotions. Aim at the highest standards and construct your speech so it will be both convincing *and* ethically sound.³

The Psychology of Persuasion

Persuasion is a psychological process. It occurs in a situation where two or more points of view exist. The speaker supports Social Security reform, but many listeners do not. The speaker considers cloning immoral, but some in the audience think it is justified in certain circumstances. The different points of view

may be completely opposed, or they may simply be different in degree. Whichever the case, there must be a disagreement, or else there would be no need for persuasion.

THE CHALLENGE OF PERSUASIVE SPEAKING

Of all the kinds of public speaking, persuasion is the most complex and the most challenging. Your objective is more ambitious than in speaking to inform, and audience analysis and adaptation become much more demanding. In some persuasive speeches you will deal with controversial topics that touch on your listeners' basic attitudes, values, and beliefs. This may increase their resistance to persuasion and make your task more difficult.

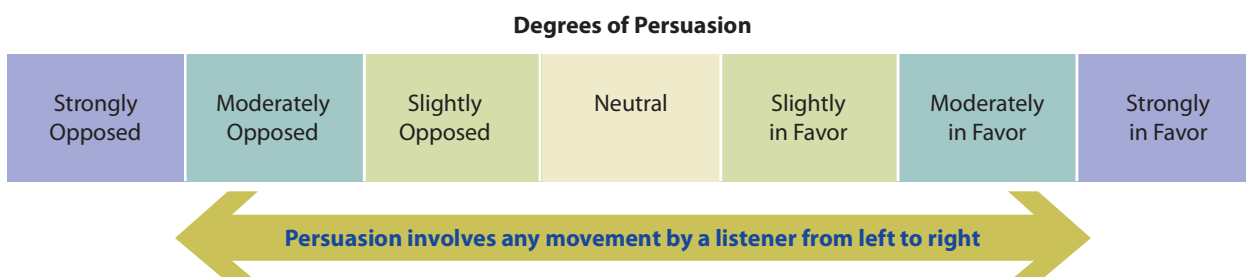
It is much easier, for example, to explain the history of capital punishment than to persuade an audience either that capital punishment should be abolished or that it should be reinstated in every state. In the persuasive speech you must contend not only with your audience's knowledge of capital punishment but also with their attitudes toward crime and justice, their beliefs about the deterrent value of capital punishment, and their values about the taking of human life. Lines of argument that work with one part of the audience may fail with—or even upset—another part. What seems perfectly logical to some listeners may seem wildly irrational to others. No matter how expert you are on the topic, no matter how skillfully you prepare the speech, no matter how captivating your delivery—some listeners will not agree with you.

This does not mean persuasion is impossible. It does mean you should have a realistic sense of what you can accomplish. You can't expect a group of die-hard Democrats to become Republicans or a steak lover to turn vegetarian as a result of one speech.

In every persuasive speech, you will face some listeners who are strongly in favor of your position, some who are neutral, and some who are adamantly opposed. If listeners are neutral or only moderately committed one way or another, you can realistically hope your speech will move at least some of them toward your side. If listeners are strongly opposed to your viewpoint, you can consider your speech a success if it leads even a few to reexamine their views.

When thinking about the range of persuasive responses, you may find it helpful to visualize listeners on a scale such as that shown in Figure 15.1 (below). Persuasion involves any movement by a listener from left to right on the scale, no matter where the listener begins and no matter how great or small the movement.⁴

How successful you are in any particular persuasive speech will depend above all on how well you tailor your message to the values, attitudes, and



• **FIGURE 15.1**



No matter what the situation, a persuasive speech will be more effective if the speaker has a clear goal, delivers the message sincerely, and adapts it to the target audience.

beliefs of your audience. In Chapter 5 we considered the general principles of audience analysis and adaptation. Here we emphasize two additional principles that are crucial to the psychology of persuasion. The first deals with how listeners process and respond to persuasive messages. The second pertains to the target audience for persuasive speeches.

HOW LISTENERS PROCESS PERSUASIVE MESSAGES

We often think of persuasion as something a speaker does *to* an audience. In fact, persuasion is something a speaker does *with* an audience. Listeners do not just sit passively and soak in everything the speaker has to say. Instead, they engage in a mental give-and-take with the speaker. While they listen, they assess the speaker's credibility, delivery, supporting materials, language, reasoning, and emotional appeals. They may respond positively at one point, negatively at another. At times they may argue, inside their own minds, with the speaker. This mental give-and-take is especially vigorous when listeners are highly involved with the topic and believe it has a direct bearing on their lives.⁵

In a sense, the psychological interaction between a speaker and audience during a persuasive speech is similar to what happens vocally during a conversation—as in this example:

Corey: Congress really needs to put an end to political ads funded by special-interest groups. The ads distort people's perception of the candidates and the issues.

Hannah: I agree that we shouldn't distort candidates and the issues, but I'm not sure censorship is the right approach. There's no proof that special-interest ads distort people's perceptions more than other kinds of political ads. Besides, doesn't the First Amendment guarantee free speech?

Corey: The First Amendment is important, but special-interest groups aren't individual citizens like you and me. They're powerful organizations that corrupt government for their own purposes. Don't we have a responsibility to protect the democratic process?

Hannah: We can't compromise on free speech. It's very dangerous to let someone in government decide what's acceptable and what's not. Once we ban special-interest ads, we might start banning other forms of political expression, too.

Corey: Not necessarily. We already outlaw some kinds of speech because they are dangerous to the community—like threatening the life of the President or shouting "Fire" in a crowded building. Why are special-interest ads any different?

Much the same kind of interaction might occur during a persuasive speech, except that the listener would respond internally rather than out loud.

What does this mean to you as a speaker? It means you must think of your persuasive speech as a kind of *mental dialogue* with your audience. You must anticipate possible objections the audience will raise to your point of view and answer them in your speech. You cannot convert skeptical listeners unless you deal directly with the reasons for their skepticism.

As you prepare your persuasive speech, put yourself in the place of your audience and imagine how they will respond. Be as tough on your speech as your audience will be. Every place they will raise a question, answer it. Every place they will have a criticism, deal with it. Every place they will see a hole in your argument, fill it. Leave nothing to chance.⁶

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

Unfortunately, no matter how carefully you plot your speech, you will seldom be able to persuade all your listeners. Like most audiences, yours will probably contain some listeners who are hostile to your position, some who favor it, some who are undecided, and some who just don't care. You would like to make your speech equally appealing to everyone, but this is rarely possible. Most often you will have a particular *part* of the whole audience that you want to reach with your speech. That part is called the *target audience*.

Advertising gives us an effective model. Successful commercials are aimed at particular segments of the market. Mutual funds are now directing many of their advertisements at women. Why? Because more and more women are investing in the stock market. Beer commercials, on the other hand, are directed at men because they drink the most beer.

For your classroom speeches, you don't have the sophisticated research capability of a large advertising agency. But as we saw in Chapter 5, you can use questionnaires to find out where your classmates stand on your speech topic. This is your equivalent of market research. Once you know where your target audience stands, you can tailor your speech to fit their values and concerns—aim at the target, so to speak.

Here, for example, is how one student, Amy Shapiro, determined her target audience for a persuasive speech urging her classmates to pass on the gift of life by signing organ donor cards.

There are 22 students in my audience. My audience-analysis questionnaires show that 3 are opposed to donating their organs under any circumstances. I can't persuade them no matter what I say. My questionnaires also show that 4 have already signed organ donor cards. I don't

mental dialogue with the audience
The mental give-and-take between speaker and listener during a persuasive speech.

target audience
The portion of the whole audience that the speaker most wants to persuade.

need to persuade them. The other 15 students could be persuaded if they knew more about the need for organ donors and about how the process works. They are my target audience.

Not only did Amy pinpoint her target audience, she also knew from her audience-analysis questionnaire the issues she would have to discuss to be convincing:

The members of my target audience break down this way: 7 give “fear of being pronounced dead prematurely” as their main reason for not signing organ cards; 5 are concerned about their body being “cut up or disfigured”; and 3 cite religious reasons for their opposition. The questionnaires also show that 8 of the 15 don’t fully understand the need for organ donors.

With all this information, Amy was able to put together a first-rate speech that focused on her classmates’ attitudes and beliefs about signing organ donor cards. In the speech, she showed the need for organ donations by explaining that there are thousands of people whose only hope for life is to receive a heart, liver, or kidney transplant. She also took care to answer her classmates’ fears and objections. She showed that there are strict safeguards to prevent doctors from pulling the plug prematurely, that donated organs are removed as carefully as if the doctor were operating on a live patient, and that almost all religious leaders approve of organ donation to help save lives. As a result, she was able to convince several of her classmates to sign organ donor cards.

In the next chapter, we’ll discuss the methods you can use to hit the target in your persuasive speeches. In the rest of this chapter, we focus on the three major kinds of persuasive speeches and how to organize them most effectively.

Persuasive Speeches on Questions of Fact

WHAT ARE QUESTIONS OF FACT?

What college basketball team has won the most games since 1990? Who was the first African American to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court? How far is it from New York to Baghdad? These questions of fact can be answered absolutely. The answers are either right or wrong.

But many questions of fact cannot be answered absolutely. There is a true answer, but we don’t have enough information to know what it is. Some questions like this involve prediction: Will the economy be better or worse next year? Who will win the Super Bowl this season?

Other questions deal with issues on which the facts are murky or inconclusive. What will happen next in the Middle East? Is sexual orientation genetically determined? No one knows the final answers to these questions, but that doesn’t stop people from speculating about them or from trying to convince other people that they have the best possible answers.

question of fact
A question about the truth or falsity of an assertion.

ANALYZING QUESTIONS OF FACT

In some ways, a persuasive speech on a question of fact is similar to an informative speech. But the two kinds of speeches take place in different kinds of situations and for different purposes. The situation for an informative speech is *nonpartisan*. The speaker acts as a lecturer or a teacher. The aim is to give information as impartially as possible, not to argue for a particular point of view. On the other hand, the situation for a persuasive speech on a question of fact is *partisan*. The speaker acts as an advocate. The aim is not to be impartial

but to present one view of the facts as persuasively as possible. The speaker may mention competing views of the facts, but only to refute them.

For example, consider the assassination of John F. Kennedy. After more than four decades, there is still much debate about what really happened in Dallas on November 22, 1963. Did Lee Harvey Oswald act alone, or was he part of a conspiracy? How many shots were fired at President Kennedy and from what locations? If there was a conspiracy, who was involved in it? The informative speaker would recite the known facts on both sides of these questions without drawing a conclusion about which side is correct. The persuasive speaker, however, would draw a conclusion from the known facts and try to convert listeners to his or her point of view.

If there were no possibility of dispute on questions of fact, there would be no need for courtroom trials. In a criminal trial there is usually at least one known fact—a crime has been committed. But did the defendant commit the crime? The prosecuting attorney tries to persuade the jury that the defendant is guilty. The defense attorney tries to persuade the jury that the defendant is innocent. The jury must decide which view of the facts is more persuasive.⁷

ORGANIZING SPEECHES ON QUESTIONS OF FACT

Persuasive speeches on questions of fact are usually organized *topically*. Suppose, for example, you want to convince your classmates that a major earthquake of 9.0 or above on the Richter scale will hit California within the next ten years. Each main point in your speech will present a *reason* why someone should agree with you:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that an earthquake of 9.0 or above on the Richter scale will hit California in the next ten years.

Central Idea: There are three good reasons to believe that an earthquake of 9.0 or above on the Richter scale will hit California in the next ten years.

Main Points:

- I. California is long overdue for a major earthquake.
- II. Many geological signs indicate that a major earthquake may happen soon.
- III. Experts agree that an earthquake of 9.0 or above could strike California any day.

To take another example, suppose you are trying to persuade your classmates that the plays attributed to William Shakespeare were not actually written by him. Your specific purpose, central idea, and main points might be:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that William Shakespeare did not write the plays attributed to him.

Central Idea: There is considerable evidence that the plays attributed to William Shakespeare were actually written by Francis Bacon or Edward de Vere.

Main Points:

- I. Biographical and textual evidence suggest that William Shakespeare did not write the plays attributed to him.
- II. Historical evidence indicates that Shakespeare's plays were probably written by either Sir Francis Bacon or Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.



Many persuasive speeches revolve around questions of value. Here Irish musician Bob Geldof speaks about the moral commitment of Western nations to help African nations deal with famine and disease.

Notice in these examples that the speaker's purpose is limited to persuading the audience to accept a particular view of the facts. Sometimes, however, the dispute that gives rise to a persuasive speech will go beyond a question of fact and will turn on a question of value.

Persuasive Speeches on Questions of Value

WHAT ARE QUESTIONS OF VALUE?

What is the best movie of all time? Is cloning morally justifiable? What are the ethical responsibilities of journalists? Such questions not only involve matters of fact, but they also demand *value judgments*—judgments based on a person's beliefs about what is right or wrong, good or bad, moral or immoral, proper or improper, fair or unfair.

Take the issue of cloning. It can be discussed at a purely factual level by asking such questions as “What are the scientific methods of cloning?” Or “What are the laws about cloning in different countries?” These are factual questions. The answers you reach are independent of your belief about the morality of cloning.

But suppose you ask, “Is it morally justifiable to clone human beings?” Or “Is it ethically acceptable to clone human cells in an effort to cure diseases such as AIDS and cancer?” Now you are dealing with questions of value. How you answer will depend not only on your factual knowledge about cloning, but also on your moral values.

question of value
A question about the worth, rightness, morality, and so forth of an idea or action.

ANALYZING QUESTIONS OF VALUE

Contrary to what many people think, questions of value are not simply matters of personal opinion or whim. If you say, “I enjoy bicycle riding,” you do not have to give a reason why you enjoy it. You are making a statement about your

personal taste. Even if bicycle riding were the most unpleasant activity ever invented, it could still be one of your favorites.

On the other hand, if you say, “Bicycle riding is the ideal form of land transportation,” you are making a statement about a question of value. Whether bicycling is the ideal form of land transportation does not depend on your own likes and dislikes. To defend the statement, you cannot say, “Bicycle riding is the ideal form of land transportation because I like it.”

Instead, you must *justify* your claim. The first step is to define what you mean by an “ideal form of land transportation.” Do you mean a mode of transportation that gets people where they want to go as fast as possible? That is relatively inexpensive? That is fun? Nonpolluting? Beneficial for the user? In other words, you must establish your *standards* for an “ideal form of land transportation.” Then you can show how bicycle riding measures up against those standards.

Whenever you give a speech on a question of value, be sure to give special thought to the standards for your value judgment.

ORGANIZING SPEECHES ON QUESTIONS OF VALUE

Persuasive speeches on questions of value are almost always organized *topically*. The most common approach is to devote your first main point to establishing the standards for your value judgment and your second main point to applying those standards to the subject of your speech.

Think back for a moment to the speech about bicycle riding as the ideal form of land transportation. If you organized this speech in topical order, your first main point would identify the standards for an ideal form of land transportation. Your second main point would show how biking measures up against those standards. Here is how your specific purpose, central idea, and main points might look:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that bicycle riding is the ideal form of land transportation.

Central Idea: Bicycle riding is the ideal form of land transportation because it is faster than walking or running, does not exploit animals or people, is nonpolluting, and promotes the health of the rider.

Main Points:

- I. An ideal form of land transportation should meet four major standards.
 - A. It should be faster than running or walking.
 - B. It should not exploit animals or people.
 - C. It should be nonpolluting.
 - D. It should be beneficial for the person who uses it.
- II. Bicycle riding meets all these standards for an ideal form of land transportation.
 - A. Bicycle riding is faster than walking or running.
 - B. Bicycle riding does not exploit the labor of animals or of other people.
 - C. Bicycle riding is not a source of air, land, water, or noise pollution.
 - D. Bicycle riding is extremely beneficial for the health of the rider.

When you speak on a question of value, you must make sure to justify your judgment against some identifiable standards. In the following example, notice how the speaker devotes her first main point to judging capital punishment against moral standards and her second main point to judging it against legal standards:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that capital punishment is morally and legally wrong.

Central Idea: Capital punishment violates both the Bible and the U.S. Constitution.

Main Points:

- I. Capital punishment violates the biblical commandment “Thou shalt not kill.”
- II. Capital punishment violates the constitutional ban on “cruel and unusual punishment.”

As you can see, speeches on questions of value may have strong implications for our actions. A person who is persuaded that capital punishment is morally and legally wrong is more likely to support legislation abolishing the death penalty. But speeches on questions of value do not argue directly for or against particular courses of action. Once you go beyond arguing right or wrong to arguing that something should or should not be done, you move from a question of value to a question of policy.

Persuasive Speeches on Questions of Policy

WHAT ARE QUESTIONS OF POLICY?

Questions of policy arise daily in almost everything we do. At home we debate what to do during spring vacation, whether to buy a new television, which movie to see on the weekend. At work we discuss whether to go on strike, what strategy to use in selling a product, how to improve communication between management and employees. As citizens we ponder whether to vote for or against a political candidate, what to do about airport security, how to maintain economic growth and protect the environment.

All these are questions of policy because they deal with specific courses of action. Questions of policy inevitably involve questions of fact. (How can we decide whether to vote for a candidate unless we know the facts of her or his stand on the issues?) They may also involve questions of value. (The policy you favor on abortion will be affected by whether you think abortion is moral or immoral.) But questions of policy *always* go beyond questions of fact or value to decide whether something should or should not be done.

When put formally, questions of policy usually include the word “should,” as in these examples:

What measures should be taken to protect the United States against terrorist attacks?

Should the electoral college be abolished?

What steps should be taken to ensure that all people in the United States receive adequate health care?

question of policy

A question about whether a specific course of action should or should not be taken.

TYPES OF SPEECHES ON QUESTIONS OF POLICY

When you speak on a question of policy, your goal may be either to gain passive agreement or to motivate immediate action from your listeners. Deciding which goal you want to achieve will affect almost every aspect of your speech.

Speeches to Gain Passive Agreement

speech to gain passive agreement

A persuasive speech in which the speaker's goal is to convince the audience that a given policy is desirable without encouraging the audience to take action in support of the policy.

If your goal is passive agreement, you will try to get your audience to agree with you that a certain policy is desirable, but you will not necessarily encourage the audience to do anything to enact the policy. For example, suppose you want to persuade people that the United States should abolish the electoral college and elect the President by direct popular vote. If you seek passive agreement, you will try to get your audience to concur, but you will not urge them to take any action right now to help change presidential election procedures.

Here are some specific purpose statements for policy speeches that seek passive agreement:

To persuade my audience that there should be stricter safety standards on amusement-park rides.

To persuade my audience that the age for full driving privileges should be raised to 18.

To persuade my audience that the United States should put greater emphasis on nuclear power to meet the country's energy needs.

In each case, the speaker's aim is to convince listeners that the speaker's policy is necessary and practical. The speaker is not trying to get listeners to take action in support of the policy.

Speeches to Gain Immediate Action

speech to gain immediate action

A persuasive speech in which the speaker's goal is to convince the audience to take action in support of a given policy.

When your goal is immediate action, you want to do more than get your listeners to nod their heads in agreement. You want to motivate them to action—to sign a petition for abolishing the electoral college, to campaign for lower tuition, to purchase organic foods, to contribute to a fund drive, and so forth.

Here are some examples of specific purpose statements for policy speeches that seek immediate action:

To persuade my audience to give blood through the Red Cross.

To persuade my audience to vote in the next student election.

To persuade my audience to become literacy tutors.

Some experts say you should seek action from your audience whenever possible. Although it is much easier to evoke passive agreement than to elicit action, the listener is not making much of a commitment by thinking, "Sure, I agree with you." Within a day or two that same listener may forget entirely about your speech—and about her or his agreement with it.

Action, however, reinforces belief. A great deal of research shows that if you can persuade a listener to take some kind of action—even if it is no more than signing a petition, putting a bumper sticker on a car, or attending a meeting—you have gained a more serious commitment. Once a listener acts on behalf of a speaker's position, she or he is more likely to remain committed to it.⁸



Persuasive speeches on questions of policy are given whenever people debate specific courses of action. Such speeches can seek either passive agreement or immediate action.

When you call for action in a persuasive speech, you should make your recommendations as specific as possible. Don't just urge listeners to "do something." Tell them exactly what to do and how to do it. For an excellent example, look at Video Clip 15.1 in the online Media Library for this chapter. The speaker's aim was to convince her classmates to donate time to the Special Olympics. After talking about the mission of Special Olympics, the need for volunteers, and the rewarding feelings experienced by volunteers, she explained how students can get involved for whatever amount of time they are able to commit at the moment. She also brought along brochures with additional information to pass out after her speech. When you construct your persuasive speech, remember that the more specific your instructions, the more likely your call to action will succeed.⁹



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View this excerpt from "Making a Difference Through the Special Olympics" in the online Media Library for this chapter (Video Clip 15.1).

ANALYZING QUESTIONS OF POLICY

Regardless of whether your aim is to elicit passive agreement or to gain immediate action, you will face three basic issues whenever you discuss a question of policy—need, plan, and practicality.

Need

There is no point in arguing for a policy unless you can show a need for it:

Is there a need for more student parking on campus?

Is there a need for the school district to institute same-sex classrooms?

Is there a need for a national ID card in the United States?

Your first step is to convince listeners that there is a serious problem with things as they are. People are not inclined to adopt a new policy unless they are convinced the old one is not working. This is why the *burden of proof* always rests with the speaker who advocates change. (Of course, you may be defending

need

The first basic issue in analyzing a question of policy: Is there a serious problem or need that requires a change from current policy?

burden of proof

The obligation facing a persuasive speaker to prove that a change from current policy is necessary.

present policy, in which case you will argue that there is *no* need to change—that things are already working as well as can be expected.)

Plan

The second basic issue of policy speeches is plan. Once you have shown that a problem exists, you must explain your plan for solving it.

What can we do to get more student parking on campus?

What topics should be taught in same-sex classrooms? Are same-sex classrooms appropriate for all grade levels?

What information should be included on a national ID card? Who will be responsible for collecting the information and creating the cards?

Answering such questions is especially important if you call for a new policy. It's easy to complain about problems; the real challenge is developing solutions.

In most classroom speeches, you will not have time to describe your plan in detail, but you should at least identify its major features. Look, for example, at the plan section in the speech on puppy mills in the online Media Library for this chapter. First, the speaker proposes legal measures to punish dog breeders that do not take proper care of their animals. Second, he presents four steps that individual listeners can take when buying a dog to make sure they are not supporting puppy mills. The speech would have been much less persuasive if the speaker had not spelled out the major features of his plan.

Practicality

The third basic issue of policy speeches is practicality. Once you have presented a plan, you must show that it will work. Will it solve the problem? Or will it create new and more serious problems?

Building a multilevel parking garage on campus would provide more student parking, but the cost would require a sharp increase in tuition.

Creating same-sex classrooms would be academically beneficial for some students, but it could reinforce gender stereotypes and return education to a separate-but-equal status.

A national ID card might be an easy way for people to verify their identity for security purposes, but it could also infringe on civil liberties and give the government too much personal information about individuals.

These are significant concerns. Whenever you advocate a new policy, you must be prepared to show that it is workable. No matter how serious a problem may be, listeners usually want some assurance that a speaker's plan will actually solve the problem.¹⁰ One way to provide this assurance is to show that a plan similar to yours has been successfully implemented elsewhere. For example, Video Clip 15.3 in the online Media Library for this chapter shows an excerpt from a student speech calling for paid parental leave in the speaker's state. As you view the clip, notice how the speaker points to the success of a similar plan in California as evidence that it will work in her state.

plan

The second basic issue in analyzing a question of policy: If there is a problem with current policy, does the speaker have a plan to solve the problem?



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View this excerpt from "The Horrors of Puppy Mills" in the online Media Library for this chapter (Video Clip 15.2).

practicality

The third basic issue in analyzing a question of policy: Will the speaker's plan solve the problem? Will it create new and more serious problems?



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View this excerpt from "Paid Parental Leave: Good for Families, Good for Business" in the online Media Library for this chapter (Video Clip 15.3).

If you oppose a shift in policy, one of your major arguments will be that the change is impractical—that it will create more problems than it can solve. For example, critics of creating a national health care system in the United States similar to the one in Canada say it would produce longer waits for treatment and lower quality of care. Other opponents say the Canadian system impedes medical innovations and reduces incentives for doctors to improve their services. If listeners accept these arguments, they will probably decide that the U.S. should not use Canada as a model for a national health care system.

How much of your speech should you devote to need, to plan, and to practicality? The answer depends on your topic and your audience. If your audience is not aware of the health and environmental problems caused by the use of antibacterial chemicals in household products, you will have to give much of your time to need before covering plan and practicality. On the other hand, if your listeners already know about the problems caused by antibacterial household products, you can quickly remind them of need and then devote most of your speech to plan and practicality.

Or suppose you advocate increasing the tax on cigarettes to \$4.00 a pack in order to reduce smoking among teenagers. Most people agree that teen smoking is a serious health problem, but many would question whether increasing the price of cigarettes will do much to solve the problem. Therefore, you should devote a fair part of your speech to practicality—to showing that in countries which have drastically raised their cigarette taxes, the smoking rate among teenagers has dropped by as much as 60 percent.

ORGANIZING SPEECHES ON QUESTIONS OF POLICY

Effective organization is crucial when you seek to persuade listeners on a question of policy. Although any of the basic patterns of organization explained in Chapter 8 can be used, four special patterns are especially valuable for policy speeches. They are problem-solution order, problem-cause-solution order, comparative advantages order, and Monroe's motivated sequence.

Problem-Solution Order

If you advocate a change in policy, your main points often will fall naturally into problem-solution order. In the first main point you demonstrate the need for a new policy by showing the extent and seriousness of the problem. In the second main point you explain your plan for solving the problem and show its practicality, for example:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that the use of antibacterial chemicals in household products is creating health and environmental problems.

Central Idea: The use of antibacterial chemicals in household products is a serious problem that requires action by government and consumers alike.

Main Points:

- I. The use of antibacterial chemicals in household products is a serious problem.
 - A. Rather than making us more healthy, antibacterial chemicals in household products are contributing to long-term health problems.

problem-solution order
A method of organizing persuasive speeches in which the first main point deals with the existence of a problem and the second main point presents a solution to the problem.



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View an excerpt from
“Bursting the Antibacterial
Bubble” in the online Media
Library for this chapter
(Video Clip 15.4).

- B. The antibacterial chemicals in household products are also creating environmental problems because they eventually end up in the U.S. water supply.
- II. Solving these problems requires a combination of government and consumer action.
 - A. The Food and Drug Administration should institute regulations controlling the use of antibacterial chemicals in household products.
 - B. Consumers should avoid purchasing household products that contain antibacterial chemicals.

You can use the problem-solution format just as easily to organize a speech opposing a change in policy. In such a speech your job is to defend the current system and to attack your opponents’ proposed policy. Thus in the first main point you might argue that there is *not* a need for change. In the second main point you might show that even if there were a serious problem, the suggested new policy would *not* solve it and would create serious problems of its own. For example:

- Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that the city council should not pass legislation merging the police and fire departments.
- Central Idea:* Merging the police and fire departments is neither necessary nor practical.
- Main Points:*
- I. Merging the police and fire departments is not necessary.
 - A. Under the current system, the police department has developed a reputation for excellence that has made it a model for departments in other cities,
 - B. The fire department is equally well-respected for doing its job quickly and efficiently.
 - II. Besides being unnecessary, merging the police and fire departments is highly impractical.
 - A. Rather than saving the city money, merging the departments would increase costs.
 - B. Merging the departments would also harm morale and reduce the high level of performance we expect from our police force and firefighters.

Problem-Cause-Solution Order

For a variation on problem-solution order, you might arrange your speech in problem-cause-solution order. This produces a speech with three main points—the first identifying a problem, the second analyzing the causes of the problem, and the third presenting a solution to the problem. For example:

- Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that the age for full motor-vehicle driving privileges should be raised to 18.
- Central Idea:* The number of accidents and deaths involving teenage drivers is a serious problem that can be controlled by raising the age for full driving privileges to 18.
- Main Points:*
- I. The number of accidents and deaths involving teenage drivers is a serious national problem.

problem-cause-solution order

A method of organizing persuasive speeches in which the first main point identifies a problem, the second main point analyzes the causes of the problem, and the third main point presents a solution to the problem.



Regardless of how you organize your persuasive speech, you will need strong supporting materials. The better your research, the more convincing your arguments are likely to be.

- A. Each year more than 8,000 people are killed in accidents involving teenage drivers.
- B. The risks of being involved in a fatal accident are highest for 16- and 17-year-old drivers.
- II. There are four main causes of the problem.
 - A. Younger drivers haven't had enough experience to develop their driving skills.
 - B. Younger drivers are more prone to risk-taking and dangerous driving behaviors.
 - C. Younger drivers are more likely to have accidents when driving after dark.
 - D. Younger drivers are easily distracted by the presence of other teenagers in the car.
- III. We can help solve these problems by raising the age for full driving privileges.
 - A. Although 16- and 17-year-olds should have limited driving privileges, they should not receive an unrestricted license until age 18.
 - B. This will allow younger drivers time to gain maturity and experience before receiving unlimited driving privileges.



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View an excerpt from "Putting the Brakes on Teenage Driving" in the online Media Library for this chapter (Video Clip 15.5).

Some teachers prefer this method of organization because it requires a speaker to identify the causes of the problem. This in turn makes it easier to check whether the proposed solution will get at the causes of the problem.

Comparative Advantages Order

When your audience already agrees that a problem exists, you can devote your speech to comparing the advantages and disadvantages of competing solutions. In such a situation, you might put your speech in comparative advantages order, devoting each main point to explaining why your solution is preferable to other proposed solutions.

comparative advantages order
 A method of organizing persuasive speeches in which each main point explains why a speaker's solution to a problem is preferable to other proposed solutions.

Suppose you want to convince your audience that automakers should put greater emphasis on developing hydrogen fuel-cell cars than gas-electric hybrid cars. Using comparative advantages order, you would compare hydrogen cars with gas-electric hybrid cars and show why the former are a better choice. Your specific purpose, central idea, and main points might look like this:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that automakers should put greater emphasis on developing hydrogen fuel-cell cars than gas-electric cars.

Central Idea: Unlike gas-electric cars, hydrogen cars run entirely without gasoline and do not emit air-polluting exhaust.

Main Points:

- I. Unlike hybrid cars, hydrogen cars run entirely without gasoline.
- II. Unlike hybrid cars, hydrogen cars do not emit any air-polluting exhaust.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

Developed in the 1930s by Alan Monroe, a professor of speech at Purdue University, the motivated sequence is tailor-made for policy speeches that seek immediate action. The sequence has five steps that follow the psychology of persuasion:

1. *Attention.* First you gain the attention of your audience by using one or more of the methods described in Chapter 9: relating to the audience, showing the importance of the topic, making a startling statement, arousing curiosity or suspense, posing a question, telling a dramatic story, or using visual aids.
2. *Need.* Next, you make the audience feel a need for change. You show there is a serious problem with the existing situation. It is important to state the need clearly and to illustrate it with strong supporting materials. By the end of this step, listeners should be so concerned about the problem that they are psychologically primed to hear your solution.
3. *Satisfaction.* Having aroused a sense of need, you satisfy it by providing a solution to the problem. You present your plan and show how it will work. Be sure to offer enough details about the plan to give listeners a clear understanding of it.
4. *Visualization.* Having given your plan, you intensify desire for it by visualizing its benefits. The key to this step is using vivid imagery to show your listeners how *they* will profit from your policy. Make them *see* how much better conditions will be once your plan is adopted.
5. *Action.* Once the audience is convinced your policy is beneficial, you are ready to call for action. Say exactly what you want the audience to do—and how to do it. Then conclude with a final stirring appeal that reinforces their commitment to act.

Many students prefer the motivated sequence because it is more detailed than problem-solution order. It follows the process of human thinking and leads the listener step by step to the desired action. One indication of its effectiveness is that it is widely used by people who make their living by persuasion—especially advertisers. The next time you watch television, pay close attention to the commercials. You will find that many of them follow the motivated sequence, as in this example:

Monroe's motivated sequence
 A method of organizing persuasive speeches that seek immediate action. The five steps of the motivated sequence are attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action.

As a persuasive speaker, you must understand both sides of an issue so you can answer the objections of listeners who do not support your point of view. You can use the Internet to help by visiting the Web sites of organizations that take opposing views. For example, if your topic is stem cell research, visit both the Bedford Stem Cell Research Foundation (www.bedfordresearch.org/) and Do No Harm: The Coalition of Americans for Research Ethics (www.stemcellresearch.org/). Or, if you are speaking on gun control, access the National Rifle Association (www.nra.org) and the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence (www.csgv.org/).

If you want your listeners to take action by writing their U.S. Senator or Representative, encourage them to use e-mail. You can find e-mail addresses for Senators at www.senate.gov. For assistance in contacting members of the House, log on to www.house.gov.



**Internet
Connection**

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- Attention:** It's a sunny spring day. Flowers are in bloom and the wind is blowing. The camera focuses on two women, both in their late twenties or early thirties, jogging through a city park. Suddenly one of the women stops, bends over, and rests her hands on her hips. Her eyes are watering and she is breathing heavily. A tightly framed close-up heightens the sense that something is wrong.
- Need:** "Are you all right?" asks her friend. "It's my allergies," the woman replies. "Every spring it's the same thing. I feel great and then my hay fever ruins everything. You'd better go on without me."
- Satisfaction:** "I used to have the same problem," says the woman's friend. "Then I tried AllArrest. It knocked out my hay fever completely. Now I can do everything I want in the spring. You should try it." The announcer, in voice-over, tells us: "AllArrest provides the most effective hay fever relief available—and without causing drowsiness."
- Visualization:** We see the same two women jogging a week or so later. Both are running briskly and breathing easily. "That AllArrest really does work," says the woman who had to stop running in the opening scene. "I feel like a new person since I started taking it. Thanks to AllArrest, I can enjoy spring again!"
- Action:** The audience is urged to use AllArrest whenever they suffer from allergies.

Try using the motivated sequence when you want to spur listeners to action. You should find it easy and effective, as did one student who used it in a speech urging classmates to work for passage of a local tenants' rights bill. Here are the highlights of his speech:

- Attention:** Have you ever had cockroaches running through the cupboards in your apartment? Have you sweltered in the heat because the air conditioning didn't work? Or shivered in the cold because the furnace was broken? Or waited months for the

security deposit you never got back even though you left your apartment as clean as when you moved in?

- Need:* Throughout this city students and other tenants are being victimized by unresponsive and unethical landlords. Just last year more than 200 complaints were filed with the city housing department, but no action has been taken against the landlords.
- Satisfaction:* These problems could be solved by passing a strong tenants' rights bill that defines the rights of tenants, specifies the obligations of landlords, and imposes strict penalties for violators.
- Visualization:* Such bills have worked in a number of college communities across the nation. If one were passed here, you would no longer have to worry about substandard sanitary or safety conditions in your apartment. Your landlord could not violate the terms of your lease or steal your security deposit.
- Action:* A tenants' rights bill has been proposed to the city council. You can help get it passed by signing the petition I will pass around after my speech. I also urge you to help by circulating petitions among your friends and by turning out to support the bill when it is debated in the city council next week. If we all work together, we can get this bill through the council.

Monroe's motivated sequence is perfectly compatible with the standard method of outlining discussed in Chapter 10. The following outline shows how one speaker incorporated the sequence into a speech urging her classmates to donate blood:

- Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience to become regular blood donors.
- Central Idea:* By becoming regular blood donors, college students can help save lives and replenish the U.S. blood supply.

Introduction

- Attention:*
- I. Are you at least 17 years old? Do you weigh more than 110 pounds? Do you consider yourself fairly healthy?
 - II. If you answered yes to these questions, you should be donating blood every two months.
 - III. As a regular blood donor, I would like to show why donors are in such desperate need and encourage you to become a donor.

Body

- Need:*
- I. The lack of participation by eligible blood donors poses a threat to the lives of many Americans.
 - A. Someone in the U.S. undergoes a blood transfusion every three seconds.
 - B. This amounts to 3,000 gallons of blood every hour of every day.
 - C. Current donation levels are too low to meet this need.
 - II. You can help by becoming a regular blood donor.
 - A. You can donate at your local Red Cross.
 - B. The process is simple, easy, and painless.
- Satisfaction:*



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View an excerpt from "The Ultimate Gift" in the online Media Library for this chapter (Video Clip 15.6).



Monroe's motivated sequence is especially useful for persuasive speakers who seek immediate action from their listeners, as is the case with actor and activist Danny Glover in this address to garment workers.

- Visualization:*
- III. Every unit of blood you donate can help save three lives.
 - A. The blood is divided into red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets, each of which can help a different person.
 - B. If you donate 6 times a year, you can help 18 people.
 - C. If you donate for 10 years, you can help save the lives of 180 people.

Conclusion

- Action:*
- I. So I encourage each of you to become a regular blood donor.
 - II. Give the ultimate gift—the gift of life.

Try using the motivated sequence when you seek immediate action from your listeners. Over the years it has worked for countless speakers—and it can work for you as well.

Sample Speech with Commentary

The following persuasive speech deals with a question of policy and provides an excellent example of problem-cause-solution structure. As you read the speech, notice how the speaker deals with the issues of need, plan, and practicality. Notice also how she uses strong, well-chosen supporting materials to back up her point of view on what she knew would be an unpopular issue among her classmates. Finally, observe how clear and uncluttered the speech is. There are few wasted words and the ideas progress cleanly and crisply.



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View "Putting the Brakes on Teenage Driving" in the online Media Library for this chapter (Video Clip 15.7).

Putting the Brakes on Teenage Driving

COMMENTARY

The speaker begins with a vivid, richly detailed story that gains attention and draws the audience into the speech.

As the speaker completes her opening story, she reveals that one of the students injured in the accident was her nephew. This personal involvement helps establish her credibility and goodwill, both of which are vital when one is speaking on a controversial subject.

The speaker strengthens her credibility and reveals the central idea of her speech.

The speaker uses her audience-analysis survey both to acknowledge her classmates' opposition to raising the driving age and to stress their recognition that there are reasons to consider instituting such a policy. After asking them to listen with an open mind, she previews the main points she will discuss in the body of the speech.

This speech is organized in problem-cause-solution order. Here the speaker starts the body by identifying the problem—the large number of accidents, deaths, and injuries involving teenage drivers. She supports her claim with statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. As you can see from the video of the speech in the online Media Library for this chapter, she uses PowerPoint to present her statistics and to heighten their impact as she moves from figure to figure.

SPEECH

On a chilly November night two years ago, a Ford Explorer was charging down a California highway. The 16-year-old driver and three of his friends were returning from a concert in Los Angeles. These young people were good students, gifted athletes, talented artists and musicians. And none were drunk or impaired by drugs.

They were, however, driving too fast, and the driver lost control of the car. The car went into a ditch and hit a tree. The driver and one passenger were killed. The other two passengers escaped with severe injuries. One of these passengers was my nephew. Today he is finishing high school in a wheelchair, a wheelchair he will occupy for the rest of his life.

Unfortunately, tragic auto accidents involving teenage drivers are much too common in all parts of the United States. After researching the subject for my speech, I have come to the same conclusion as the experts—that the best way to prevent such accidents is to raise the age for full driving privileges to 18 or older.

I know from my audience-analysis questionnaire that most of you oppose such a plan. But I also know from my questionnaires that most of you recognize that 16- and 17-year-old drivers are less skilled and less responsible than older drivers. So I ask you to listen with an open mind while we discuss some of the problems associated with teenage driving, the major causes of the problems, and a plan that will go a long way toward solving the problems.

No matter how one looks at the evidence, it all leads to one fact: There are too many motor vehicle accidents, deaths, and injuries involving teenage drivers. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, while teenagers make up 7 percent of the nation's licensed drivers, they represent 14 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities. The NHTSA reports that last year 3,657 drivers aged 16 to 20 were killed in automobile accidents. In addition to killing the drivers, these same accidents took the lives of 2,384 teenage passengers. But these accidents didn't affect teenagers alone. They also took the lives of 2,625 people aged 21 or older. So the total number of people killed last year in automobile accidents involving teenage drivers was 8,666—almost exactly the number of full-time students at this campus.

As in the previous paragraph, the statistics here come from credible, clearly identified sources. Although most listeners did not favor the speaker's position at the start of her speech, the strength of her evidence eventually led some to concede that her position needed to be taken seriously.

A transition moves the speaker into her second main point, in which she explores four major causes of the problem. Notice how she uses a signpost to introduce each cause.

The evidence in this paragraph connects the tendency of younger drivers to take dangerous risks with the state of brain development among 16-year-olds. In addition to coming from respected sources, the evidence provides a scientific foundation for what the speaker's audience knew from their own experience about the propensity for risk-taking among teenagers.

Now the speaker discusses the third cause of the problem—night driving. Knowing that night driving is more dangerous for all age groups, she takes care to note that it is particularly perilous for teenagers because of their risk-taking and their inexperience behind the wheel.

This paragraph is especially effective. If you watch the speech in the online Media Library for this chapter, you can see how the speaker uses her voice, gestures, and facial expressions to enhance the impact of her ideas and to establish a strong bond with the audience

Evidence also shows that the younger the driver, the greater the risk. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 16-year-olds have "the highest percentage of crashes involving speeding, the highest percentage of single-vehicle crashes, and the highest percentage of crashes involving driver error." Moreover, as *USA Today* reports, 16-year-olds are three times more likely to be involved in fatal crashes than are older drivers.

Now that we've seen the extent of the problem, we can explore its causes. One of the causes is inexperience. New drivers just haven't had enough time on the road to develop their driving skills. But inexperience is far from the only cause of the problem. After all, there will always be inexperienced drivers—even if the driving age is raised to 21 or even to 25.

A second cause is revealed by brain research. Findings from the National Institute of Mental Health show that the brain of an average 16-year-old has not developed to the point where he or she is able to effectively judge the risk of a given situation. Dr. Jay Giedd, who led the research team that conducted the study, states: "When a smart, talented, and very mature teen does something that a parent might call 'stupid,' it's this underdeveloped part of the brain that has most likely failed." Steven Lowenstein, a medical professor at the University of Colorado, has just finished a five-year study comparing the traffic records of 16-year-old drivers to drivers aged 25 to 49. His conclusion? "Deliberate risk-taking and dangerous and aggressive driving behaviors predominated" among the 16-year-olds.

A third cause of motor vehicle fatalities among teenage drivers is night driving. According to *The Washington Post*, when 16-year-olds get behind the wheel of a car after dark, the likelihood of having an accident increases several times over. Of course, nighttime driving is less safe for everyone, but it becomes particularly dangerous when combined with a young driver's inexperience and reduced ability to gauge risk.

Finally, there is the presence of teenage passengers in the car. We all know what it's like to drive with our friends—the stereo is up loud, cell phones are ringing, everybody's laughing and having a good time. The problem is that all these factors create distractions, distractions that too often result in accidents, injury, and death. Allan Williams, chief scientist at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, reports that one teenage passenger doubles the risk of a fatal crash. With two or more passengers, the risk is five times greater. Remember my nephew's accident I mentioned at the start of my speech? There were three passengers in the car.

A transition signals that the speaker is moving into her third main point. As in her second main point, she uses a signpost to introduce each of the subpoints.

As this section of the speech proceeds, notice how the speaker's plan addresses all four causes of the problem discussed in main point two—inexperience, brain development, night driving, and the number of teenage passengers in a car.

Because the speaker is not an authority on highway safety, she uses expert testimony to prove that her plan will reduce teenage driving fatalities. Notice how much less effective the speech would be if the speaker had merely stated the steps of her plan without providing evidence of its effectiveness.

Here the speaker deals with the objection that her plan would be harsh and inconvenient. The quotation from a father who lost his teenage son in a car accident puts the harshness issue in perspective and forces listeners to think about the trade-off between saving lives and instituting tougher driving-age requirements.

The conclusion builds on the emotional appeal generated by the quotation at the end of the previous paragraph. The final sentence, in which the speaker notes that her nephew would gladly accept the inconvenience caused by her policy for the chance to walk again, is compelling and ends the speech on a powerful note.

So the extent of the problem is clear. So, too, are its causes. What steps can we take to help bring about a solution? First, we need a national policy that no one can receive a learner's permit until age 16, and no one can receive full driving privileges until age 18. This will allow 16-year-olds time to gain driving experience before having an unrestricted license and to reach a stage of brain development where they are better able to handle the risk and responsibility of driving.

Second, we need to restrict nighttime driving so as to keep younger drivers off the road when conditions are riskiest. Some states have tried to address this problem by banning teenagers from driving after midnight or 1 A.M., but as the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports, these laws don't go far enough. According to the Institute, we need a 9:00 P.M. or 10:00 P.M. limit until drivers reach the age of 18.

Third, we need to restrict the number of teenage passengers in cars driven by younger drivers. In fact, says Kevin Quinlan from the National Transportation Safety Board, "passenger restriction is the first and foremost measure you can take" to reduce teenage driving fatalities. According to Quinlan, the optimal policy would be to bar drivers age 17 or younger from having any passengers in the car unless the riders are adults or family members. Drivers from the age of 17 to 18 should not be allowed to carry more than one teenage passenger.

Now I know all of this might sound harsh and perhaps inconvenient, but the evidence is clear that it would save a significant number of lives. "If you want to discuss harsh," said one father whose 17-year-old son died in an accident three years ago, "I can talk to you about harsh. It's being awakened at 2:30 in the morning by the State Patrol telling you that your son has just been killed."

Everyone in this room has lived to college age. But this year alone, thousands of teenage drivers will not live that long. And they won't live that long due to factors that we can prevent. There's no way to solve all the problems we encounter on the road, but we can do something to help save the lives of younger drivers and make the road safer for all of us. As I said earlier, this might sound harsh or inconvenient, but I know my nephew would gladly trade both for the chance to walk again.

SUMMARY

Persuasion is the process of creating, reinforcing, or changing people's beliefs or actions. When you speak to persuade, you act as an advocate. The ability to speak persuasively will benefit you in every part of your life, from personal relations to community activities to career aspirations.

How successful you are in any persuasive speech depends on how well you tailor your message to your listeners' values, attitudes, and beliefs. You should think of your speech as a mental dialogue with your audience. Identify your target audience, anticipate objections they may raise to your point of view, and answer those objections in your speech.

Persuasive speeches may center on questions of fact, value, or policy. When giving a persuasive speech about a question of fact, your role is akin to that of a lawyer in a courtroom trial. You will try to get your listeners to accept your view of the facts.

Questions of value involve a person's beliefs about what is right or wrong, good or bad, moral or immoral, ethical or unethical. When speaking about a question of value, you must justify your opinion by establishing standards for your value judgment. Speeches on questions of value do not argue directly for or against particular courses of action.

Once you go beyond arguing right or wrong to urging that something should or should not be done, you move to a question of policy. When you speak on a question of policy, your goal may be to evoke passive agreement or to spark immediate action. In either case, you will face three basic issues—need, plan, and practicality. How much of your speech you devote to each issue will depend on your topic and your audience.

There are several options for organizing speeches on questions of policy. If you advocate a change in policy, your main points will often fall naturally into problem-solution order or into problem-cause-solution order. If your audience already agrees that a problem exists, you may be able to use comparative advantages order. Whenever you seek immediate action from listeners, you should consider a more specialized organizational pattern known as Monroe's motivated sequence.

Regardless of your topic or method of organization, you need to make sure your goals are ethically sound and that you use ethical methods to persuade your audience.



KEY TERMS

persuasion (324)	need (335)
mental dialogue with the audience (328)	burden of proof (335)
target audience (328)	plan (336)
question of fact (329)	practicality (336)
question of value (331)	problem-solution order (337)
question of policy (333)	problem-cause-solution order (338)
speech to gain passive agreement (334)	comparative advantages order (339)
speech to gain immediate action (334)	Monroe's motivated sequence (340)

REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What is the difference between an informative speech and a persuasive speech? Why is speaking to persuade more challenging than speaking to inform?



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For further review, go to the Study Questions in the online Study Aids for this chapter.

2. What does it mean to say that audiences engage in a mental dialogue with the speaker as they listen to a speech? What implications does this mental give-and-take hold for effective persuasive speaking?
3. What is the target audience for a persuasive speech?
4. What are questions of fact? How does a persuasive speech on a question of fact differ from an informative speech? Give an example of a specific purpose statement for a persuasive speech on a question of fact.
5. What are questions of value? Give an example of a specific purpose statement for a persuasive speech on a question of value.
6. What are questions of policy? Give an example of a specific purpose statement for a persuasive speech on a question of policy.
7. Explain the difference between passive agreement and immediate action as goals for persuasive speeches on questions of policy.
8. What are the three basic issues you must deal with when discussing a question of policy? What will determine the amount of attention you give to each of these issues in any particular speech?
9. What four methods of organization are used most often in persuasive speeches on questions of policy?
10. What are the five steps of Monroe's motivated sequence? Why is the motivated sequence especially useful in speeches that seek immediate action from listeners?

EXERCISES FOR CRITICAL THINKING

1. Look back at the story of Ramon Trujillo at the beginning of this chapter (page 324). Like Ramon, most people do a certain amount of persuading every day in normal conversation. Keep a journal of your communication activities for an entire day, making special note of all instances in which you tried to persuade someone else to your point of view. Choose one of those instances and prepare a brief analysis of it.
In your analysis, answer the following questions: (1) Who was the audience for your persuasive effort? (2) What were the "specific purpose" and the "central idea" of your persuasive message? (3) Did you rehearse your persuasive message ahead of time, or did it arise spontaneously from the situation? (4) Were you successful in achieving your specific purpose? (5) If you faced the same situation again, what strategic changes would you make in your persuasive effort?
2. Below are four specific purposes for persuasive speeches. In each case explain whether the speech associated with it concerns a question of fact, a question of value, or a question of policy. Then rewrite the specific purpose statement to make it appropriate for a speech about one of the other two kinds of questions. For instance, if the original purpose statement is about a question of policy, write a new specific purpose statement that deals with the same topic as either a question of fact or a question of value.

Example

Original statement: To persuade my audience that it is unfair for judges to favor natural parents over adoptive parents in child custody disputes. (question of value)

Rewritten statement: To persuade my audience that the courts should establish clear guidelines for settling disputes between adoptive parents and natural parents in child custody cases. (question of policy)

- a. To persuade my audience to donate time as a community volunteer.
 - b. To persuade my audience that violence in video games is a major cause of violent behavior among teenagers.
 - c. To persuade my audience that a national sales tax should be adopted to help pay off the national debt.
 - d. To persuade my audience that it is unethical for businesses to use genetic testing in screening potential employees.
3. Choose a topic for a persuasive speech on a question of policy. Create two specific purpose statements about that topic—one for a speech to gain passive agreement, another for a speech to motivate immediate action. Once you have the specific purpose statements, explain how the speech seeking immediate action would differ in structure and persuasive appeals from the speech seeking passive agreement. Be specific.
 4. Analyze the sample speech with commentary at the end of this chapter (“Putting the Brakes on Teenage Driving,” pages 344–346). Pay special attention to how the speaker supports her ideas as she moves through the problem, cause, and solution sections. Does she present a convincing case that a serious problem exists? What does she identify as the major causes of the problem? Does her plan address all of those causes?
 5. Select a television commercial that is organized according to Monroe’s motivated sequence. Prepare a brief analysis in which you (a) identify the target audience for the commercial and (b) describe each step in the motivated sequence as it appears in the commercial.
 6. Analyze “The Ultimate Gift,” in the appendix of sample speeches that follows Chapter 18 (pp. A14–A16). Because this speech is organized in Monroe’s motivated sequence, pay special attention to how the speaker develops each step in the sequence—attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, action. Identify where each step of the sequence occurs in the speech and explain how the persuasive appeal of the speech builds from step to step.

Applying *the Power of Public Speaking*

As a local union leader, it is your job to present a contract offer made by management to your striking membership. Though the proposed offer falls short of meeting all your union’s demands, you believe it is a good offer, and in your speech, you will recommend that the union members vote to accept it.

The contract issues have been hotly debated, so you have an idea how some of your 42 members will cast their ballots. One issue is that management has guaranteed to maintain full benefits for current workers but wants to reduce benefits for new workers. Though the proposed offer limits these reductions, you know of 12 members who will vote against any proposal that limits the benefits of future workers. Already with you, however, are the 8 members who voted not to strike and who will vote to accept any reasonable offer. Among the undecided voters are those who think that since the strike is only in its second week, a better contract may be offered if this proposal is rejected.

Who is the target audience for your speech? How will you persuade them to vote yes on the contract offer? Which of the following methods of organization will you use for your speech, and why: problem-solution, comparative advantages, Monroe’s motivated sequence?