

Chapter Fifteen

The Importance of Persuasion

Ethics and Persuasion

The Psychology of Persuasion

The Challenge of Persuasive Speaking

How Listeners Process Persuasive Messages

The Target Audience

Persuasive Speeches on Questions of Fact

What Are Questions of Fact?

Analyzing Questions of Fact

Organizing Speeches on Questions of Fact

Persuasive Speeches on Questions of Value

What Are Questions of Value?

Analyzing Questions of Value

Organizing Speeches on Questions of Value

Persuasive Speeches on Questions of Policy

What Are Questions of Policy?

Types of Speeches on Questions of Policy

Analyzing Questions of Policy

Organizing Speeches on Questions of Policy

Sample Speech with Commentary



SPEAKING TO PERSUADE



Chapter Focus

This chapter begins by examining the importance of persuasion, providing an ethical perspective on persuasive discourse, and exploring the psychological principles that underlay the persuasive process. It then explains how to analyze and organize persuasive speeches on questions of fact, value, and policy. The chapter ends by presenting a full sample speech with commentary to help students construct their own persuasive speeches. For a full outline of the chapter, see the *Instructor's Manual*, pp. 302–305.

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 antidiscrimination 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 seven days to return unopened merchandise for a full refund. Most stores have a 14-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 seven 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 antidiscrimination 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.

Most of us do a certain amount of persuading every day, although we may not realize it or call it that. 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. In a recent study, 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. The economists 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.³ 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 the-

ories about how persuasion works.⁴ 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—skills that take you from giving information to affecting your listeners' attitudes, beliefs, or actions. If you work at mastering these skills, you will reap the benefits not just in public speaking, but in many other aspects of your life.

Ethics and Persuasion

As we saw in Chapter 2, questions of ethics come into play whenever a speaker addresses an audience. 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 and do your best to follow them every step of the way. 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 in persuasive speaking (pages 413–414). If you engage in emotional appeal during your speech, make sure it's appropriate to the topic and that you build

Related Reading

For a more detailed look at this subject, see Richard L. Johannesen, “Perspectives on Ethics in Persuasion,” in Charles U. Larson, *Persuasion: Reception and Responsibility*, 9th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001).

your speech on a firm base of facts and logic before appealing to your audience's emotions. In this regard, as in others, aim at the highest standards and construct your speech so it will be both convincing *and* ethically sound.⁵

The Psychology of Persuasion

As with other kinds of public speaking, you will be most effective in persuasion if you approach it systematically. The first step is to understand that persuasion is a psychological process. It occurs in a situation where two or more points of view exist. The speaker supports school vouchers, but many listeners do not. The speaker considers doctor-assisted suicide immoral, but some in the audience think it is justified in certain circumstances. The speaker wants everyone in the audience to sign up immediately to learn CPR, but most listeners are inclined to procrastinate and will do it "someday." 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' most basic attitudes, values, and beliefs. This will increase your listeners' resistance to persuasion and make your task that much more difficult.

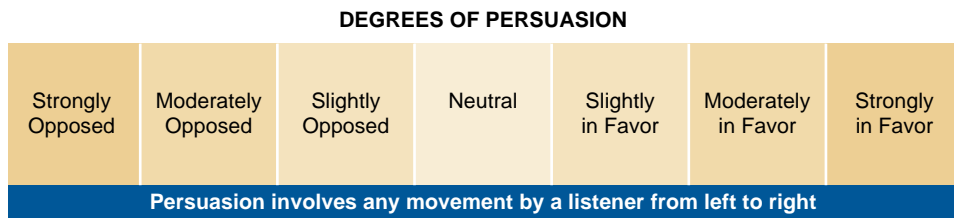
It is much easier, for example, to explain the history of capital punishment than to persuade an audience either that capital punishment should be abolished or that it should be reinstated in every state. In the persuasive speech you must contend not only with your audience's knowledge of capital punishment but also with their attitudes toward crime and justice, their beliefs about whether capital punishment deters people from committing violent crimes, 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 enter a persuasive speaking situation with 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.

Class Activity

For an enjoyable exercise that helps illuminate the differences between informative and persuasive speaking, see David H. Fregoe, "Informative vs. Persuasive Speaking. The Objects Game," in *Selections from the Speech Communication Teacher, 1986–1991*, pp. 57–58, which accompanies *The Art of Public Speaking*.

**Figure 15.1**

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 (above). 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.⁶

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 beliefs of your audience. Persuasion is a strategic activity. Just as a businesswoman or a military commander plots a strategy to gain a big sale or to be victorious in battle, so a persuasive speaker must have a strategy to win the audience to her or his side.

In Chapter 5 we considered the general principles of audience analysis and adaptation. Here we need to 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, as a great deal of research shows, persuasion is something a speaker does *with* an audience. Although audiences in the United States seldom interrupt a speaker while she or he is talking, they do not just sit passively and soak in everything the speaker has to say.

Instead, they often engage in a mental give-and-take with the speaker. While they listen, they actively 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 of the speech and believe it has a direct bearing on their lives.⁷

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:

Jordan: The federal government really needs to clamp down on hate speech. Publications that demonize homosexuality are inciting violence, sometimes even murder.

Keisha: I agree that violence against gays and lesbians is wrong, but I'm not sure censorship is the right approach. There's no proof these publications actually cause violence. Besides, doesn't the First Amendment guarantee the right to free speech, even for people who support detestable causes?

Teaching Tip

Make sure students understand how much more difficult the persuasive speech is than the informative speech. Stress that the persuasive speech almost always requires considerably more research and preparation time than does the informative speech.

Teaching Tip

Be sure to stress the notion of persuasion as a mental dialogue between speaker and listener. It is especially important that students understand the need to answer an audience's questions about and objections to the speaker's position. Students should imagine their listeners saying, "OK, but what about..." at every juncture of the speechwriting process.

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



- Jordan: Free speech is important, but people have a right to live without being persecuted. Doesn't our government have a responsibility to do what it can to keep people safe from discrimination?
- Keisha: We can't compromise on free speech. It's a very dangerous idea to let someone in government decide what's acceptable speech and what's not. Once we ban hate speech, we might start banning other forms of expression, too.
- Jordan: Not necessarily. We already outlaw some kinds of speech because they are dangerous to the community—such as threatening the life of the President or shouting “Fire” in a crowded building. Why is banning hate speech any different?

Much the same kind of interaction might occur during a persuasive speech, except that the listener—in this case, Keisha—would respond to herself 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. Most important, you must anticipate possible objections the audience will raise to your point of view and then answer those objections 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. For this to work, you must 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.⁸

mental dialogue with the audience

The mental give-and-take between speaker and listener during a persuasive speech.

The Target Audience

Unfortunately, no matter how carefully you plot your speech, you will seldom be able to persuade all your listeners. Some will be so opposed to your views that you have absolutely no chance of changing their minds. Others will already agree with you, so there is no need to persuade them. 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*.

Concentrating on a target audience does not mean you should ignore or insult the rest of your listeners. You must always keep in mind the ideas and feelings of your entire audience. But no matter how noble your intentions or how hard you try, you can't persuade all the people all the time. It only makes sense, then, to decide which portion of the audience you *most* want to reach.

Advertising gives us an effective model. Successful commercials are aimed at particular segments of the market, and their appeals are picked to fit the target audience. 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—especially blue-collar men—because they drink the most beer. Soft-drink commercials? They are meant to hook young people, so they feature teenagers, play their kind of music, and echo their values.

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 observation, interviews, and questionnaires to find out where your classmates stand on your speech topic. This is your equivalent of market research. From it you can identify your target audience and the issues you will have to discuss to be convincing. 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 cannot persuade them no matter what I say. My questionnaires also show that 4 have already signed organ donor cards. I don't 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

target audience

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

Class Activity

Have students design, circulate, and tabulate an audience-analysis questionnaire (see Chapter 5, pp. 116–119) in advance of their persuasive speeches. From the questionnaire results, each student should be able to identify the target audience for his or her speech. Some instructors require that students write a two-page report—due on speech day—in which they (1) summarize the results of the questionnaire, (2) note what it revealed about the knowledge and attitudes of the audience with respect to the speech topic, (3) state what portion of the whole audience became the target audience for the speech, and (4) explain the steps they took to adapt their ideas to the target audience.

concerned about their body being “cut up or disfigured”; and 3 cite religious reasons for their opposition. The questionnaires also show that 10 of the 15 don’t fully understand the need for organ donors.

Cross-Reference
See Chapter 5 for full discussion of audience analysis and adaptation.

With all this information, Amy was able to put together a first-rate speech that focused specifically 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 to make a heart or liver available for transplant surgery, 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 as a way 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. We will look first at speeches on questions of fact, then at speeches on questions of value, and finally at speeches on questions of policy.

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. You can look up the answers in a reference book, and no reasonable person would dispute them. The answers are either right or wrong.

question of fact

A question about the truth or falsity of an assertion.

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? Will another major earthquake strike California before the year 2010?

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? Are daily megadoses of vitamins beneficial to human health? Did William Shakespeare really write the plays attributed to him? 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.

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. His or her 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 40 years, there is still much public 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 merely 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? And if so, for what reason? 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. It is up to the jury to decide which view of the facts is more persuasive.⁹

Organizing Speeches on Questions of Fact

Persuasive speeches on questions of fact are usually organized *topically*. Consider, for example, the presentation by NASA scientists in support of their claim that life existed on Mars several billion years ago. Speaking at a press conference carried live on CNN, the scientists put their case together

Teaching Tip

Make sure students understand the difference between an informative speech and a persuasive speech on a question of fact. The persuasive speech on a question of fact comes about in a situation where the audience entertains serious doubts about the facts of a case. Informative speeches are given in situations where the audience wants to learn about the facts and does not entertain serious doubts about the truth or falsity of those facts. If there is no controversy about the facts, there is no need for a persuasive speech on a question of fact.



Many persuasive speeches revolve around questions of fact. Here Detroit AFL-CIO President Donald Boggs discusses working conditions at a labor rally.

so that each main point presented a *reason* someone should agree with them. If that case were put in speech outline form, it would look like this:

- Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that life existed on Mars 3 billion years ago.
- Central Idea:* Scientific analysis of a Martian meteorite found in Antarctica indicates that life existed on Mars 3 billion years ago.
- Main Points:*
- I. The meteorite contains a type of molecule that can result from the decomposition of living organisms.
 - II. Crystals in the meteorite have the same shape as crystals formed by bacteria on Earth.
 - III. Crystals in the meteorite also contain other key similarities to crystals found in 3-billion-year-old fossils from Earth.

To take another example, suppose you are trying to persuade your classmates that genetically engineered crops pose serious dangers to the environment and to human health. Your specific purpose, central idea, and main points might be:

Overhead Transparency
For ease of classroom discussion, examples of specific purpose statements, central ideas, and main points for persuasive speeches on questions of fact are included in the binder of full-color overhead transparencies that accompanies *The Art of Public Speaking*.

- Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that genetically engineered crops pose serious dangers to the environment and to human health.
- Central Idea:* Genetically engineered crops have the potential to create major environmental and health hazards.
- Main Points:*
- I. Genetically engineering crops will create environmental havoc by harming beneficial insects while creating superbugs and superweeds that will be very difficult to control.
 - II. Genetically engineered crops will create health problems by introducing harmful toxins and allergens into foods without the knowledge of consumers.

Occasionally you might arrange a persuasive speech on a question of fact *spatially*. For example:

- Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that poaching of wild animals is a serious international problem.
- Central Idea:* Poaching is threatening the survival of animal species throughout the world.
- Main Points:*
- I. In Africa, poaching has claimed thousands of leopards, cheetahs, rhinoceroses, and elephants.
 - II. In Asia, poaching has all but eliminated Bengal tigers, snow leopards, and musk deer.
 - III. In South America, poaching has driven jaguars and swamp deer to the brink of extinction.

- IV. In North America, poaching has drastically reduced the number of bald eagles, grizzly bears, timber wolves, and giant otters.

Notice that in all these examples 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 the cloning of human beings 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 euthanasia. It can be discussed on a purely factual level by asking such questions as “How long can a person showing no brain activity be sustained on life support systems?” Or “How much does it cost to maintain such a person in a hospital or nursing home for one month?” Or “Are there any countries in which euthanasia is practiced legally?” These are factual questions. The answers you reach are independent of your belief about the morality of euthanasia.

But suppose you ask “Is it morally justifiable to remove life support systems from a living body?” Or “Is it acceptable to burden a family with the cost of maintaining life support when there is no hope for the patient's recovery?” Now you are dealing with questions of value. How you answer will depend not only on your factual knowledge about euthanasia, 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—not about the value of biking as a sport or a form of transportation. 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 no longer making a statement about your personal enjoyment of biking. Now 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?

Teaching Tip

Because values are less concrete than facts, students often think that a persuasive speech on a question of value is simply a matter of stating one's beliefs. If you assign a persuasive speech on a question of value, be sure to underscore the importance of justifying one's position in light of clearly defined criteria for value judgment.

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 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 do not always have to devote your first main point to setting forth the standards for your value judgment and the second to applying those standards to the topic of the speech. But you must make sure to justify your judgment against *some* identifiable standards. In the following example, notice how the speaker devotes her

Class Activity

Distribute copies of “Ghosts,” by Ken Lonquist, which is printed on pp. 473–475 of the *Instructor’s Manual*. Have students analyze the speech in light of the criteria for persuasive speeches on questions of value discussed in this chapter. For fuller discussion of this exercise, see the *Instructor’s Manual*, pp. 310–313. For an analysis of “Ghosts,” consult the *Instructor’s Manual*, pp. 476–477.

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. They do not urge listeners to *do* anything. 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.

Overhead Transparency
 For ease of classroom discussion, examples of specific purpose statements, central ideas, and main points for persuasive speeches on questions of value are included in the binder of full-color overhead transparencies that accompanies *The Art of Public Speaking*.

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 high-definition TV, 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 same-sex marriages be legalized?
- 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.

Class Activity
 To help students distinguish among questions of fact, value, and policy, assign the second Exercise for Critical Thinking at the end of this chapter. For full discussion of this activity, see the *Instructor’s Manual*, pp. 302–303.

How should colleges and universities deal with the problem of binge drinking?

Should the United States pay reparations to African Americans for the existence of slavery?

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 is crucial, for it will affect almost every aspect of your speech.

Speeches to Gain Passive Agreement

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 that the President should be chosen directly by the people rather than by the electoral college. But you will not urge the audience 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 SAT should no longer be used in determining college admission.

To persuade my audience that the federal government should require mandatory trunk safety releases on all cars sold in the United States.

To persuade my audience that school districts should not allow soft-drink companies to stock their products in school vending machines.

To persuade my audience that all sports teams should be required to change names and mascots that are demeaning to Native Americans.

In each of these cases, the speaker's aim is to affect the thinking of listeners—to convince them 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

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. Beyond convincing them that your cause is sound, you will try to rouse them to take action right away—to sign a petition for abolishing the electoral college, to campaign for lower tuition, to purchase organic foods, to contribute to a fund drive, to vote for a political candidate, to donate time to the Special Olympics, and so forth.

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.

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.



Persuasive speeches on questions of policy are given whenever people debate specific courses of action. To be effective, such speeches need to deal with the three basic issues of need, plan, and practicality.

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 presidential election.
- To persuade my audience to sign a petition against reducing student loans.
- To persuade my audience to start a regular exercise program.
- To persuade my audience to donate time to Habitat for Humanity.

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.

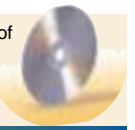
Action, however, reinforces belief. A great deal of research shows that if you can persuade a listener to take some kind of action—even if it is no more than signing a petition, putting a bumper sticker on a car, or attending a meeting—you have gained a more serious commitment. Once a listener acts on behalf of a speaker’s position, no matter if the action is minor, she or he is more likely to remain committed to the speaker’s position and to take future action in support of it.¹⁰

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 CD Video 15.1. The speaker’s aim was to convince her

Class Activity

The third Exercise for Critical Thinking at the end of this chapter gives students work in creating specific purpose statements both for policy speeches that seek passive agreement and for those that seek immediate action. The exercise also explores how the two kinds of persuasive speeches differ in structure and persuasive appeals. For full discussion of this exercise, see the *Instructor’s Manual*, pp. 306–307.

View this section of Rebecca Hanson, “Self-Defense on Campus.”



CD: VIDEO 15.1

classmates to sign up for a self-defense class. After showing why students need self-defense skills, she identified the self-defense classes available on and off campus and explained a bit about each of them. 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.¹¹

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:

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?

Is there a need for more student parking on campus?

Is there a need for new regulations governing the disposal of discarded computers?

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

Your first step is to convince listeners that there is a problem with things as they are. No doubt you have heard the old saying “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” 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. If you are speaking in favor of a new policy, you must prove to your listeners’ satisfaction that there is a serious problem with existing policy, that the problem will only get worse with time, and that action must be taken now to solve the problem. (Of course, you may be defending 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.)

burden of proof

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

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.

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?

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

What specific regulations should be implemented for the disposal of discarded computers?

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 to develop 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. For ex-

ample, if you advocate health care reform in the United States, you might follow the lead of some proponents and call for a program similar to that in Canada. When explaining your plan, you would state that Canada provides universal coverage for all medically necessary hospital visits and physician services. You might also note how Canada's system is funded and administered, the high quality of health care it provides, and any major modifications that would be needed to make it work in the United States. But whatever your plan, be sure to explain any aspects of it that might seriously affect your audience's willingness to accept it.

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.

New regulations would reduce the pollutants released into landfills by discarded computers, but instituting the program would be expensive and enforcement could be difficult.

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.¹² One way to provide this assurance is to show that a plan similar to yours has been successfully implemented elsewhere. For example, CD-ROM Video 15.2 shows an excerpt from a student speech calling for mandatory foreign-language instruction in elementary schools. As you view the clip, notice how the speaker clearly presents her plan and then points to the effectiveness of similar plans in other states and countries.

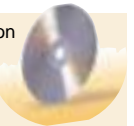
If you oppose a shift in policy, one of your major arguments will be that the change is impractical—that it will create more problems than it can solve. Many parents and educators, for instance, say that imposing standardized national tests for high-school graduation will destroy the autonomy of local school districts and result in federal control of classrooms in every part of the nation. Other opponents say that such tests will discriminate against late bloomers, racial and ethnic minorities, and other children with special needs. If listeners accept these arguments, they will probably decide that a policy requiring standardized national tests for high-school graduation should not be adopted.

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 dangers to the environment posed by discarded computers, 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

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?

View the discussion of practicality in Renee Varghese, "Multicultural, Multilingual!"



CD: VIDEO 15.2

Teaching Tip

Be sure to explain how important it is for speakers who advocate a change in policy to demonstrate the practicality of their plan. There are many issues on which people agree about the existence of a problem but disagree over the practicality of solutions to the problem. Persuasive speeches often fail because speakers do not give enough attention to the issue of practicality. For an excellent example of how to deal with practicality, see Susan Ingraham, “The Problem with Pennies,” at the end of this chapter.

about the problems in the U.S. health care system, 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 \$3.00 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 when discussing a question of policy, four special patterns are especially useful 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 action is needed to deal with the safety problems caused by motorists’ use of cell phones while driving.

Central Idea: Solving the safety problems caused by using a cell phone while driving will require action by individuals and government alike.

Main Points:

- I. The widespread use of cell phones by motorists has made driving much more dangerous.
 - A. Studies have shown that motorists are four to eight times more likely to be involved in an accident when they are using a cell phone.
 - B. In the past three years, an alarming number of fatalities have been blamed on drivers’ use of cell phones.
- II. The problem can be solved by a combination of individual and government action.
 - A. While driving, individuals should only use their cell phones for genuine emergencies.
 - B. Government should pass legislation restricting the use of cell phones while driving.

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.

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. Consider, for example, the following outline for a speech opposing the repeal of Title IX, the federal mandate that prohibits sex discrimination in education.

- Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that Title IX should not be repealed.
- Central Idea:* Title IX is a valuable law whose repeal would harm the growth of equal academic and athletic opportunities for women.
- Main Points:*
- I. Since it was passed in 1972, Title IX has dramatically expanded the athletic and academic opportunities for women on college campuses.
 - A. Title IX is best known for requiring colleges to provide equal sports programs for men and women.
 - B. Title IX is also responsible for opening educational doors that had been closed to women.
 - II. Repealing Title IX would eliminate the legal protection that helped make these gains possible.
 - A. If Title IX were repealed, colleges would no longer be required by law to provide equal academic or athletic opportunities for women.
 - B. If Title IX were repealed, the gains made to date would be imperiled and future progress would be in jeopardy.

Overhead Transparency
 For ease of classroom discussion, examples of specific purpose statements, central ideas, main points, and methods of organization for persuasive speeches on questions of policy are included in the binder of full-color overhead transparencies that accompanies *The Art of Public Speaking*.

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, if they choose to drink, they should take action to drink responsibly.
- Central Idea:* Excessive drinking among college students is a serious problem that can be combatted by choosing activities that are not alcohol-centered and by overcoming social pressure for excessive drinking.
- Main Points:*
- I. Excessive drinking remains a serious problem among college students.
 - A. Students who drink to excess tax a community's medical resources.

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. You can find some materials on the Internet, but specialized sources may only be available at the library.



View the conclusion of Joveta Dixon, "Responsible Drinking."



CD: VIDEO 15.3

- B. Students who drink to excess cause serious problems for themselves.
- II. Two causes of the problem specific to college life are social pressure and the large number of alcohol-centered activities.
 - A. College has an abundance of alcohol-centered activities.
 - B. There is also great social pressure on students to drink to excess.
- III. There are individual solutions to these problems that you can implement right away.
 - A. Choose enjoyable activities that are not alcohol-centered.
 - B. Learn to control social pressure for excess drinking.

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. Rather than dwelling on the problem, you would devote each main point to explaining why your solution is preferable to other proposed solutions.

Suppose you want to convince your audience that the U.S. space program should continue to shift its emphasis from highly glamorous staffed flights such as the space shuttle to unstaffed scientific missions that gather information about other planets and the nature of the solar system. Using comparative advantages order, you would compare unstaffed scientific missions with staffed space flights and show why the former is a better choice. Your specific purpose, central idea, and main points might look like this:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that the U.S. space program should continue to put greater priority on unstaffed scientific missions that gather information about the planets and the solar system.

Central Idea: Unstaffed scientific missions are less costly and more beneficial than staffed space flights.

Main Points:

- I. Unstaffed scientific missions are far less costly than staffed space flights.
- II. Unstaffed scientific missions provide many more practical benefits than staffed space flights.

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:¹³

1. *Attention.* First you gain the attention of your audience. You do this in the introduction 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.* Having captured the interest of your audience, you next make them 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—statistics, examples, and testimony—that relate directly to the audience's values or vital interests. 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

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.

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.

do—and how to do it. Give them the address to write. Tell them where they should go to join the Young Republicans. Show them how to sign up for counseling. 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:

Class Activity

As a homework assignment, have each student select a television commercial that is organized according to Monroe's motivated sequence. Each student should prepare a brief analysis (1) identifying the target audience for the commercial and (2) describing each step in the motivated sequence as it appears in the commercial. Lead a class discussion in which students present the results of their work. Be sure to make connections between the commercials and the ways students can use the motivated sequence in their speeches.

- 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 hay fever or other 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

THE
INTERNET
Connection

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 websites of organizations that take opposing views. For example, if your topic is stem cell research, visit both the Stem Cell Research Foundation (www.stemcellresearchfoundation.org) and Do No Harm: The Coalition of Americans for Research Ethics (www.pop.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.gunfree.org).

If you want your listeners to take action by writing to their U.S. Senator or Representative, encourage them to use e-mail. For a list of Senate e-mail addresses, see Contacting the Senate (<http://www.senate.gov/contacting/index.cfm>). For assistance in contacting members of the House, log on to www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW_by_State.htm.

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 apartment 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 problem 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

Cross-Reference

For student speeches that follow Monroe's motivated sequence, see Rebecca Hanson, "Self-Defense on Campus" (Chapter 16, pp. 406–408) and Dawn Follendorf, "To Save a Child" (Appendix, pp. A16–A18). Both speeches are also available as part of the videotape supplement to *The Art of Public Speaking*.

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 entirely 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 help children around the globe by contributing to an organization called Compassion International. In its full form, the outline included supporting materials for all the points in the speech.

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience to help children worldwide by contributing to Compassion International.

Central Idea: Contributing to an organization such as Compassion International can help break the cycle of poverty that affects millions of children.

Introduction

Attention:

- I. For every morning that you wake up and eat breakfast, millions of children begin their daily struggle with chronic hunger and poverty.
- II. By sponsoring a child for two years through an organization called Compassion International, I have seen the difference it can make in a child's life.
- III. Today, I would like to encourage all of you to become involved with Compassion International.

Body

Need:

- I. Millions of children in developing countries suffer from poverty, hunger, and lack of education.
 - A. Poverty destroys the quality of life for children in developing countries from Asia to South America.
 - B. Hunger takes the lives of almost 20,000 children under the age of five each day.
 - C. Lack of education helps perpetuate the vicious cycle of hunger and poverty.

Satisfaction:

- II. Groups such as Compassion International can help break this cycle.
 - A. Founded in 1952, Compassion International provides food, clothing, education, shelter, and health care for children in 22 countries across the globe.
 - B. You can sponsor a child for just \$28 a month.
 - C. For two years I have been sponsoring a little boy in Ecuador named José Francisco.

Teaching Tip

Remind students who use the motivated sequence that the attention step is completed in the introduction, that the need, satisfaction and visualization steps each constitute a main point in the body of the speech, and that the action step is taken in the conclusion. Encourage students to refer to the sample outline on this page if they have questions as they construct their speeches. For the full text of this speech, see pp. A12–A14 in the appendix of sample speeches for analysis and discussion.

- Visualization:*
- III. Compassion International has an impressive record as a truly effective charity.
 - A. According to the Better Business Bureau, 78 percent of donated funds go directly to the children.
 - B. Internal and external audits ensure that all funds are properly received, tracked, and managed for each child.
 - C. *Smart Money* magazine ranks Compassion International as one of the top 10 charities in the United States.



Class Activity
 See the third and fourth Additional Exercises for Critical Thinking on pp. 318–319 of the *Instructor’s Manual* for enjoyable activities that give students practice working with the motivated sequence.

Conclusion

- Action:*
- I. So I encourage each of you to sponsor a child through Compassion International.
 - II. As Compassion International states, “while we cannot individually change the world, we can change the world for one child.”

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 was presented in a public speaking class.¹⁴ It deals with a question of policy and provides an excellent example of problem-solution structure.

As you read the speech, notice how the speaker deals with the issues of need, plan, and practicality. Notice also how she anticipates the potential objections of her audience and answers those objections at various stages of the speech. Finally, observe how clear and uncluttered the speech is. There are few wasted words, and the ideas progress cleanly and crisply.

The Problem with Pennies	
Commentary	Speech
<p>The opening quotations capture attention with their clever variations on traditional sayings about pennies.</p> <p>The contrast between the three traditional sayings quoted here and the variations on those sayings presented in paragraph 1 provides a witty way for the speaker to lead</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Susan Ingraham</p> <p>“A nickel for your thoughts,” “A nickel saved is a nickel earned,” “Nickels from heaven.”</p> <p>Okay, maybe these phrases don’t have quite the same ring as the original sayings—“A penny for your thoughts,” “A penny saved is a penny earned,” and “Pennies from heaven.” But it’s a fact of our nation’s economic life that the penny is becoming</p>

into revealing her topic and stating her central idea. The final sentence of this paragraph—"It's time to let this dinosaur of our economy go extinct"—is especially effective.

The speaker begins this paragraph with three questions that most listeners have in their minds at this stage of the speech. By stating that she changed her mind about these questions as a result of her research, the speaker suggests that listeners should change their minds too.

The speaker starts the body of her speech by stating her first main point—that pennies cause problems for individuals, for businesses, and for the nation as a whole. Her repeated use of "you" throughout this paragraph relates the topic to the audience and helps draw them into the speech.

The speaker uses statistics and an example to support her claim that many people don't use pennies. The story from Noel Gunther works well because it is richly textured and recounts a situation with which many college students can identify.

The statistics in this paragraph are presented clearly and come from credible sources. Although most listeners were skeptical at the start of this speech about the need to abolish pennies, the strength of the speaker's evidence won most of them over by the end.

In this and the next paragraph, the speaker presents a combination of statistics and tes-

obsolete. Inflation over the past few decades has been the death of penny candy, penny arcades, and penny bubble gum. The fact is that pennies don't buy much of anything any more. The age of the penny is over. It's time to let this dinosaur of our economy go extinct.

Sure, most of you say, pennies can be annoying. But why do we have to get rid of them? Why must we change something that's worked for so long? And what would we do without pennies? I had the same questions when I started work on this speech. But as a result of my research, I'm convinced that the continued use of pennies is a costly problem and that we can get along just fine without them. Today, I hope to convince you of the same thing.

The place to begin is by noting that pennies cause problems for individuals, for businesses, and for the nation as a whole. Many Americans consider pennies a useless annoyance. According to my class survey, about two-thirds of you find pennies bothersome. They take up space and add weight to your pockets, wallets, and purses. They get in the way when you're trying to find other coins. They slow down checkout lines when you have to search for exact change. And most of the time when you really need coins—for copy machines, pay phones, and vending machines—you can't use pennies anyway.

In fact, many people don't use pennies. A survey by the U.S. Mint showed that only half of the 12,000 people questioned use pennies on a daily basis. Most of the other half collect pennies around the house, waiting until they have enough to cash in at the bank. It can be a long wait. In a *Los Angeles Times* article, writer Noel Gunther explained that during his last two years in college, he and his roommate saved all their pennies so they could throw a "Pennies from Heaven" party for graduation. They filled six jars with what looked like a fortune. The day before graduation, they emptied the jars and counted out \$21.56—barely enough to buy beverages!

Pennies are a nuisance for the business community as well as for individuals. The National Association of Convenience Stores estimates that an average of two seconds is spent handling pennies during each of its members' 10 billion annual cash transactions. That comes out to a total of 5.5 million hours spent handling pennies—at an annual cost of \$22 million. According to *Fortune* magazine, some banks charge up to 30 cents for every dollar's worth of pennies they process. This makes it very costly for some businesses to accept pennies.

Keeping pennies in circulation also costs the nation as a whole. Every year the Treasury Department takes about 7 bil-

timony to demonstrate the problems created for the nation as a whole by keeping pennies in circulation.

The evidence in this paragraph is particularly strong and builds cumulatively to the statement, based on testimony from U.S. Treasury officials, that “it costs our society considerably more than a penny to transact a penny’s worth of business.”

A transition bridging the first and second main points helps listeners keep track of where the speaker is in the speech.

Now the speaker moves into her second main point, in which she presents a solution to the problems caused by pennies. The solution has four steps, each of which is explained clearly and concisely so listeners will understand exactly what the speaker is proposing.

By demonstrating how her plan will work, the speaker answers the potential objections of her audience to the plan. Notice how much less effective the speech would have been if the speaker had failed to explain the procedures by which purchases and sales taxes would be rounded off to the nearest nickel.

The speaker reaches the final step in her plan, which calls for the total elimination of pennies from the economy.

Having presented her plan, the speaker now shows its practicality. In this paragraph, she

lion pennies out of circulation because they are bent or worn out. According to the Treasury Department, several billion more pennies go into mayonnaise jars, coffee cans, piggy banks, and dresser drawers. Or they are simply thrown away. In the survey mentioned earlier in my speech, the U.S. Mint reported that 6 percent of American adults simply jettison their pennies with the trash!

To keep an adequate supply of pennies in circulation, the U.S. Mint creates approximately 12 billion new pennies each year. The cost of manufacturing these new pennies is .66 of a cent apiece, which adds up to almost \$80 million a year. As Treasury officials told *U.S. News & World Report*, when you add on storage and handling expenses, it costs our society considerably more than a penny to transact a penny’s worth of business.

You can now see the magnitude of the problem with pennies. Fortunately, it’s a problem that can be easily solved.

The solution I recommend is similar to a plan supported by the Coin Coalition, a group working to eliminate pennies from our economy. The plan has four basic steps. First, the federal government should legalize and standardize the rounding off of all purchases to the nearest nickel. This rounding off should take place after all items in a given transaction are totaled but before the sales tax is added. Because the number of purchases rounded up would roughly equal the number rounded down, this would not cause any increased cost to consumers.

Second, the sales tax should also be rounded off to the nearest nickel. Both the customer and the state would stand an equal chance of gaining or losing a maximum of two cents on each purchase. In essence, this is no different from what you do when you file your income taxes—except that in computing your income taxes, you round everything off to the nearest dollar.

Because the first two steps of this plan will eliminate the need for pennies, the third step is for the U.S. Mint to stop making new pennies. As we have seen, this will save the taxpayers some \$80 million a year in minting costs alone.

The fourth step of this plan is for people to cash in the pennies already in circulation, thereby removing pennies entirely from the money supply.

I admit that it may be hard to imagine a world without pennies, but there is plenty of evidence that this plan will work.

argues that pennies can be eliminated from the U.S. economy today as easily as half-cent coins were eliminated during the nineteenth century.

Here the speaker reinforces the practicality of her plan by relating it to the everyday experiences of her audience. Dealing with questions of practicality is especially important in a speech such as this in which listeners are likely to be skeptical about the speaker's plan.

The speaker begins her conclusion by summarizing her main points.

The closing sentence of the speech is especially effective. By echoing the introduction in tone as well as content, it gives the speech a strong sense of closure and reinforces the speaker's point that eliminating pennies from the economy can be easily accomplished.

James Benfield, Executive Director of the Coin Coalition, notes that when the U.S. stopped minting half-cent coins in 1857, a similar procedure of rounding off purchases and phasing out the coins worked extremely well. None of us miss the half-cent, and in a few years none of us will miss the penny.

Whether we realize it or not, many of us already round off some of our purchases to the nearest nickel. Think for a moment of the "Take a Penny, Leave a Penny" containers next to the cash registers at local convenience stores. Every time you take a few pennies from the box to pay for your purchase or leave a few pennies from your change, you are actually rounding off the amount you pay to the nearest nickel.

In conclusion, pennies create problems for individuals, for businesses, and for the nation as a whole. The time and money currently wasted in using and minting pennies could be put to more productive ends. By rounding off purchases and sales taxes to the nearest nickel, by ending production of new pennies, and by letting old pennies drop out of use, the problems created by pennies could be eliminated without upsetting the economy. And just as we have gotten used to life without penny candy, penny arcades, and penny bubble gum, so I think, given time, we will also get used to the phrase "a nickel saved is a nickel earned."

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. Your job is to sell a program, to defend an idea, to refute an opponent, or to inspire people to action. 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 particular persuasive speech will depend above all on how well you tailor your message to the values, attitudes, and beliefs of your audience. Careful listeners do not sit passively and soak in everything a speaker has to say. While they listen, they actively assess the speaker's credibility, supporting materials, language, reasoning, and emotional appeals.

You should think of your speech as a kind of mental dialogue with your audience. Most important, you need to identify your target audience, anticipate the possible objections they will raise to your point of view, and answer those objections in your speech. You cannot convert skeptical listeners unless you deal directly with the reasons for their skepticism.

Persuasive speeches may center on questions of fact, questions of value, or questions of policy. Some questions of fact can be answered absolutely. Others cannot—either because the facts are murky or because there is not enough information available to us. 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 go beyond the immediate facts to 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. Although questions of value often have strong implications for our actions, 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, whose five steps are based on the psychology of persuasion.

Regardless of your speech 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. In this regard, as in others, you should aim at the highest standards and construct your speech so it will be ethical as well as convincing.

Key Terms

persuasion (2)	need (16)
mental dialogue with the audience (6)	burden of proof (16)
target audience (7)	plan (16)
question of fact (8)	practicality (17)
question of value (11)	problem-solution order (18)
question of policy (13)	problem-cause-solution order (19)
speech to gain passive agreement (14)	comparative advantages order (21)
speech to gain immediate action (14)	Monroe's motivated sequence (21)

Review these terms by doing the Chapter 15 crossword puzzle at www.mhhe.com/lucas8.



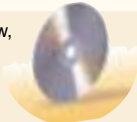
ONLINE LEARNING CENTER

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?
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?

For further review, go to the Study Questions for this chapter



CD: STUDY QUESTIONS

Exercises for Critical Thinking

1. Look back at the story of Ramon Trujillo at the beginning of this chapter (page 2). 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 on television is a major cause of violent behavior in society.
 - 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 (“The Problem with Pennies,” pages 25–28). Because this is a speech on a question of policy, pay special attention to how the speaker deals with the three basic issues of need, plan, and practicality. Does the speaker present a convincing case that a serious problem exists? Does she offer a clear plan to solve the problem? Does she demonstrate that the plan is practical?
 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 Dawn Follendorf, “To Save a Child,” in the appendix of sample speeches for analysis and discussion (pages A12–A14). Because this speech is organized in Monroe’s motivated sequence, pay special

Cross-Reference

For discussion of the Exercises for Critical Thinking, see the *Instructor’s Manual*, pp. 312–320. For additional exercises, check the *Instructor’s Manual*, pp. 320–324, as well as the five volumes of *Selections from the Speech Communication Teacher* that accompany *The Art of Public Speaking*.

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.

Cross-Reference

For discussion of this Applying the Power of Public Speaking scenario, see the *Instructor's Manual*, pp. 320–321.

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 at all 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?

NOTES

¹There are many competing definitions of persuasion. Mine is drawn from Gerald R. Miller, "On Being Persuaded: Some Basic Distinctions," in James Price Dillard and Michael Pfau (eds.), *The Persuasion Handbook: Developments in Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), pp. 3–16.

²Amanda Bennett, "Economics + A = Zillion Causes and Effects," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 10, 1995, p. B1.

³Herbert W. Simons, *Persuasion in Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), p. 12.

⁴For an excellent review of the major theories of persuasion, see Dillard and Pfau, *Persuasion Handbook*, Chaps. 6–14.

⁵See Richard L. Johannesen, *Ethics in Human Communication*, 5th ed. (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2002), for a comprehensive look at communication ethics.

⁶Adapted from Simons, *Persuasion in Society*, p. 30.

⁷This view of the interaction between speaker and listener reflects cognitive processing models of persuasion in general and the Elaboration Likelihood Model in particular. For a concise explanation of the latter, see Em Griffin, *A First Look at Communication Theory*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), pp. 197–208.

⁸A great deal of research confirms the need for persuasive speakers to answer potential objections to their arguments. For a comprehensive review of research on this subject, see Daniel J. O'Keefe, "How to Handle Opposing Arguments in Persuasive Messages: A Meta-Analytic Review of the Effects of One-Sided and Two-Sided Messages," in *Communication Yearbook 22* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999), pp. 209–249.

- ⁹For a superb look at the research on courtroom persuasion, see John C. Reinard, "Persuasion in the Legal Setting," in Dillard and Pfau, *Persuasion Handbook*, pp. 543–602.
- ¹⁰See Jerry M. Burger, "The Foot-in-the-Door Compliance Procedure: A Multiple-Process Analysis and Review," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3 (1999), pp. 303–325.
- ¹¹Daniel J. O'Keefe, *Persuasion: Theory and Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), pp. 218–219.
- ¹²Kim Witte and Mike Allen, "A Meta-Analysis of Fear Appeals: Implications for Effective Public Health Campaigns," *Health Education and Behavior*, 27 (2000), pp. 591–615.
- ¹³Raymie E. McKerrow, Bruce E. Gronbeck, Douglas Ehninger, and Alan H. Monroe, *Principles and Types of Public Speaking*, 15th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003).
- ¹⁴Reprinted with permission of Susan Ingraham.