Chapter 11

Informative and Persuasive Speaking

Communicative messages surround us. Most try to teach us something and/or influence our thoughts or behaviors. As with any type of communication, some messages are more engaging and effective than others. I'm sure you have experienced the displeasure of sitting through a boring class lecture that didn't seem to relate to your interests or a lecture so packed with information that your brain felt overloaded. Likewise, you have probably been persuaded by a message only to find out later that the argument that persuaded you was faulty or the speaker misleading. As senders and receivers of messages, it's important that we be able to distinguish between informative and persuasive messages and know how to create and deliver them.

11.1 Informative Speeches

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify common topic categories for informative speeches.
2. Identify strategies for researching and supporting informative speeches.
3. Explain the different methods of informing.
4. Employ strategies for effective informative speaking, including avoiding persuasion, avoiding information overload, and engaging the audience.

Many people would rather go see an impassioned political speech or a comedic monologue than a lecture. Although informative speaking may not be the most exciting form of public speaking, it is the most common. Reports, lectures, training seminars, and demonstrations are all examples of informative speaking. That means you are more likely to give and listen to informative speeches in a variety of contexts. Some organizations, like consulting firms, and career fields, like training and development, are solely aimed at conveying information. College alumni have reported that out of many different speech skills, informative speaking is most important.Rudolph Verderber, *Essentials of Informative Speaking: Theory and Contexts* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991), 3. Since your exposure to informative speaking is inevitable, why not learn how to be a better producer and consumer of informative messages?

Creating an Informative Speech

As you'll recall from Chapter 9 "Preparing a Speech", speaking to inform is one of the three possible general purposes for public speaking. The goal of **informative speaking**[1] is to teach an audience something using objective factual information. Interestingly, informative speaking is a newcomer in the world of public speaking theorizing and instruction, which began thousands of years ago with the ancient Greeks.Thomas H. Olbricht, *Informative Speaking* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1968), 1–12. Ancient philosophers and statesmen like Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian conceived of public speaking as rhetoric, which is inherently persuasive. During that time, and until the 1800s, almost all speaking was argumentative. Teaching and instruction were performed as debates, and even fields like science and medicine relied on argumentative reasoning instead of factual claims.

1. Speaking to teach an audience something using factual objective information.

Until the 1800s, even scientific fields and medicine relied on teaching that was based on debate and argument rather than the informative-based instruction that is used today.

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While most instruction is now verbal, for most of modern history, people learned by doing rather than listening, as apprenticeships were much more common than classroom-based instruction. So what facilitated the change from argumentative and demonstrative teaching to verbal and informative teaching? One reason for this change was the democratization of information. Technical information used to be jealously protected by individuals, families, or guilds. Now society generally believes that information should be shared and made available to all. The increasing complexity of fields of knowledge and professions also increased the need for informative speaking. Now one must learn a history or backstory before actually engaging with a subject or trade. Finally, much of the information that has built up over time has become commonly accepted; therefore much of the history or background information isn't disputed and can now be shared in an informative rather than argumentative way.

Choosing an Informative Speech Topic

Being a successful informative speaker starts with choosing a topic that can engage and educate the audience. Your topic choices may be influenced by the level at which you are speaking. Informative speaking usually happens at one of three levels: formal, vocational, and impromptu.Rudolph Verderber, *Essentials of Informative Speaking: Theory and Contexts* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991), 3–4. Formal informative speeches occur when an audience has assembled specifically to hear what you have to say. Being invited to speak to a group during a professional meeting, a civic gathering, or a celebration gala brings with it high expectations. Only people who have accomplished or achieved much are asked to serve as keynote speakers, and they usually speak about these experiences. Many more people deliver informative speeches at the vocational level, as part of their careers. Teachers like me spend many hours lecturing, which is a common form of informative speaking. In addition, human resources professionals give presentations about changes in policy and provide training for new employees, technicians in factories convey machine specifications and safety procedures, and servers describe how a dish is prepared in their restaurant. Last, we all convey information daily in our regular interactions. When we give a freshman directions to a campus building, summarize the latest episode of *American Idol* for our friend who missed it, or explain a local custom to an international student, we are engaging in impromptu informative speaking.

Whether at the formal, vocational, or impromptu level, informative speeches can emerge from a range of categories, which include objects, people, events, processes, concepts, and issues. An extended speech at the formal level may include subject matter from several of these categories, while a speech at the vocational level may convey detailed information about a process, concept, or issue relevant to a specific career.

Since we don't have time to research or organize content for impromptu informative speaking, these speeches may provide a less detailed summary of a topic within one of these categories. A broad informative speech topic could be tailored to fit any of these categories. As you draft your specific purpose and thesis statements, think about which category or categories will help you achieve your speech goals, and then use it or them to guide your research. Table 11.1 "Sample Informative Speech Topics by Category" includes an example of how a broad informative subject area like renewable energy can be adapted to each category as well as additional sample topics.

Subjects of informative speaking at the vocational level usually relate to a speaker's professional experience or expertise.

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Table 11.1 Sample Informative Speech Topics by Category

Category	Renewable Energy Example	Other Examples
Objects	Biomass gasifier	Tarot cards, star-nosed moles, Enterprise 1701-D
People	Al Gore	Jennifer Lopez, Bayard Rustin, the Amish
Concepts	Sustainability	Machismo, intuition, Wa (social harmony)
Events	Earth Day	Pi Day, Take Back the Night, 2012 presidential election
Processes	Converting wind to energy	Scrapbooking, animal hybridization, Academy Awards voting
Issues	Nuclear safety	Cruise ship safety, identity theft, social networking and privacy

Speeches about objects convey information about any nonhuman material things. Mechanical objects, animals, plants, and fictional objects are all suitable topics of investigation. Given that this is such a broad category, strive to pick an object that

your audience may not be familiar with or highlight novel relevant and interesting facts about a familiar object.

Speeches about people focus on real or fictional individuals who are living or dead. These speeches require in-depth biographical research; an encyclopedia entry is not sufficient. Introduce a new person to the audience or share little-known or surprising information about a person we already know. Although we may already be familiar with the accomplishments of historical figures and leaders, audiences often enjoy learning the "personal side" of their lives.

Speeches about concepts are less concrete than speeches about objects or people, as they focus on ideas or notions that may be abstract or multifaceted. A concept can be familiar to us, like equality, or could literally be a foreign concept like *qi* (or *chi*), which is the Chinese conception of the energy that flows through our bodies. Use the strategies discussed in this book for making content relevant and proxemic to your audience to help make abstract concepts more concrete.

Speeches about events focus on past occasions or ongoing occurrences. A particular day in history, an annual observation, or a seldom occurring event can each serve as interesting informative topics. As with speeches about people, it's important to provide a backstory for the event, but avoid rehashing commonly known information.

Informative speeches about processes provide a step-by-step account of a procedure or natural occurrence. Speakers may walk an audience through, or demonstrate, a series of actions that take place to complete a procedure, such as making homemade cheese. Speakers can also present information about naturally occurring processes like cell division or fermentation.

Last, informative speeches about issues provide objective and balanced information about a disputed subject or a matter of concern for society. It is important that speakers view themselves as objective reporters rather than commentators to avoid tipping the balance of the speech from informative to persuasive. Rather than advocating for a particular position, the speaker should seek to teach or raise the awareness of the audience.

Informative speeches about processes provide steps of a procedure, such as how to make homemade cheese.

Researching an Informative Speech Topic

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Having sharp research skills is a fundamental part of being a good informative speaker. Since informative speaking is supposed to convey factual information, speakers should take care to find sources that are objective, balanced, and credible. Periodicals, books, newspapers, and credible websites can all be useful sources for informative speeches, and you can use the guidelines for evaluating supporting materials discussed in Chapter 9 "Preparing a Speech" to determine the best information to include in your speech. Aside from finding credible and objective sources, informative speakers also need to take time to find engaging information. This is where sharp research skills are needed to cut through all the typical information that comes up in the research process to find novel information. Novel information is atypical or unexpected, but it takes more skill and effort to locate. Even seemingly boring informative speech topics like the history of coupons can be brought to life with information that defies the audience's expectations. A student recently delivered an engaging speech about coupons by informing us that coupons have been around for 125 years, are most frequently used by wealthier and more educated households, and that a coupon fraud committed by an Italian American businessman named Charles Ponzi was the basis for the term *Ponzi scheme*, which is still commonly used today.

As a teacher, I can attest to the challenges of keeping an audience engaged during an informative presentation. While it's frustrating to look out at my audience of students and see glazed-over eyes peering back at me, I also know that it is my responsibility to choose interesting information and convey it in a way that's engaging. Even though the core content of what I teach hasn't change dramatically over the years, I constantly challenge myself to bring that core information to life through application and example. As we learned earlier, finding proxemic and relevant information and examples is typically a good way to be engaging. The basic information may not change quickly, but the way people use it and the way it relates to our lives changes. Finding current, relevant examples and finding novel information are both difficult, since you, as the researcher, probably don't know this information exists.

Here is where good research skills become necessary to be a good informative speaker. Using advice from Chapter 9 "Preparing a Speech" should help you begin to navigate through the seas of information to find hidden treasure that excites you and will in turn excite your audience.

As was mentioned earlier, the goal for informative speaking is to teach your audience. An audience is much more likely to remain engaged when they are actively learning. This is like a balancing act. You want your audience to be challenged enough by the information you are presenting to be interested, but not so challenged that they become overwhelmed and shut down. You should take care to consider how much information your audience already knows about a topic. Be aware that speakers who are very familiar with their speech topic tend to overestimate their audience's knowledge about the topic. It's better to engage your topic at a level slightly below your audience's knowledge level than above. Most people won't be bored by a brief review, but many people become lost and give up listening if they can't connect to the information right away or feel it's over their heads.

To avoid boring an audience, effective informative speakers possess good research skills and the ability to translate information to be engaging and relevant for an audience.

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A good informative speech leaves the audience thinking long after the speech is done. Try to include some practical "takeaways" in your speech. I've learned many interesting and useful things from the informative speeches my students have done. Some of the takeaways are more like trivia information that is interesting to share—for example, how prohibition led to the creation of NASCAR. Other takeaways are more practical and useful—for example, how to get wine stains out of clothing and carpet or explanations of various types of student financial aid.

Organizing and Supporting an Informative Speech

You can already see that informing isn't as easy as we may initially think. To effectively teach, a speaker must present quality information in an organized and accessible way. Once you have chosen an informative speech topic and put your research skills to the test in order to locate novel and engaging information, it's time to organize and support your speech.

Organizational Patterns

Three organizational patterns that are particularly useful for informative speaking are topical, chronological, and spatial. As you'll recall, to organize a speech topically, you break a larger topic down into logical subdivisions. An informative speech about labor unions could focus on unions in three different areas of employment, three historically significant strikes, or three significant legal/legislative decisions. Speeches organized chronologically trace the development of a topic or overview the steps in a process. An informative speech could trace the

rise of the economic crisis in Greece or explain the steps in creating a home compost pile. Speeches organized spatially convey the layout or physical characteristics of a location or concept. An informative speech about the layout of a fire station or an astrology wheel would follow a spatial organization pattern.

Methods of Informing

Types of and strategies for incorporating supporting material into speeches are discussed in Chapter 9 "Preparing a Speech", but there are some specific ways to go about developing ideas within informative speeches. Speakers often inform an audience using definitions, descriptions, demonstrations, and explanations. It is likely that a speaker will combine these methods of informing within one speech, but a speech can also be primarily organized using one of these methods.

Informing through Definition

Informing through definition[2] entails defining concepts clearly and concisely and is an important skill for informative speaking. There are several ways a speaker can inform through definition: synonyms and antonyms, use or function, example, and etymology.Rudolph Verderber, *Essentials of Informative Speaking: Theory and Contexts* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991), 53–55. Defining a concept using a synonym or an antonym is a short and effective way to convey meaning. Synonyms are words that have the same or similar meanings, and antonyms are words that have opposite meanings. In a speech about how to effectively inform an audience, I would claim that using concrete words helps keep an audience engaged. I could enhance your understanding of what *concrete* means by defining it with synonyms like *tangible* and *relatable*. Or I could define *concrete* using antonyms like *abstract* and *theoretical*.

Identifying the use or function of an object, item, or idea is also a short way of defining. We may think we already know the use and function of most of the things we interact with regularly. This is true in obvious cases like cars, elevators, and smartphones. But there are many objects and ideas that we may rely on and interact with but not know the use or function. For example, QR codes (or quick response codes) are popping up in magazines, at airports, and even on t-shirts.Andy Vuong, “Wanna Read That QR Code? Get the Smartphone App,” *The Denver Post*, April 18, 2011, accessed March 6, 2012, http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_17868932. Many people may notice them but not know what they do. As a speaker, you could define QR codes by their function by informing the audience that QR codes allow businesses, organizations, and individuals to get information to consumers/receivers through a barcode-like format that can be easily scanned by most smartphones.

2. Informing by defining concepts clearly and concisely using synonyms or antonyms, use or function, examples, or etymology.

An informative speaker could teach audience members about QR codes by defining them based on their use or function.

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A speaker can also define a topic using examples, which are cited cases that are representative of a larger concept. In an informative speech about anachronisms in movies and literature, a speaker might provide the following examples: the film *Titanic* shows people on lifeboats using flashlights to look for survivors from the sunken ship (such flashlights weren't invented until two years later);The Past in Pictures, "Teaching Using Movies: Anachronisms!" accessed March 6, 2012, http://www.thepastinthepictures.wildelearning.co.uk/Introductoryunit!.htm. Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar* includes a reference to a clock, even though no mechanical clocks existed during Caesar's time.Scholasticus K, "Anachronism Examples in Literature," February 2, 2012, accessed March 6, 2012, http://www.buzzle.com/articles/anachronism-examples-in-literature.html. Examples are a good way to repackage information that's already been presented to help an audience retain and understand the content of a speech. Later we'll learn more about how repackaging information enhances informative speaking.

Etymology refers to the history of a word. Defining by etymology entails providing an overview of how a word came to its current meaning. The *Oxford English Dictionary* is the best source for finding etymology and often contains interesting facts that can be presented as novel information to better engage your audience. For example, the word *assassin*, which refers to a person who intentionally murders another, literally means "hashish-eater" and comes from the Arabic word *hashshashin*. The current meaning emerged during the Crusades as a result of the practices of a sect of Muslims who would get high on hashish before killing Christian leaders—in essence, assassinating them.Oxford English Dictionary Online, accessed March 6, 2012, http://www.oed.com.

Informing through Description

As the saying goes, "Pictures are worth a thousand words." **Informing through description**[3] entails creating verbal pictures for your audience. Description is also an important part of informative speeches that use a spatial organizational pattern, since you need to convey the layout of a space or concept. Good descriptions are based on good observations, as they convey what is taken in through the senses and answer these type of questions: What did that look like? Smell like? Sound like? Feel like? Taste like? If descriptions are vivid and well written, they can actually invoke a sensory reaction in your audience. Just as your mouth probably begins to salivate when I suggest that you imagine biting into a fresh, bright yellow, freshly cut, juicy

3. Informing by creating detailed verbal pictures.

lemon wedge, so can your audience be transported to a setting or situation through your descriptions. I once had a student set up his speech about the history of streaking by using the following description: "Imagine that you are walking across campus to your evening class. You look up to see a parade of hundreds upon hundreds of your naked peers jogging by wearing little more than shoes."

Informing through Demonstration

When **informing through demonstration**[4], a speaker gives verbal directions about how to do something while also physically demonstrating the steps. Early morning infomercials are good examples of demonstrative speaking, even though they are also trying to persuade us to buy their "miracle product." Whether straightforward or complex, it's crucial that a speaker be familiar with the content of their speech and the physical steps necessary for the demonstration. Speaking while completing a task requires advanced psycho-motor skills that most people can't wing and therefore need to practice. Tasks suddenly become much more difficult than we expect when we have an audience. Have you ever had to type while people are reading along with you? Even though we type all the time, even one extra set of eyes seems to make our fingers more clumsy than usual.

Television chefs are excellent examples of speakers who frequently inform through demonstration. While many of them make the process of speaking while cooking look effortless, it took much practice over many years to make viewers think it is effortless.

Part of this practice also involves meeting time limits. Since television segments are limited and chefs may be demonstrating and speaking live, they have to be able to adapt as needed. Demonstration speeches are notorious for going over time, especially if speakers haven't practiced with their visual aids / props. Be prepared to condense or edit as needed to meet your time limit. The reality competition show *The Next Food Network Star* captures these difficulties, as many experienced cooks who have the content knowledge and know how to physically complete their tasks fall apart when faced with a camera challenge because they just assumed they could speak and cook at the same time.

Television chefs inform through demonstration. Although they make it seem easy, it is complex and difficult.

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4. Informing by giving verbal directions about how to do something while also physically demonstrating the steps.

Tips for Demonstration Speeches

1. Include personal stories and connections to the topic, in addition to the "how-to" information, to help engage your audience.
2. Ask for audience volunteers (if appropriate) to make the demonstration more interactive.
3. Include a question-and-answer period at the end (if possible) so audience members can ask questions and seek clarification.
4. Follow an orderly progression. Do not skip around or backtrack when reviewing the steps.
5. Use clear signposts like *first*, *second*, and *third*.
6. Use orienting material like internal previews and reviews, and transitions.
7. Group steps together in categories, if needed, to help make the information more digestible.
8. Assess the nonverbal feedback of your audience. Review or slow down if audience members look lost or confused.
9. Practice with your visual aids / props many times. Things suddenly become more difficult and complicated than you expect when an audience is present.
10. Practice for time and have contingency plans if you need to edit some information out to avoid going over your time limit.

Informing through Explanation

Informing through explanation[5] entails sharing how something works, how something came to be, or why something happened. This method of informing may be useful when a topic is too complex or abstract to demonstrate. When presenting complex information make sure to break the topic up into manageable units, avoid information overload, and include examples that make the content relevant to the audience. Informing through explanation works well with speeches about processes, events, and issues. For example, a speaker could explain the context surrounding the Lincoln-Douglas debates or the process that takes place during presidential primaries.

5. Informing by sharing how something works, how something came to be, or why something happened.

“Getting Plugged In”

TED Talks as a Model of Effective Informative Speaking

Over the past few years, I have heard more and more public speaking teachers mention their use of TED speeches in their classes. What started in 1984 as a conference to gather people involved in Technology, Entertainment, and Design has now turned into a worldwide phenomenon that is known for its excellent speeches and presentations, many of which are informative in nature.“About TED,” accessed October 23, 2012, http://www.ted.com/pages/about. The motto of TED is “Ideas worth spreading,” which is in keeping with the role that we should occupy as informative speakers. We should choose topics that are worth speaking about and then work to present them in such a way that audience members leave with “take-away” information that is informative and useful. TED fits in with the purpose of the “Getting Plugged In” feature in this book because it has been technology focused from the start. For example, Andrew Blum’s speech focuses on the infrastructure of the Internet, and Pranav Mistry’s speech focuses on a new technology he developed that allows for more interaction between the physical world and the world of data. Even speakers who don’t focus on technology still skillfully use technology in their presentations, as is the case with David Gallo’s speech about exotic underwater life. Here are links to all these speeches:

- Andrew Blum’s speech: What Is the Internet, Really? http://www.ted.com/talks/andrew_blum_what_is_the_internet_really.html
- Pranav Mistry’s speech: The Thrilling Potential of Sixth Sense Technology. http://www.ted.com/talks/pranav_mistry_the_thrilling_potential_of_sixthsense_technology.html
- David Gallo’s speech: Underwater Astonishments. http://www.ted.com/talks/david_gallo_shows_underwater_astonishments.html

1. What can you learn from the TED model and/or TED speakers that will help you be a better informative speaker?
2. In what innovative and/or informative ways do the speakers reference or incorporate technology in their speeches?

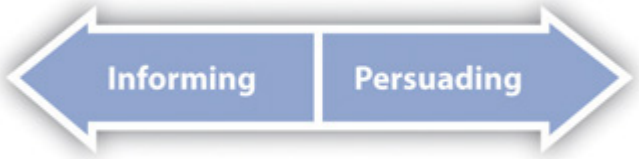
Effective Informative Speaking

There are several challenges to overcome to be an effective informative speaker. They include avoiding persuasion, avoiding information overload, and engaging your audience.

Avoiding Persuasion

We should avoid thinking of informing and persuading as dichotomous, meaning that it's either one or the other. It's more accurate to think of informing and persuading as two poles on a continuum, as in Figure 11.1 "Continuum of Informing and Persuading".Thomas H. Olbricht, *Informative Speaking* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1968), 14. Most persuasive speeches rely on some degree of informing to substantiate the reasoning. And informative speeches, although meant to secure the understanding of an audience, may influence audience members' beliefs, attitudes, values, or behaviors.

Figure 11.1 *Continuum of Informing and Persuading*



Speakers can look to three areas to help determine if their speech is more informative or persuasive: speaker purpose, function of information, and audience perception.Rudolph Verderber, *Essentials of Informative Speaking: Theory and Contexts* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991), 5–6. First, for informative speaking, a speaker's purpose should be to create understanding by sharing objective, factual information. Specific purpose and thesis statements help establish a speaker's goal and purpose and can serve as useful reference points to keep a speech on track. When reviewing your specific purpose and thesis statement, look for words like *should/shouldn't*, *good/bad*, and *right/wrong*, as these often indicate a persuasive slant in the speech.

Second, information should function to clarify and explain in an informative speech. Supporting materials shouldn't function to prove a thesis or to provide reasons for an audience to accept the thesis, as they do in persuasive speeches. Although informative messages can end up influencing the thoughts or behaviors of audience members, that shouldn't be the goal.

Third, an audience's perception of the information and the speaker helps determine whether a speech is classified as informative or persuasive. The audience must perceive that the information being presented is not controversial or disputed, which will lead audience members to view the information as factual. The audience must also accept the speaker as a credible source of information. Being prepared, citing credible sources, and engaging the audience help establish a speaker's credibility. Last, an audience must perceive the speaker to be trustworthy and not have a hidden agenda. Avoiding persuasion is a common challenge for informative speakers, but it is something to consider, as violating the speaking occasion may be perceived as unethical by the audience. Be aware of the overall tone of your speech by reviewing your specific purpose and thesis to make sure your speech isn't tipping from informative to persuasive.

Avoiding Information Overload

Words like should/shouldn't, good/bad, and right/wrong in a specific purpose and/or thesis statement often indicate that the speaker's purpose is tipping from informative to persuasive.

Many informative speakers have a tendency to pack a ten-minute speech with as much information as possible. This can result in **information overload**[6], which is a barrier to effective listening that occurs when a speech contains more information than an audience can process. Editing can be a difficult task, but it's an important skill to hone, because you will be editing more than you think. Whether it's reading through an e-mail before you send it, condensing a report down to an executive summary, or figuring out how to fit a client's message on the front page of a brochure, you will have to learn how to discern what information is best to keep and what can be thrown out. In speaking, being a discerning editor is useful because it helps avoid information overload. While a receiver may not be attracted to a brochure that's covered in text, they could take the time to read it, and reread it, if necessary. Audience members cannot conduct their own review while listening to a speaker live. Unlike readers, audience members can't review words over and over.Rudolph Verderber, *Essentials of Informative Speaking: Theory and Contexts* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991), 10. Therefore competent speakers, especially informative speakers who are trying to teach their audience something, should adapt their message to a listening audience. To help avoid information overload, adapt your message to make it more listenable.

6. A barrier to effective listening that occurs when a speech contains more information than audience members can process.

Although the results vary, research shows that people only remember a portion of a message days or even hours after receiving it.Laura Janusik, "Listening Facts," accessed March 6, 2012, http://d1025403.site.myhosting.com/files.listen.org/Facts.htm. If you spend 100 percent of your speech introducing new information,

you have wasted approximately 30 percent of your time and your audience's time. Information overload is a barrier to effective listening, and as good speakers, we should be aware of the limitations of listening and compensate for that in our speech preparation and presentation. I recommend that my students follow a guideline that suggests spending no more than 30 percent of your speech introducing new material and 70 percent of your speech repackaging that information. I specifically use the word *repackaging* and not *repeating*. Simply repeating the same information would also be a barrier to effective listening, since people would just get bored. Repackaging will help ensure that your audience retains most of the key information in the speech. Even if they don't remember every example, they will remember the main underlying point.

Avoiding information overload requires a speaker to be a good translator of information. To be a good translator, you can compare an unfamiliar concept with something familiar, give examples from real life, connect your information to current events or popular culture, or supplement supporting material like statistics with related translations of that information. These are just some of the strategies a good speaker can use. While translating information is important for any oral presentation, it is especially important when conveying technical information. Being able to translate complex or technical information for a lay audience leads to more effective informing, because the audience feels like they are being addressed on their level and don't feel lost or "talked down to." The History Channel show *The Universe* provides excellent examples of informative speakers who act as good translators. The scientists and experts featured on the show are masters of translating technical information, like physics, into concrete examples that most people can relate to based on their everyday experiences.

Following the guidelines established in Chapter 9 "Preparing a Speech" for organizing a speech can also help a speaker avoid information overload. Good speakers build in repetition and redundancy to make their content more memorable and their speech more consumable. Preview statements, section transitions, and review statements are some examples of orienting material that helps focus an audience's attention and facilitates the process of informing.Rudolph Verderber, *Essentials of Informative Speaking: Theory and Contexts* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991), 12.

Comparing the turbulent formation of the solar system to the collisions of bumper bars and spinning rides at an amusement park makes the content more concrete.

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Engaging Your Audience

As a speaker, you are competing for the attention of your audience against other internal and external

stimuli. Getting an audience engaged and then keeping their attention is a challenge for any speaker, but it can be especially difficult when speaking to inform. As was discussed earlier, once you are in the professional world, you will most likely be speaking informatively about topics related to your experience and expertise. Some speakers fall into the trap of thinking that their content knowledge is enough to sustain them through an informative speech or that their position in an organization means that an audience will listen to them and appreciate their information despite their delivery. Content expertise is not enough to be an effective speaker. A person must also have speaking expertise.Rudolph Verderber, *Essentials of Informative Speaking: Theory and Contexts* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991), 4. Effective speakers, even renowned experts, must still translate their wealth of content knowledge into information that is suited for oral transmission, audience centered, and well organized. I'm sure we're all familiar with the stereotype of the absentminded professor or the genius who thinks elegantly in his or her head but can't convey that same elegance verbally. Having well-researched and organized supporting material is an important part of effective informative speaking, but having good content is not enough.

Audience members are more likely to stay engaged with a speaker they view as credible. So complementing good supporting material with a practiced and fluent delivery increases credibility and audience engagement. In addition, as we discussed earlier, good informative speakers act as translators of information. Repackaging information into concrete familiar examples is also a strategy for making your speech more engaging. Understanding relies on being able to apply incoming information to life experiences.

Repackaging information is also a good way to appeal to different learning styles, as you can present the same content in various ways, which helps reiterate a point. While this strategy is useful with any speech, since the goal of informing is teaching, it makes sense to include a focus on learning within your audience adaptation. There are three main **learning styles**[7] that help determine how people most effectively receive and process information: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.Neil Fleming, "The VARK Helpsheets," accessed March 6, 2012, http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=helpsheets. Visual learners respond well to information presented via visual aids, so repackage information using text, graphics, charts and other media. Public speaking is a good way to present information for auditory learners who process information well when they hear it. Kinesthetic learners are tactile; they like to learn through movement and "doing." Asking for volunteers to help with a demonstration, if appropriate, is a way to involve kinesthetic learners in your speech. You can also have an interactive review activity at the end of a speech, much like many teachers incorporate an activity after a lesson to reinforce the material.

7. How individuals effectively receive and process information, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

“Getting Real”

Technical Speaking

People who work in technical fields, like engineers and information technology professionals, often think they will be spared the task of public speaking. This is not the case, however, and there is actually a branch of communication studies that addresses public speaking matters for “techies.” The field of technical communication focuses on how messages can be translated from expert to lay audiences. I actually taught a public speaking class for engineering students, and they basically had to deliver speeches about the things they were working on in a way that I could understand. I ended up learning a lot more about jet propulsion and hybrid car engines than I ever expected!

Have you ever been completely lost when reading an instruction manual for some new product you purchased? Have you ever had difficulty following the instructions of someone who was trying to help you with a technical matter? If so, you’ve experienced some of the challenges associated with technical speaking. There are many careers where technical speaking skills are needed. According to the Society for Technical Communication, communicating about specialized or technical topics, communicating by using technology, and providing instructions about how to do something are all examples of technical speaking.Society for Technical Communication, “Defining Technical Communication,” accessed March 6, 2012, http://www.stc.org/about-stc/the-profession-all-about-technical-communication/defining-tc. People with technical speaking skills offer much to organizations and businesses. They help make information more useable and accessible to customers, clients, and employees. They can help reduce costs to a business by reducing unnecessary work that results from misunderstandings of instructions, by providing clear information that allows customers to use products without training or technical support and by making general information put out by a company more user friendly. Technical speakers are dedicated to producing messages that are concise, clear, and coherent.Society for Technical Communication, “Ethical Principles,” accessed March 6, 2012, http://www.stc.org/about-stc/the-profession-all-about-technical-communication/ethical-principles. Such skills are used in the following careers: technical writers and editors, technical illustrators, visual designers, web designers, customer service representatives, salespeople, spokespeople, and many more.

1. What communication skills that you've learned about in the book so far do you think would be important for a technical speaker?
2. Identify instances in which you have engaged in technical speaking or received information from a technical speaker. Based on what you have learned in this chapter, were the speakers effective or not, and why?

Sample Informative Speech

Title: Going Green in the World of Education

General purpose: To inform

Specific purpose: By the end of my speech, the audience will be able to describe some ways in which schools are going green.

Thesis statement: The green movement has transformed school buildings, how teachers teach, and the environment in which students learn.

Introduction

Attention getter: Did you know that attending or working at a green school can lead students and teachers to have less health problems? Did you know that allowing more daylight into school buildings increases academic performance and can lessen attention and concentration challenges? Well, the research I will cite in my speech supports both of these claims, and these are just two of the many reasons why more schools, both grade schools and colleges, are going green.

Introduction of topic: Today, I'm going to inform you about the green movement that is affecting many schools.

Credibility and relevance: Because of my own desire to go into the field of education, I decided to research how schools are going green in the United States. But it's not just current and/or future teachers that will be affected by this trend. As students at Eastern Illinois University, you are already asked to make "greener" choices. Whether it's the little signs in the dorm rooms that ask you to turn off your lights when you leave the room, the reusable water bottles that were given out on move-in day, or even our new Renewable Energy Center, the list goes on and on.

Additionally, younger people in our lives, whether they be future children or younger siblings or relatives, will likely be affected by this continuing trend.

Preview statement: In order to better understand what makes a "green school," we need to learn about how K–12 schools are going green, how college campuses are going green, and how these changes affect students and teachers.

Transition: I'll begin with how K–12 schools are going green.

Body

1. According to the "About Us" section on their official website, the US Green Building Council was established in 1993 with the mission to promote sustainability in the building and construction industry, and it is this organization that is responsible for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, which is a well-respected green building certification system.
    1. While homes, neighborhoods, and businesses can also pursue LEED certification, I'll focus today on K–12 schools and college campuses.
        1. It's important to note that principles of "going green" can be applied to the planning of a building from its first inception or be retroactively applied to existing buildings.
            a. A 2011 article by Ash in *Education Week* notes that the pathway to creating a greener school is flexible based on the community and its needs.
                a. In order to garner support for green initiatives, the article recommends that local leaders like superintendents, mayors, and college administrators become involved in the green movement.
                b. Once local leaders are involved, the community, students, parents, faculty, and staff can be involved by serving on a task force, hosting a summit or conference, and implementing lessons about sustainability into everyday conversations and school curriculum.
            b. The US Green Building Council's website also includes a tool kit with a lot of information about how to "green" existing schools.

2. Much of the efforts to green schools have focused on K–12 schools and districts, but what makes a school green?

    1. According to the US Green Building Council's Center for Green Schools, green school buildings conserve energy and natural resources.

        a. For example, Fossil Ridge High School in Fort Collins, Colorado, was built in 2006 and received LEED certification because it has automatic light sensors to conserve electricity and uses wind energy to offset nonrenewable energy use.
        b. To conserve water, the school uses a pond for irrigation, has artificial turf on athletic fields, and installed low-flow toilets and faucets.
        c. According to the 2006 report by certified energy manager Gregory Kats titled "Greening America's Schools," a LEED certified school uses 30–50 percent less energy, 30 percent less water, and reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 40 percent compared to a conventional school.

    2. The Center for Green Schools also presents case studies that show how green school buildings also create healthier learning environments.

        a. Many new building materials, carpeting, and furniture contain chemicals that are released into the air, which reduces indoor air quality.
        b. So green schools purposefully purchase materials that are low in these chemicals.
        c. Natural light and fresh air have also been shown to promote a healthier learning environment, so green buildings allow more daylight in and include functioning windows.

    Transition: As you can see, K–12 schools are becoming greener; college campuses are also starting to go green.

2. Examples from the University of Denver and Eastern Illinois University show some of the potential for greener campuses around the country.

    1. The University of Denver is home to the nation's first "green" law school.

1. According to the Sturm College of Law's website, the building was designed to use 40 percent less energy than a conventional building through the use of movement-sensor lighting; high-performance insulation in the walls, floors, and roof; and infrared sensors on water faucets and toilets.
2. Electric car recharging stations were also included in the parking garage, and the building has extra bike racks and even showers that students and faculty can use to freshen up if they bike or walk to school or work.

2. Eastern Illinois University has also made strides toward a more green campus.

    1. Some of the dining halls on campus have gone "trayless," which according to a 2009 article by Calder in the journal *Independent School* has the potential to dramatically reduce the amount of water and chemical use, since there are no longer trays to wash, and also helps reduce food waste since people take less food without a tray.
    2. The biggest change on campus has been the opening of the Renewable Energy Center in 2011, which according to EIU's website is one of the largest biomass renewable energy projects in the country.

        a. The Renewable Energy Center uses slow-burn technology to use wood chips that are a byproduct of the lumber industry that would normally be discarded.
        b. This helps reduce our dependency on our old coal-fired power plant, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
        c. The project was the first known power plant to be registered with the US Green Building Council and is on track to receive LEED certification.

Transition: All these efforts to go green in K–12 schools and on college campuses will obviously affect students and teachers at the schools.

3. The green movement affects students and teachers in a variety of ways.

    1. Research shows that going green positively affects a student's health.

        1. Many schools are literally going green by including more green spaces such as recreation areas, gardens, and greenhouses, which according to a 2010 article in the *Journal of Environmental*

Education by University of Colorado professor Susan Strife has been shown to benefit a child's cognitive skills, especially in the areas of increased concentration and attention capacity.
2. Additionally, the report I cited earlier, "Greening America's Schools," states that the improved air quality in green schools can lead to a 38 percent reduction in asthma incidents and that students in "green schools" had 51 percent less chance of catching a cold or the flu compared to children in conventional schools.

2. Standard steps taken to green schools can also help students academically.

    1. The report "Greening America's Schools" notes that a recent synthesis of fifty-three studies found that more daylight in the school building leads to higher academic achievement.
    2. The report also provides data that show how the healthier environment in green schools leads to better attendance and that in Washington, DC, and Chicago, schools improved their performance on standardized tests by 3–4 percent.

3. Going green can influence teachers' lesson plans as well their job satisfaction and physical health.

    1. There are several options for teachers who want to "green" their curriculum.

        a. According to the article in *Education Week* that I cited earlier, the Sustainability Education Clearinghouse is a free online tool that provides K–12 educators with the ability to share sustainability-oriented lesson ideas.
        b. The Center for Green Schools also provides resources for all levels of teachers, from kindergarten to college, that can be used in the classroom.

    2. The report "Greening America's Schools" claims that the overall improved working environment that a green school provides leads to higher teacher retention and less teacher turnover.
    3. Just as students see health benefits from green schools, so do teachers, as the same report shows that teachers in these schools get sick less, resulting in a decrease of sick days by 7 percent.

Conclusion

Transition to conclusion and summary of importance: In summary, the going-green era has impacted every aspect of education in our school systems.

Review of main points: From K–12 schools to college campuses like ours, to the students and teachers in the schools, the green movement is changing the way we think about education and our environment.

Closing statement: As Glenn Cook, the editor in chief of the *American School Board Journal*, states on the Center for Green Schools's website, "The green schools movement is the biggest thing to happen to education since the introduction of technology to the classroom."

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Getting integrated: Informative speaking is likely the type of public speaking we will most often deliver and be audience to in our lives. Informative speaking is an important part of academic, professional, personal, and civic contexts.
- Informative speeches teach an audience through objective factual information and can emerge from one or more of the following categories: objects, people, concepts, events, processes, and issues.
- Effective informative speaking requires good research skills, as speakers must include novel information, relevant and proxemic examples, and "take-away" information that audience members will find engaging and useful.
    - The four primary methods of informing are through definition, description, demonstration, or explanation.
        - Informing through definition entails defining concepts clearly and concisely using synonyms and antonyms, use or function, example, or etymology.
        - Informing through description entails creating detailed verbal pictures for your audience.
        - Informing through demonstration entails sharing verbal directions about how to do something while also physically demonstrating the steps.
        - Informing through explanation entails sharing how something works, how something came to be, or why something happened.
- An effective informative speaker should avoid persuasion by reviewing the language used in the specific purpose and thesis statements, using objective supporting material, and appearing trustworthy to the audience.
- An effective informative speaker should avoid information overload by repackaging information and building in repetition and orienting material like reviews and previews.
- An effective informative speaker engages the audience by translating information into relevant and concrete examples that appeal to different learning styles.

EXERCISES

1. Getting integrated: How might you use informative speaking in each of the following contexts: academic, professional, personal, and civic?
2. Brainstorm potential topics for your informative speech and identify which topic category each idea falls into. Are there any risks of persuading for the topics you listed? If so, how can you avoid persuasion if you choose that topic?
3. Of the four methods of informing (through definition, description, demonstration, or explanation), which do you think is most effective for you? Why?

11.2 Persuasive Speaking

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain how claims, evidence, and warrants function to create an argument.
2. Identify strategies for choosing a persuasive speech topic.
3. Identify strategies for adapting a persuasive speech based on an audience's orientation to the proposition.
4. Distinguish among propositions of fact, value, and policy.
5. Choose an organizational pattern that is fitting for a persuasive speech topic.

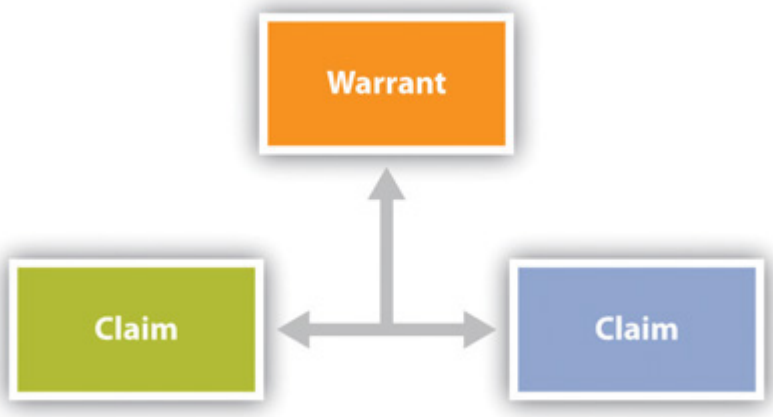
We produce and receive persuasive messages daily, but we don't often stop to think about how we make the arguments we do or the quality of the arguments that we receive. In this section, we'll learn the components of an argument, how to choose a good persuasive speech topic, and how to adapt and organize a persuasive message.

Foundation of Persuasion

Persuasive speaking seeks to influence the beliefs, attitudes, values, or behaviors of audience members. In order to persuade, a speaker has to construct arguments that appeal to audience members. Arguments form around three components: claim, evidence, and warrant. The **claim**[8] is the statement that will be supported by evidence. Your thesis statement is the overarching claim for your speech, but you will make other claims within the speech to support the larger thesis. **Evidence**[9], also called grounds, supports the claim. The main points of your persuasive speech and the supporting material you include serve as evidence. For example, a speaker may make the following claim: "There should be a national law against texting while driving." The speaker could then support the claim by providing the following evidence: "Research from the US Department of Transportation has found that texting while driving creates a crash risk that is twenty-three times worse than driving while not distracted." The **warrant**[10] is the underlying justification that connects the claim and the evidence. One warrant for the claim and evidence cited in this example is that the US Department of Transportation is an institution that funds research conducted by credible experts. An additional and more implicit warrant is that people shouldn't do things they know are unsafe.

8. A persuasive statement that will be supported by evidence.
9. Material presented to support the claim.
10. The underlying justification that connects the claim and evidence.

Figure 11.2 Components of an Argument



The quality of your evidence often impacts the strength of your warrant, and some warrants are stronger than others. A speaker could also provide evidence to support their claim advocating for a national ban on texting and driving by saying, "I have personally seen people almost wreck while trying to text." While this type of evidence can also be persuasive, it provides a different type and strength of warrant since it is based on personal experience. In general, the anecdotal evidence from personal experience would be given a weaker warrant than the evidence from the national research report. The same process works in our legal system when a judge evaluates the connection between a claim and evidence. If someone steals my car, I could say to the police, "I'm pretty sure Mario did it because when I said hi to him on campus the other day, he didn't say hi back, which proves he's mad at me." A judge faced with that evidence is unlikely to issue a warrant for Mario's arrest. Fingerprint evidence from the steering wheel that has been matched with a suspect is much more likely to warrant arrest.

As you put together a persuasive argument, you act as the judge. You can evaluate arguments that you come across in your research by analyzing the connection (the warrant) between the claim and the evidence. If the warrant is strong, you may want to highlight that argument in your speech. You may also be able to point out a weak warrant in an argument that goes against your position, which you could then include in your speech. Every argument starts by putting together a claim and evidence, but arguments grow to include many interrelated units.

Choosing a Persuasive Speech Topic

As with any speech, topic selection is important and is influenced by many factors. Good persuasive speech topics are current, controversial, and have important

implications for society. If your topic is currently being discussed on television, in newspapers, in the lounges in your dorm, or around your family's dinner table, then it's a current topic. A persuasive speech aimed at getting audience members to wear seat belts in cars wouldn't have much current relevance, given that statistics consistently show that most people wear seat belts. Giving the same speech would have been much more timely in the 1970s when there was a huge movement to increase seat-belt use.

Many topics that are current are also controversial, which is what gets them attention by the media and citizens. Current and controversial topics will be more engaging for your audience. A persuasive speech to encourage audience members to donate blood or recycle wouldn't be very controversial, since the benefits of both practices are widely agreed on. However, arguing that the restrictions on blood donation by men who have had sexual relations with men be lifted would be controversial. I must caution here that controversial is not the same as inflammatory. An inflammatory topic is one that evokes strong reactions from an audience for the sake of provoking a reaction. Being provocative for no good reason or choosing a topic that is extremist will damage your credibility and prevent you from achieving your speech goals.

You should also choose a topic that is important to you and to society as a whole. As we have already discussed in this book, our voices are powerful, as it is through communication that we participate and make change in society. Therefore we should take seriously opportunities to use our voices to speak publicly. Choosing a speech topic that has implications for society is probably a better application of your public speaking skills than choosing to persuade the audience that Lebron James is the best basketball player in the world or that Superman is a better hero than Spiderman. Although those topics may be very important to you, they don't carry the same social weight as many other topics you could choose to discuss. Remember that speakers have ethical obligations to the audience and should take the opportunity to speak seriously.

You will also want to choose a topic that connects to your own interests and passions. If you are an education major, it might make more sense to do a persuasive speech about funding for public education than the death penalty. If there are hot-button issues for you that make you get fired up and veins bulge out in your neck, then it may be a good idea to avoid those when speaking in an academic or professional context.

Choosing such topics may interfere with your ability to deliver a speech in a competent and ethical manner. You want to care about your topic, but you also want to be able to approach it in a way that's going to make people want to listen to you. Most people tune out speakers they perceive to be too ideologically entrenched and write them off as extremists or zealots.

Choose a persuasive speech topic that you're passionate about but still able to approach and deliver in an ethical manner.

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You also want to ensure that your topic is actually persuasive. Draft your thesis statement as an "I believe" statement so your stance on an issue is clear. Also, think of your main points as reasons to support your thesis. Students end up with speeches that aren't very persuasive in nature if they don't think of their main points as reasons. Identifying arguments that counter your thesis is also a good exercise to help ensure your topic is persuasive. If you can clearly and easily identify a competing thesis statement and supporting reasons, then your topic and approach are arguable.

Review of Tips for Choosing a Persuasive Speech Topic

1. Choose a topic that is current.
    - **Not current.** People should use seat belts.
    - **Current.** People should not text while driving.
2. Choose a topic that is controversial.
    - **Not controversial.** People should recycle.
    - **Controversial.** Recycling should be mandatory by law.
3. Choose a topic that meaningfully impacts society.
    - **Not as impactful.** Superman is the best superhero.
    - **Impactful.** Colleges and universities should adopt zero-tolerance bullying policies.
4. Write a thesis statement that is clearly argumentative and states your stance.
    - **Unclear thesis.** Homeschooling is common in the United States.
    - **Clear, argumentative thesis with stance.** Homeschooling does not provide the same benefits of traditional education and should be strictly monitored and limited.

Adapting Persuasive Messages

Competent speakers should consider their audience throughout the speech-making process. Given that persuasive messages seek to directly influence the audience in some way, audience adaptation becomes even more important. If possible, poll your audience to find out their orientation toward your thesis. I read my students' thesis statements aloud and have the class indicate whether they agree with, disagree with, or are neutral in regards to the proposition. It is unlikely that you will have a homogenous audience, meaning that there will probably be some who agree, some who disagree, and some who are neutral. So you may employ all of the following strategies, in varying degrees, in your persuasive speech.

When you have audience members who already agree with your proposition, you should focus on intensifying their agreement. You can also assume that they have foundational background knowledge of the topic, which means you can take the time to inform them about lesser-known aspects of a topic or cause to further reinforce their agreement. Rather than move these audience members from disagreement to agreement, you can focus on moving them from agreement to action. Remember, calls to action should be as specific as possible to help you capitalize on audience members' motivation in the moment so they are more likely to follow through on the action.

There are two main reasons audience members may be neutral in regards to your topic: (1) they are uninformed about the topic or (2) they do not think the topic affects them. In this case, you should focus on instilling a concern for the topic. Uninformed audiences may need background information before they can decide if they agree or disagree with your proposition. If the issue is familiar but audience members are neutral because they don't see how the topic affects them, focus on getting the audience's attention and demonstrating relevance. Remember that concrete and proxemic supporting materials will help an audience find relevance in a topic. Students who pick narrow or unfamiliar topics will have to work harder to persuade their audience, but neutral audiences often provide the most chance of achieving your speech goal since even a small change may move them into agreement.

When audience members disagree with your proposition, you should focus on changing their minds. To effectively persuade, you must be seen as a credible speaker. When an audience is hostile to your proposition, establishing credibility is even more important, as audience members may be quick to discount or discredit someone who doesn't appear prepared or doesn't present well-researched and supported information. Don't give an audience a chance to write you off before you even get to share your best evidence. When facing a disagreeable audience, the goal should also be small change. You may not be able to switch someone's position

completely, but influencing him or her is still a success. Aside from establishing your credibility, you should also establish common ground with an audience.

Acknowledging areas of disagreement and logically refuting counterarguments in your speech is also a way to approach persuading an audience in disagreement, as it shows that you are open-minded enough to engage with other perspectives.

Build common ground with disagreeable audiences and acknowledge areas of disagreement.

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Determining Your Proposition

The proposition of your speech is the overall direction of the content and how that relates to the speech goal. A persuasive speech will fall primarily into one of three categories: propositions of fact, value, or policy. A speech may have elements of any of the three propositions, but you can usually determine the overall proposition of a speech from the specific purpose and thesis statements.

Propositions of fact[11] focus on beliefs and try to establish that something "is or isn't." **Propositions of value**[12] focus on persuading audience members that something is "good or bad," "right or wrong," or "desirable or undesirable." **Propositions of policy**[13] advocate that something "should or shouldn't" be done. Since most persuasive speech topics can be approached as propositions of fact, value, or policy, it is a good idea to start thinking about what kind of proposition you want to make, as it will influence how you go about your research and writing. As you can see in the following example using the topic of global warming, the type of proposition changes the types of supporting materials you would need:

- **Proposition of fact.** Global warming **is caused** by increased greenhouse gases related to human activity.
- **Proposition of value.** America's disproportionately large amount of pollution relative to other countries is **wrong**.
- **Proposition of policy.** There **should** be stricter emission restrictions on individual cars.

To support propositions of fact, you would want to present a logical argument based on objective facts that can then be used to build persuasive arguments. Propositions of value may require you to appeal more to your audience's emotions and cite expert and lay testimony. Persuasive speeches about policy usually require

11. Arguments that try to establish that something "is or isn't" or is "true or false."
12. Arguments that persuade that something is "good or bad," "right or wrong," or "desirable or undesirable."
13. Arguments that persuade that something "should or shouldn't" be done.

you to research existing and previous laws or procedures and determine if any relevant legislation or propositions are currently being considered.

“Getting Critical”

Persuasion and Masculinity

The traditional view of rhetoric that started in ancient Greece and still informs much of our views on persuasion today has been critiqued for containing Western and masculine biases. Traditional persuasion has been linked to Western and masculine values of domination, competition, and change, which have been critiqued as coercive and violent.Sally M. Gearhart, “The Womanization of Rhetoric,” *Women’s Studies International Quarterly* 2 (1979): 195–201.

Communication scholars proposed an alternative to traditional persuasive rhetoric in the form of invitational rhetoric. Invitational rhetoric differs from a traditional view of persuasive rhetoric that “attempts to win over an opponent, or to advocate the correctness of a single position in a very complex issue.”Jennifer Emerling Bone, Cindy L. Griffin, and T. M. Linda Scholz, “Beyond Traditional Conceptualizations of Rhetoric: Invitational Rhetoric and a Move toward Civility,” *Western Journal of Communication* 72 (2008): 436. Instead, invitational rhetoric proposes a model of reaching consensus through dialogue. The goal is to create a climate in which growth and change can occur but isn’t required for one person to “win” an argument over another. Each person in a communication situation is acknowledged to have a standpoint that is valid but can still be influenced through the offering of alternative perspectives and the invitation to engage with and discuss these standpoints.Kathleen J. Ryan and Elizabeth J. Natalle, “Fusing Horizons: Standpoint Hermenutics and Invitational Rhetoric,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 31 (2001): 69–90. Safety, value, and freedom are three important parts of invitational rhetoric. Safety involves a feeling of security in which audience members and speakers feel like their ideas and contributions will not be denigrated. Value refers to the notion that each person in a communication encounter is worthy of recognition and that people are willing to step outside their own perspectives to better understand others. Last, freedom is present in communication when communicators do not limit the thinking or decisions of others, allowing all participants to speak up.Jennifer Emerling Bone, Cindy L. Griffin, and T. M. Linda Scholz, “Beyond Traditional Conceptualizations of Rhetoric: Invitational Rhetoric and a Move toward Civility,” *Western Journal of Communication* 72 (2008): 436–37.

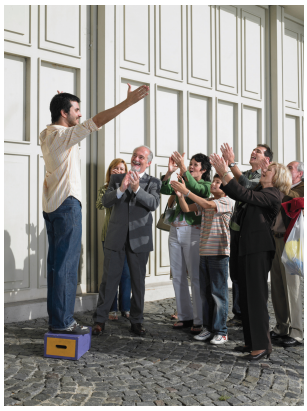
Invitational rhetoric doesn't claim that all persuasive rhetoric is violent. Instead, it acknowledges that some persuasion is violent and that the connection between persuasion and violence is worth exploring. Invitational rhetoric has the potential to contribute to the civility of communication in our society. When we are civil, we are capable of engaging with and appreciating different perspectives while still understanding our own. People aren't attacked or reviled because their views diverge from ours. Rather than reducing the world to "us against them, black or white, and right or wrong," invitational rhetoric encourages us to acknowledge human perspectives in all their complexity.Jennifer Emerling Bone, Cindy L. Griffin, and T. M. Linda Scholz, "Beyond Traditional Conceptualizations of Rhetoric: Invitational Rhetoric and a Move toward Civility," *Western Journal of Communication* 72 (2008): 457.

1. What is your reaction to the claim that persuasion includes Western and masculine biases?
2. What are some strengths and weaknesses of the proposed alternatives to traditional persuasion?
3. In what situations might an invitational approach to persuasion be useful? In what situations might you want to rely on traditional models of persuasion?

Organizing a Persuasive Speech

We have already discussed several patterns for organizing your speech, but some organization strategies are specific to persuasive speaking. Some persuasive speech topics lend themselves to a topical organization pattern, which breaks the larger topic up into logical divisions. Earlier, in Chapter 9 "Preparing a Speech", we discussed recency and primacy, and in this chapter we discussed adapting a persuasive speech based on the audience's orientation toward the proposition. These concepts can be connected when organizing a persuasive speech topically. Primacy means putting your strongest information first and is based on the idea that audience members put more weight on what they hear first. This strategy can be especially useful when addressing an audience that disagrees with your proposition, as you can try to win them over early. Recency means putting your strongest information last to leave a powerful impression. This can be useful when you are building to a climax in your speech, specifically if you include a call to action.

The problem-solution pattern is an organizational pattern that advocates for a particular approach to solve a problem. You would provide evidence to show that a problem exists and then propose a solution with additional evidence or reasoning to justify the course of action. One main point addressing the problem and one main point addressing the solution may be sufficient, but you are not limited to two. You could add a main point between the problem and solution that outlines other solutions that have failed. You can also combine the problem-solution pattern with the cause-effect pattern or expand the speech to fit with Monroe's Motivated Sequence.



Putting your strongest argument last can help motivate an audience to action.

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As was mentioned in Chapter 9 "Preparing a Speech", the cause-effect pattern can be used for informative speaking when the relationship between the cause and effect is not contested. The pattern is more fitting for persuasive speeches when the relationship between the cause and effect is controversial or unclear. There are several ways to use causes and effects to structure a speech. You could have a two-point speech that argues from cause to effect or from effect to cause. You could also have more than one cause that lead to the same effect or a single cause that leads to multiple effects. The following are some examples of thesis statements that correspond to various organizational patterns. As you can see, the same general topic area, prison overcrowding, is used for each example. This illustrates the importance of considering your organizational options early in the speech-making process, since the pattern you choose will influence your researching and writing.

Persuasive Speech Thesis Statements by Organizational Pattern

- **Problem-solution.** Prison overcrowding is a serious problem that we can solve by finding alternative rehabilitation for nonviolent offenders.
- **Problem–failed solution–proposed solution.** Prison overcrowding is a serious problem that shouldn't be solved by building more prisons; instead, we should support alternative rehabilitation for nonviolent offenders.
- **Cause-effect.** Prisons are overcrowded with nonviolent offenders, which leads to lesser sentences for violent criminals.
- **Cause-cause-effect.** State budgets are being slashed and prisons are overcrowded with nonviolent offenders, which leads to lesser sentences for violent criminals.

- **Cause-effect-effect.** Prisons are overcrowded with nonviolent offenders, which leads to increased behavioral problems among inmates and lesser sentences for violent criminals.
- **Cause-effect-solution.** Prisons are overcrowded with nonviolent offenders, which leads to lesser sentences for violent criminals; therefore we need to find alternative rehabilitation for nonviolent offenders.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence is an organizational pattern designed for persuasive speaking that appeals to audience members' needs and motivates them to action. If your persuasive speaking goals include a call to action, you may want to consider this organizational pattern. We already learned about the five steps of Monroe's Motivated Sequence in Chapter 9 "Preparing a Speech", but we will review them here with an example:

1. **Step 1: Attention**
    - Hook the audience by making the topic relevant to them.
    - Imagine living a full life, retiring, and slipping into your golden years. As you get older you become more dependent on others and move into an assisted-living facility. Although you think life will be easier, things get worse as you experience abuse and mistreatment from the staff. You report the abuse to a nurse and wait, but nothing happens and the abuse continues. Elder abuse is a common occurrence, and unlike child abuse, there are no laws in our state that mandate complaints of elder abuse be reported or investigated.
2. **Step 2: Need**
    - Cite evidence to support the fact that the issue needs to be addressed.
    - According to the American Psychological Association, one to two million elderly US Americans have been abused by their caretakers. In our state, those in the medical, psychiatric, and social work field are required to report suspicion of child abuse but are not mandated to report suspicions of elder abuse.
3. **Step 3: Satisfaction**
    - Offer a solution and persuade the audience that it is feasible and well thought out.

    - There should be a federal law mandating that suspicion of elder abuse be reported and that all claims of elder abuse be investigated.

4. **Step 4: Visualization**

    - Take the audience beyond your solution and help them visualize the positive results of implementing it or the negative consequences of not.
    - Elderly people should not have to live in fear during their golden years. A mandatory reporting law for elderly abuse will help ensure that the voices of our elderly loved ones will be heard.

5. **Step 5: Action**

    - Call your audience to action by giving them concrete steps to follow to engage in a particular action or to change a thought or behavior.
    - I urge you to take action in two ways. First, raise awareness about this issue by talking to your own friends and family. Second, contact your representatives at the state and national level to let them know that elder abuse should be taken seriously and given the same level of importance as other forms of abuse. I brought cards with the contact information for our state and national representatives for this area. Please take one at the end of my speech. A short e-mail or phone call can help end the silence surrounding elder abuse.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Arguments are formed by making claims that are supported by evidence. The underlying justification that connects the claim and evidence is the warrant. Arguments can have strong or weak warrants, which will make them more or less persuasive.
- Good persuasive speech topics are current, controversial (but not inflammatory), and important to the speaker and society.
    - Speakers should adapt their persuasive approach based on audience members' orientation toward the proposal.
        - When audience members agree with the proposal, focus on intensifying their agreement and moving them to action.
        - When audience members are neutral in regards to the proposition, provide background information to better inform them about the issue and present information that demonstrates the relevance of the topic to the audience.
        - When audience members disagree with the proposal, focus on establishing your credibility, build common ground with the audience, and incorporate counterarguments and refute them.
    - Persuasive speeches include the following propositions: fact, value, and policy.
        - Propositions of fact focus on establishing that something "is or isn't" or is "true or false."
        - Propositions of value focus on persuading an audience that something is "good or bad," "right or wrong," or "desirable or undesirable."
        - Propositions of policy advocate that something "should or shouldn't" be done.
- Persuasive speeches can be organized using the following patterns: problem-solution, cause-effect, cause-effect-solution, or Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

EXERCISES

1. Getting integrated: Give an example of persuasive messages that you might need to create in each of the following contexts: academic, professional, personal, and civic. Then do the same thing for persuasive messages you may receive.
2. To help ensure that your persuasive speech topic is persuasive and not informative, identify the claims, evidence, and warrants you may use in your argument. In addition, write a thesis statement that refutes your topic idea and identify evidence and warrants that could support that counterargument.
3. Determine if your speech is primarily a proposition of fact, value, or policy. How can you tell? Identify an organizational pattern that you think will work well for your speech topic, draft one sentence for each of your main points, and arrange them according to the pattern you chose.

11.3 Persuasive Reasoning and Fallacies

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define inductive, deductive, and causal reasoning.
2. Evaluate the quality of inductive, deductive, and causal reasoning.
3. Identify common fallacies of reasoning.

Persuasive speakers should be concerned with what strengthens and weakens an argument. Earlier we discussed the process of building an argument with claims and evidence and how warrants are the underlying justifications that connect the two. We also discussed the importance of evaluating the strength of a warrant, because strong warrants are usually more persuasive. Knowing different types of reasoning can help you put claims and evidence together in persuasive ways and help you evaluate the quality of arguments that you encounter. Further, being able to identify common fallacies of reasoning can help you be a more critical consumer of persuasive messages.

Reasoning

Reasoning refers to the process of making sense of things around us. In order to understand our experiences, draw conclusions from information, and present new ideas, we must use reasoning. We often reason without being aware of it, but becoming more aware of how we think can empower us to be better producers and consumers of communicative messages. The three types of reasoning we will explore are inductive, deductive, and causal.

Inductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning[14] reaches conclusions through the citation of examples and is the most frequently used form of logical reasoning.Otis M. Walter, *Speaking to Inform and Persuade* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 58. While introductory speakers are initially attracted to inductive reasoning because it seems easy, it can be difficult to employ well. Inductive reasoning, unlike deductive reasoning, doesn't result in true or false conclusions. Instead, since conclusions are generalized based on observations or examples, conclusions are "more likely" or "less likely." Despite the fact that this type of reasoning isn't definitive, it can still be valid and persuasive.

14. Arguments that persuade by citing examples that build to a conclusion.

Some arguments based on inductive reasoning will be more cogent, or convincing and relevant, than others. For example, inductive reasoning can be weak when claims are made too generally. An argument that fraternities should be abolished from campus because they contribute to underage drinking and do not uphold high academic standards could be countered by providing examples of fraternities that sponsor alcohol education programming for the campus and have members that have excelled academically.Otis M. Walter, *Speaking to Inform and Persuade* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 58. In this case, one overly general claim is countered by another general claim, and both of them have some merit. It would be more effective to present a series of facts and reasons and then share the conclusion or generalization that you have reached from them.

You can see inductive reasoning used in the following speech excerpt from President George W. Bush's address to the nation on the evening of September 11, 2001. Notice how he lists a series of events from the day, which builds to his conclusion that the terrorist attacks failed in their attempt to shake the foundation of America.

Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts. The victims were in airplanes or in their offices: secretaries, business men and women, military and federal workers, moms and dads, friends and neighbors. Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror. The pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge—huge structures collapsing have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger. These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed. Our country is strong.

A great people has been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America.

If a speaker is able to provide examples that are concrete, proxemic, and relevant to the audience, as Bush did in this example, audience members are prompted to think of additional examples that connect to their own lives. Inductive reasoning can be useful when an audience disagrees with your proposition. As you present logically connected examples as evidence that build to a conclusion, the audience may be persuaded by your evidence before they realize that the coming conclusion will

counter what they previously thought. This also sets up cognitive dissonance, which is a persuasive strategy we will discuss later.

Using inductive reasoning, speakers reach conclusions through the citation of examples.

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Reasoning by analogy[15] is a type of inductive reasoning that argues that what is true in one set of circumstances will be true in another.Otis M. Walter, *Speaking to Inform and Persuade* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 64. Reasoning by analogy has been criticized and questioned by logicians, since two sets of circumstances are never exactly the same. While this is true, our goal when using reasoning by analogy in persuasive speaking is not to create absolutely certain conclusions but to cite cases and supporting evidence that can influence an audience. For example, let's say you are trying to persuade a university to adopt an alcohol education program by citing the program's success at other institutions. Since two universities are never exactly the same, the argument can't be airtight. To better support this argument, you could first show that the program was actually successful using various types of supporting material such as statistics from campus offices and testimony from students and staff. Second, you could show how the cases relate by highlighting similarities in the campus setting, culture, demographics, and previous mission. Since you can't argue that the schools are similar in all ways, choose to highlight significant similarities. Also, it's better to acknowledge significant limitations of the analogy and provide additional supporting material to address them than it is to ignore or hide such limitations.

So how do we evaluate inductive reasoning? When inductive reasoning is used to test scientific arguments, there is rigorous testing and high standards that must be met for a conclusion to be considered valid. Inductive reasoning in persuasive speaking is employed differently. A speaker cannot cite every example that exists to build to a conclusion, so to evaluate inductive reasoning you must examine the examples that are cited in ways other than quantity. First, the examples should be sufficient, meaning that enough are cited to support the conclusion. If not, you risk committing the hasty generalization fallacy. A speaker can expect that the audience will be able to think of some examples as well, so there is no set number on how many examples is sufficient. If the audience is familiar with the topic, then fewer examples are probably sufficient, while more may be needed for unfamiliar topics. A speaker can make his or her use of reasoning by example more powerful by showing that the examples correspond to the average case, which may require additional supporting evidence in the form of statistics. Arguing that teacher salaries should be increased by providing an example of a teacher who works side jobs and pays for his or her own school supplies could be effectively supported by showing that this teacher's salary corresponds to the national average.Otis M. Walter, *Speaking to Inform and Persuade* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 59–60.

15. Arguments that claim what is true in one set of circumstances will be true in another.

Second, the examples should be typical, meaning they weren't cherry-picked to match the point being argued. A speaker who argues to defund the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) because the organization supports art that is "pornographic and offensive" may cite five examples of grants given for projects that caused such controversy. Failing to mention that these examples were pulled from the more than 128,000 grants issued by the NEA would be an inappropriate use of inductive reasoning since the examples aren't sufficient or typical enough to warrant the argument. Another way to support inductive arguments is to show that the examples are a fair sample, meaning they are representative of the larger whole. Arguing that college athletes shouldn't receive scholarships because they do not have the scholastic merit of other students and have less academic achievement could be supported by sharing several examples. But if those examples were not representative, then they are biased, and the reasoning faulty. A speaker would need to show that the athletes used in the example are representative, in terms of their race, gender, sport, and background, of the population of athletes at the university.

Deductive Reasoning

Deductive reasoning[16] derives specifics from what is already known. It was the preferred form of reasoning used by ancient rhetoricians like Aristotle to make logical arguments.Martha D. Cooper and William L. Nothstine, *Power Persuasion: Moving an Ancient Art into the Media Age* (Greenwood, IN: Educational Video Group, 1996), 27. A syllogism is an example of deductive reasoning that is commonly used when teaching logic. A **syllogism**[17] is an example of deductive reasoning in which a conclusion is supported by major and minor premises. The conclusion of a valid argument can be deduced from the major and minor premises. A commonly used example of a syllogism is "All humans are mortal. Socrates is a human. Socrates is mortal." In this case, the conclusion, "Socrates is mortal," is derived from the major premise, "All humans are mortal," and the minor premise, "Socrates is a human." In some cases, the major and minor premises of a syllogism may be taken for granted as true. In the previous example, the major premise is presumed true because we have no knowledge of an immortal person to disprove the statement. The minor premise is presumed true because Socrates looks and acts like other individuals we know to be human. Detectives or scientists using such logic would want to test their conclusion. We could test our conclusion by stabbing Socrates to see if he dies, but since the logic of the syllogism is sound, it may be better to cut Socrates a break and deem the argument valid. Since most arguments are more sophisticated than the previous example, speakers need to support their premises with research and evidence to establish their validity before deducing their conclusion.

16. Arguments that derive specifics from what is already know.

17. An example of deductive reasoning in which a conclusion is supported by major and minor premises.

A syllogism can lead to incorrect conclusions if one of the premises isn't true, as in the following example:

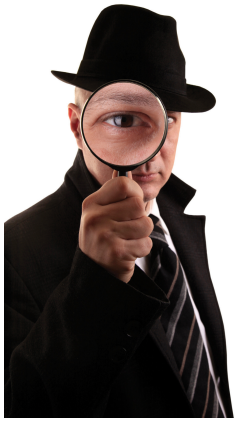
- All presidents have lived in the White House. (Major premise)
- George Washington was president. (Minor premise)
- George Washington lived in the White House. (Conclusion)

In the previous example, the major premise was untrue, since John Adams, our second president, was the first president to live in the White House. This causes the conclusion to be false. A syllogism can also exhibit faulty logic even if the premises are both true but are unrelated, as in the following example:

- Penguins are black and white. (Major premise)
- Some old television shows are black and white. (Minor premise)
- Some penguins are old television shows. (Conclusion)

Causal Reasoning

Causal reasoning[18] argues to establish a relationship between a cause and an effect. When speakers attempt to argue for a particular course of action based on potential positive or negative consequences that may result, they are using causal reasoning. Such reasoning is evident in the following example: Eating more local foods will boost the local economy and make you healthier. The "if/then" relationship that is set up in causal reasoning can be persuasive, but the reasoning isn't always sound. Rather than establishing a true cause-effect relationship, speakers more often set up a correlation, which means there is a relationship between two things but there are other contextual influences.



Like in the game of Clue, real-life detectives use deductive reasoning to draw a conclusion about who committed a crime based on the known evidence.

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To use causal reasoning effectively and ethically, speakers should avoid claiming a direct relationship between a cause and an effect when such a connection cannot be proven. Instead of arguing that "x caused y," it is more accurate for a speaker to say "x influenced y." Causal thinking is often used when looking to blame something or someone, as can be seen in the following example: It's the president's fault that the economy hasn't recovered more. While such a statement may garner a speaker some political capital, it is not based on solid reasoning. Economic and political processes are too complex to distill to such a simple cause-effect relationship. A speaker would need to use more solid reasoning, perhaps inductive reasoning through examples, to build up enough evidence to support that a

18. Arguments that establish a relationship between a cause and an effect.

correlation exists and a causal relationship is likely. When using causal reasoning, present evidence that shows the following: (1) the cause occurred before the effect, (2) the cause led to the effect, and (3) it is unlikely that other causes produced the effect.

Review of Types of Reasoning

- **Inductive.** Arguing from examples to support a conclusion; includes reasoning by analogy. Examples should be sufficient, typical, and representative to warrant a strong argument.
- **Deductive.** Deriving specifics from what is already known; includes syllogisms. Premises that lead to a conclusion must be true, relevant, and related for the argument to be valid.
- **Causal.** Argues to establish a relationship between a cause and an effect. Usually involves a correlation rather than a true causal relationship.

Fallacies of Reasoning

Fallacies[19] are flaws within the logic or reasoning of an argument. Although we will discuss 10 common fallacies, more than 125 have been identified and named. It's important to note that the presence of a fallacy in an argument doesn't mean that it can't be persuasive. In fact, many people are persuaded by fallacious arguments because they do not identify the fallacy within the argument. Fallacies are often the last effort of uninformed or ill-prepared speakers who find that they have nothing better to say. Being aware of the forms of reasoning and fallacies makes us more critical consumers of persuasive messages, which is a substantial benefit of studying persuasive speaking that affects personal, political, and professional aspects of our lives.

Hasty Generalization

The hasty generalization fallacy relates to inductive reasoning and is the result of too few examples being cited to warrant the generalization. Jumping to conclusions is tempting, especially when pressed for time, but making well-researched and supported arguments is key to being an effective and ethical speaker. Making a claim that train travel is not safe and citing two recent derailments that resulted in injury doesn't produce a strong warrant when viewed in relation to the number of train passengers who travel safely every day.

19. Flaws within the logic or reasoning of an argument.

False Analogy

The false analogy fallacy also relates to inductive reasoning and results when the situations or circumstances being compared are not similar enough. A common false analogy that people make is comparing something to putting a person on the moon: "If we can put a person on the moon, why can't we figure out a way to make the tax code easier to understand?" This question doesn't acknowledge the different skill sets and motivations involved in the two examples being compared.

False Cause

The false cause fallacy relates to causal reasoning and occurs when a speaker argues, with insufficient evidence, that one thing caused or causes another. When I was in high school, teachers used to say that wearing baseball caps would make us go bald when we got older. In an attempt to persuade us to not wear hats in the classroom, they were arguing, fallaciously, that wearing baseball caps is what causes baldness. When a false cause argument is made after the "effect," it is referred to in Latin as *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, which means "after this, therefore because of this." Blaming bad fortune on superstitions is a good example of faulty reasoning that tries to argue for a connection between an "effect" that has already occurred and its preceding "cause." My bad luck is more likely attributable to poor decisions I have made or random interference than the mirror I broke while moving two years ago.

Superstitious beliefs often exemplify the false cause fallacy. Is the broken mirror really the cause of your bad luck?

False Authority

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The false authority fallacy results when the person making an argument doesn't actually have the qualifications to be credible but is perceived as credible because they are respected or admired. Despite the fact that this form of argument is fallacious, it is obviously quite effective. Advertisers spend millions of dollars to get celebrities and athletes to sell us their products because of the persuasive potential these stars carry in their persona, not in their ability to argue a point. Voters might be persuaded to support a candidate because of a famous musician's endorsement without questioning the political beliefs of either the musician or the politician to see if they match up with their own.

Bandwagon

Parents and other sources of guidance in our lives have tried to keep us from falling for the bandwagon fallacy. When your mom responds to your argument that you should get to go to the party because everyone else is by asking, "If everyone else jumped off a bridge, would you?" she is rightfully pointing out the fallacy in your argument. In a public-speaking-related example, I have had students try to persuade their audience to buy and eat more organic foods based on their increasing popularity. In short, popular appeal and frequency of use are not strong warrants to support an argument. Just because something is popular, doesn't mean it's good.

False Dilemma

The false dilemma fallacy occurs when a speaker rhetorically backs his or her audience into a corner, presenting them with only two options and arguing that they must choose either one or the other. This is also known as the "either/or" fallacy. Critical thinkers know that the world can't be simplified to black and white, good and bad, or right and wrong. Yet many people rely on such oversimplifications when making arguments. A speaker who argues that immigrants to the United States should learn English or go back to their own country doesn't acknowledge that there are many successful immigrants who have successful lives and contribute to society without speaking English fluently. The speaker also ignores the fact that many immigrants do not have access to English language instruction or the time to take such classes because they are busy with their own jobs and families. Granted, such a rhetorical strategy does make it easier to discuss complex issues and try to force people into a decision, but it also removes gray area in the form of context that can be really important for making a decision. Be critical of speakers and messages that claim there are only two options from which to choose.

Ad Hominem

Ad hominem means "to the person" in Latin and refers to a common fallacy of attacking a person rather than an argument. Elementary school playgrounds and middle school hallways are often sites of ad hominem attacks. When one person runs out of good reasons to support their argument and retorts to the other, "Well you're ugly!" they have resorted to a fallacious ad hominem argument. You probably aren't surprised to know that politicians frequently rely on personal attacks, especially when they are sponsored by political action committees (PACs). The proliferation of these organizations resulted in an increase in "attack ads" during the 2012 presidential race. While all fallacious arguments detract from the quality of public communication, ad hominem arguments in particular diminish the civility of our society.

Slippery Slope

The slippery slope fallacy occurs when a person argues that one action will inevitably lead to a series of other actions. If we take one step down an icy hill it becomes difficult to get back up and you slide all the way down even though you only wanted to take one step. A slippery slope fallacy in a speech about US foreign policy might take the form of the following argument: If the United States goes to help this country in need, then we will be expected to intervene any time there's a conflict in the world.

Red Herring

The red herring fallacy is my favorite because it has an interesting origin—and it was used in *Scooby Doo*! The origin of the name of this fallacy comes from old foxhunting practices in England. When the hunters were training their dogs to stay on the trail of a fox, they would mark a trail with fox scent so the dog could practice following the scent. As a further test, they would take the smell of fish (like a red herring) and create a second trail leading in another direction. If a dog left the scent of the fox trail to follow the stronger and more noticeable scent trail left by the red herring, then the dog failed the test. The smartest and best-trained dogs weren't distracted by the fishy trail and stayed on the path. Basically every episode of Scooby Doo involves a red herring trick—for example, when the ghost at the amusement park turns out to be a distraction created by the owner to cover up his financial problems and shady business practices. A speaker who uses the red herring fallacy makes an argument that distracts from the discussion at hand. Bringing up socialism during an argument about nationalized health care is an example of a red herring fallacy.

Appeal to Tradition

The appeal to tradition fallacy argues that something should continue because "it's the way things have been done before." Someone may use this type of argument when they feel threatened by a potential change. People who oppose marriage rights for gay and lesbian people often argue that the definition of marriage shouldn't change because of its traditional meaning of a "union between one man and one woman." Such appeals often overstate the history and prevalence of the "tradition." Within the United States, many departures from traditional views of marriage have led to changes that we accept as normal today. Within the past one hundred years we have seen law changes that took away men's rights to beat their wives and make decisions for them. And it wasn't until 1993 that every state made marital rape a crime, which changed the millennia-old "tradition" that women were obligated to have sex with their husbands.Stephanie Coontz, "Traditional Marriage Has Changed a Lot," *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, February 23, 2006, accessed March 6, 2012, http://www.seattlepi.com/default/article/Traditional-marriage-has-changed-a-lot-1196563.php. Many people are resistant to or anxious about change, which is understandable, but this doesn't form the basis of a good argument.

Review of Fallacies

- **Hasty generalization.** Inductive reasoning fallacy that occurs when too few examples are cited to warrant a conclusion.
- **False analogy.** Inductive reasoning fallacy that occurs when situations or circumstances being compared are not similar enough.
- **False cause.** Causal reasoning fallacy that occurs when a speaker argues with insufficient evidence that one thing caused/causes another.
- **False authority.** Fallacy that occurs when a person making an argument doesn't have the knowledge or qualifications to be credible but is perceived as credible because they are respected or admired.
- **Bandwagon.** Fallacy that relies on arguing for a course of action or belief because it is commonly done or held.
- **False dilemma.** Fallacy that occurs when a speaker presents an audience only two options and argues they must choose one or the other.
- **Ad hominem.** Fallacy that occurs when a speaker attacks another person rather than his or her argument.
- **Slippery slope.** Fallacy that occurs when a person argues that one action will inevitably lead to a series of other actions.
- **Red herring.** Fallacy that occurs when a speaker poses an argument that is meant to distract from the argument at hand.

- **Appeal to tradition.** Fallacy that results when a speaker argues that something should continue because "it's the way things have been done before."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- We use reasoning to make sense of the world around us and draw conclusions. Three types of reasoning are inductive, deductive, and causal.
  - Inductive reasoning refers to arguments that persuade by citing examples that build to a conclusion. Examples should be sufficient, typical, and representative to warrant a strong argument. Reasoning by analogy argues that what is true in one set of circumstances will be true in another, and is an example of inductive reasoning.
  - Deductive reasoning refers to arguments that derive specifics from what is already known and includes syllogisms. Premises that lead to the conclusion must be true and relevant for the argument to be valid.
  - Causal reasoning refers to arguments that establish a relationship between a cause and an effect and usually involves a correlation rather than a true causal relationship.
- Fallacies refer to flaws within the logic or reasoning of an argument. Ten fallacies of reasoning discussed in this chapter are hasty generalization, false analogy, false cause, false authority, false dilemma, ad hominem, slippery slope, red herring, and appeal to tradition.

EXERCISES

1. Identify examples of inductive, deductive, and causal reasoning in the sample persuasive speech on education in prisons included in Section 4.3 "Nonverbal Communication Competence".
2. People often use fallacies in arguments, usually without knowing it. Being able to identify fallacies is an important critical thinking skill. Find a letter to the editor in a paper or online and see if you can identify any of the ten fallacies discussed in this chapter.
3. Of the ten fallacies discussed in the chapter, which do you think is the most unethical and why?

11.4 Persuasive Strategies

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify common persuasive strategies.
2. Explain how speakers develop ethos.
3. Explain how speakers appeal to logos and pathos.
4. Explain how cognitive dissonance works as a persuasive strategy.
5. Explain the relationship between motivation and appeals to needs as persuasive strategies.

Do you think you are easily persuaded? If you are like most people, you aren't swayed easily to change your mind about something. Persuasion is difficult because changing views often makes people feel like they were either not informed or ill informed, which also means they have to admit they were wrong about something. We will learn about nine persuasive strategies that you can use to more effectively influence audience members' beliefs, attitudes, and values. They are ethos, logos, pathos, positive motivation, negative motivation, cognitive dissonance, appeal to safety needs, appeal to social needs, and appeal to self-esteem needs.

Ethos, Logos, and Pathos

Ethos, logos, and pathos were Aristotle's three forms of rhetorical proof, meaning they were primary to his theories of persuasion. **Ethos**[20] refers to the credibility of a speaker and includes three dimensions: competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism. The two most researched dimensions of credibility are competence and trustworthiness.James B. Stiff and Paul A. Mongeau, *Persuasive Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 105.

Competence[21] refers to the perception of a speaker's expertise in relation to the topic being discussed. A speaker can enhance their perceived competence by presenting a speech based in solid research and that is well organized and practiced. Competent speakers must know the content of their speech and be able to effectively deliver that content. **Trustworthiness**[22] refers to the degree that audience members perceive a speaker to be presenting accurate, credible information in a nonmanipulative way. Perceptions of trustworthiness come from the content of the speech and the personality of the speaker. In terms of content, trustworthy speakers consider the audience throughout the speech-making process, present information in a balanced way, do not coerce the audience, cite

20. Refers to the credibility of a speaker, which includes three dimensions: competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism.

21. Perception of a speaker's expertise and knowledge in relation to the topic being discussed.

22. The degree to which audience members perceive a speaker to be presenting accurate, credible information in a nonmanipulative way.

credible sources, and follow the general principles of communication ethics. In terms of personality, trustworthy speakers are also friendly and warm.James B. Stiff and Paul A. Mongeau, *Persuasive Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 105.

Dynamism[23] refers to the degree to which audience members perceive a speaker to be outgoing and animated.James B. Stiff and Paul A. Mongeau, *Persuasive Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 105. Two components of dynamism are charisma and energy. Charisma refers to a mixture of abstract and concrete qualities that make a speaker attractive to an audience. Charismatic people usually know they are charismatic because they've been told that in their lives, and people have been attracted to them.

Unfortunately, charisma is difficult to intentionally develop, and some people seem to have a naturally charismatic personality, while others do not. Even though everyone can't embody the charismatic aspect of dynamism, the other component of dynamism, energy, is something that everyone can tap into. Communicating enthusiasm for your topic and audience by presenting relevant content and using engaging delivery strategies such as vocal variety and eye contact can increase your dynamism.

Dynamic speakers develop credibility through their delivery skills.

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Logos[24] refers to the reasoning or logic of an argument. The presence of fallacies would obviously undermine a speaker's appeal to logos. Speakers employ logos by presenting credible information as supporting material and verbally citing their sources during their speech. Using the guidelines from our earlier discussion of reasoning will also help a speaker create a rational appeal. Research shows that messages are more persuasive when arguments and their warrants are made explicit.James B. Stiff and Paul A. Mongeau, *Persuasive Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 142. Carefully choosing supporting material that is verifiable, specific, and unbiased can help a speaker appeal to logos. Speakers can also appeal to logos by citing personal experience and providing the credentials and/or qualifications of sources of information.Martha D. Cooper and William L. Nothstine, *Power Persuasion: Moving an Ancient Art into the Media Age* (Greenwood, IN: Educational Video Group, 1996), 48. Presenting a rational and logical argument is important, but speakers can be more effective persuaders if they bring in and refute counterarguments. The most effective persuasive messages are those that present two sides of an argument and

23. Refers to the degree to which audience members perceive a speaker to be outgoing and animated.

24. The reasoning or logic of an argument.

refute the opposing side, followed by single argument messages, followed by messages that present counterarguments but do not refute them.James B. Stiff and Paul A. Mongeau, *Persuasive Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 142. In short, by clearly showing an audience why one position is superior to another, speakers do not leave an audience to fill in the blanks of an argument, which could diminish the persuasive opportunity.

Pathos[25] refers to emotional appeals. Aristotle was suspicious of too much emotional appeal, yet this appears to have become more acceptable in public speaking. Stirring emotions in an audience is a way to get them involved in the speech, and involvement can create more opportunities for persuasion and action. Reading in the paper that a house was burglarized may get your attention, but think about how different your reaction would be if you found out it was your own home. Intentionally stirring someone's emotions to get them involved in a message that has little substance would be unethical. Yet such spellbinding speakers have taken advantage of people's emotions to get them to support causes, buy products, or engage in behaviors that they might not otherwise, if given the chance to see the faulty logic of a message.

Effective speakers should use emotional appeals that are also logically convincing, since audiences may be suspicious of a speech that is solely based on emotion. Emotional appeals are effective when you are trying to influence a behavior or you want your audience to take immediate action.James B. Stiff and Paul A. Mongeau, *Persuasive Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 146. Emotions lose their persuasive effect more quickly than other types of persuasive appeals. Since emotions are often reactionary, they fade relatively quickly when a person is removed from the provoking situation.Leon Fletcher, *How to Design and Deliver Speeches*, 7th ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 342.

Emotional appeals are also difficult for some because they require honed delivery skills and the ability to use words powerfully and dramatically. The ability to use vocal variety, cadence, and repetition to rouse an audience's emotion is not easily attained. Think of how stirring Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech was due to his ability to evoke the emotions of the audience. Dr. King used powerful and creative language in conjunction with his vocalics to deliver one of the most famous speeches in our history. Using concrete and descriptive examples can paint a picture in your audience member's minds. Speakers can also use literal images, displayed using visual aids, to appeal to pathos.

Speakers should strive to appeal to ethos, logos, and pathos within a speech. A speech built primarily on ethos might lead an audience to think that a speaker is full of himself or herself. A speech full of facts and statistics appealing to logos

25. Emotional appeals used by a speaker.

would result in information overload. Speakers who rely primarily on appeals to pathos may be seen as overly passionate, biased, or unable to see other viewpoints.

Review of Ethos, Logos, and Pathos

1. Ethos relates to the credibility of a speaker. Speakers develop ethos by
    - appearing competent, trustworthy, and dynamic;
    - sharing their credentials and/or relevant personal experience;
    - presenting a balanced and noncoercive argument;
    - citing credible sources;
    - using appropriate language and grammar;
    - being perceived as likable; and
    - appearing engaged with the topic and audience through effective delivery.
2. Logos relates to the reasoning and logic of an argument. Speakers appeal to logos by
    - presenting factual, objective information that serves as reasons to support the argument;
    - presenting a sufficient amount of relevant examples to support a proposition;
    - deriving conclusions from known information; and
    - using credible supporting material like expert testimony, definitions, statistics, and literal or historical analogies.
3. Pathos relates to the arousal of emotion through speech. Speakers appeal to pathos by
    - using vivid language to paint word pictures for audience members;
    - providing lay testimony (personal stories from self or others);
    - using figurative language such as metaphor, similes, and personification; and
    - using vocal variety, cadence, and repetition.

Dissonance, Motivation, and Needs

Aristotle's three rhetorical proofs—ethos, logos, and pathos—have been employed as persuasive strategies for thousands of years. More recently, persuasive strategies have been identified based on theories and evidence related to human psychology. Although based in psychology, such persuasive strategies are regularly employed and researched in communication due to their role in advertising, marketing, politics, and interpersonal relationships. The psychologically based persuasive

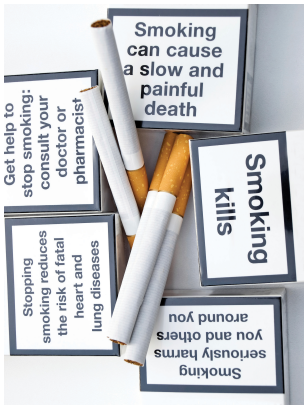
appeals we will discuss are cognitive dissonance, positive and negative motivation, and appeals to needs.

Cognitive Dissonance

If you've studied music, you probably know what dissonance is. Some notes, when played together on a piano, produce a sound that's pleasing to our ears. When dissonant combinations of notes are played, we react by wincing or cringing because the sound is unpleasant to our ears. So dissonance is that unpleasant feeling we get when two sounds clash. The same principle applies to **cognitive dissonance**[26], which refers to the mental discomfort that results when new information clashes with or contradicts currently held beliefs, attitudes, or values. Using cognitive dissonance as a persuasive strategy relies on three assumptions: (1) people have a need for consistency in their thinking; (2) when inconsistency exists, people experience psychological discomfort; and (3) this discomfort motivates people to address the inconsistency to restore balance.James B. Stiff and Paul A. Mongeau, *Persuasive Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 80. In short, when new information clashes with previously held information, there is an unpleasantness that results, as we have to try to reconcile the difference.

Cognitive dissonance isn't a single-shot persuasive strategy. As we have learned, people are resistant to change and not easy to persuade. While we might think that exposure to conflicting information would lead a rational person to change his or her mind, humans aren't as rational as we think.

There are many different mental and logical acrobatics that people do to get themselves out of dissonance. Some frequently used strategies to resolve cognitive dissonance include discrediting the speaker or source of information, viewing yourself as an exception, seeking selective information that supports your originally held belief, or intentionally avoiding or ignoring sources of cognitive dissonance.Martha D. Cooper and William L. Nothstine, *Power Persuasion: Moving an Ancient Art into the Media Age* (Greenwood, IN: Educational Video Group, 1996), 72. As you can see, none of those actually results in a person modifying their thinking, which means persuasive speech goals are not met. Of course, people can't avoid dissonant information forever, so multiple attempts at creating cognitive dissonance can actually result in thought or behavior modification.



New, larger, and more graphic warning labels on cigarette packaging are meant to induce cognitive dissonance.

26. The mental discomfort that results when new information contradicts currently held beliefs, attitudes, or values.

Positive and Negative Motivation

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Positive and negative motivation are common persuasive strategies used by teachers, parents, and public speakers. Rewards can be used for positive motivation, and the threat of punishment or negative consequences can be used for negative motivation. We've already learned the importance of motivating an audience to listen to your message by making your content relevant and showing how it relates to their lives. We also learned an organizational pattern based on theories of motivation: Monroe's Motivated Sequence. When using **positive motivation**[27], speakers implicitly or explicitly convey to the audience that listening to their message or following their advice will lead to positive results. Conversely, **negative motivation**[28] implies or states that failure to follow a speaker's advice will result in negative consequences. Positive and negative motivation as persuasive strategies match well with appeals to needs and will be discussed more next.

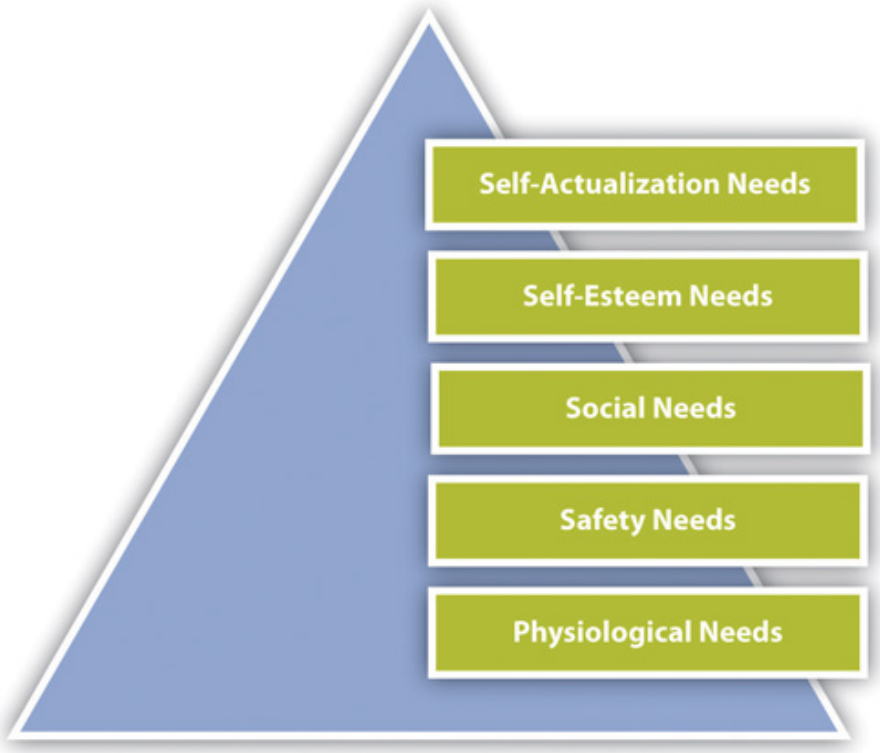
Appeals to Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs states that there are several layers of needs that human beings pursue. They include physiological, safety, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs.Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50 (1943): 370–96. Since these needs are fundamental to human survival and happiness, tapping into needs is a common persuasive strategy. Appeals to needs are often paired with positive or negative motivation, which can increase the persuasiveness of the message.

27. Attempts to motivate an audience by implying or stating that listening to a message or following a speaker's advice will lead to positive results.

28. Attempts to motivate an audience by implying or stating that failure to follow a speaker's advice will result in negative consequences.

Figure 11.3 *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*



Physiological needs form the base of the hierarchy of needs. The closer the needs are to the base, the more important they are for human survival. Speakers do not appeal to physiological needs. After all, a person who doesn't have food, air, or water isn't very likely to want to engage in persuasion, and it wouldn't be ethical to deny or promise these things to someone for persuasive gain. Some speakers attempt to appeal to self-actualization needs, but I argue that this is difficult to do ethically. Self-actualization refers to our need to achieve our highest potential, and these needs are much more intrapersonal than the others. We achieve our highest potential through things that are individual to us, and these are often things that we protect from outsiders. Some examples include pursuing higher education and intellectual fulfillment, pursuing art or music, or pursuing religious or spiritual fulfillment. These are often things we do by ourselves and for ourselves, so I like to think of this as sacred ground that should be left alone. Speakers are more likely to be successful at focusing on safety, social, and self-esteem needs.

We satisfy our **safety needs**[29] when we work to preserve our safety and the safety of our loved ones. Speakers can combine appeals to safety with positive motivation by presenting information that will result in increased safety and security. Combining safety needs and negative motivation, a speaker may convey that audience

29. Human need to preserve the safety of ourselves and our loved ones.

members' safety and security will be put at risk if the speaker's message isn't followed. Combining negative motivation and safety needs depends on using some degree of fear as a motivator. Think of how the insurance industry relies on appeals to safety needs for their business. While this is not necessarily a bad strategy, it can be done more or less ethically.

Ethics of Using Fear Appeals

- Do not overuse fear appeals.
- The threat must be credible and supported by evidence.
- Empower the audience to address the threat.

I saw a perfect example of a persuasive appeal to safety while waiting at the shop for my car to be fixed. A pamphlet cover with a yellow and black message reading, "Warning," and a stark black and white picture of a little boy picking up a ball with the back fender of a car a few feet from his head beckoned to me from across the room. The brochure was produced by an organization called Kids and Cars, whose tagline is "Love them, protect them." While the cover of the brochure was designed to provoke the receiver and compel them to open the brochure, the information inside met the ethical guidelines for using fear appeals. The first statistic noted that at least two children a week are killed when they are backed over in a driveway or parking lot. The statistic is followed by safety tips to empower the audience to address the threat. You can see a video example of how this organization effectively uses fear appeals in Video 11.1.

Video Clip 11.1

Kids and Cars: Bye-Bye Syndrome

(click to see video)

This video illustrates how a fear appeal aimed at safety needs can be persuasive. The goal is to get the attention of audience members and compel them to check out the information the organization provides. Since the information provided by the organization supports the credibility of the threat, empowers the audience to address the threat, and is free, this is an example of an ethical fear appeal.

Our **social needs**[30] relate to our desire to belong to supportive and caring groups. We meet social needs through interpersonal relationships ranging from acquaintances to intimate partnerships. We also become part of interest groups or social or political groups that help create our sense of identity. The existence and power of peer pressure is a testament to the motivating power of social needs. People go to great lengths and sometimes make poor decisions they later regret to

30. Human need to belong to supportive and caring groups.

be a part of the "in-group." Advertisers often rely on creating a sense of exclusivity to appeal to people's social needs. Positive and negative motivation can be combined with social appeals. Positive motivation is present in messages that promise the receiver "in-group" status or belonging, and negative motivation can be seen in messages that persuade by saying, "Don't be left out." Although these arguments may rely on the bandwagon fallacy to varying degrees, they draw out insecurities people have about being in the "out-group."

We all have a need to think well of ourselves and have others think well of us, which ties to our **self-esteem needs**[31]. Messages that combine appeals to self-esteem needs and positive motivation often promise increases in respect and status. A financial planner may persuade by inviting a receiver to imagine prosperity that will result from accepting his or her message. A publicly supported radio station may persuade listeners to donate money to the station by highlighting a potential contribution to society. The health and beauty industries may persuade consumers to buy their products by promising increased attractiveness. While it may seem shallow to entertain such ego needs, they are an important part of our psychological makeup. Unfortunately, some sources of persuasive messages are more concerned with their own gain than the well-being of others and may take advantage of people's insecurities in order to advance their persuasive message. Instead, ethical speakers should use appeals to self-esteem that focus on prosperity, contribution, and attractiveness in ways that empower listeners.

Review of Persuasive Strategies

- **Ethos.** Develops a speaker's credibility.
- **Logos.** Evokes a rational, cognitive response from the audience.
- **Pathos.** Evokes an emotional response from the audience.
- **Cognitive dissonance.** Moves an audience by pointing out inconsistencies between new information and their currently held beliefs, attitudes, and values.
- **Positive motivation.** Promises rewards if the speaker's message is accepted.
- **Negative motivation.** Promises negative consequences if a speaker's message is rejected.
- **Appeals to safety needs.** Evokes an audience's concern for their safety and the safety of their loved ones.
- **Appeals to social needs.** Evokes an audience's need for belonging and inclusion.
- **Appeals to self-esteem needs.** Evokes an audience's need to think well of themselves and have others think well of them, too.

31. Human need to think well of ourselves and have others think well of us.

"Getting Competent"

Identifying Persuasive Strategies in Mary Fisher's "Whisper of AIDS" Speech

Mary Fisher's speech at the 1992 Republican National Convention, "A Whisper of AIDS," is one of the most moving and powerful speeches of the past few decades. She uses, more than once, all the persuasive strategies discussed in this chapter. The video and transcript of her speech can be found at the following link: http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/maryfisher1992rnc.html. As you watch the speech, answer the following questions:

1. **Ethos.** List specific examples of how the speaker develops the following dimensions of credibility: competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism.
2. **Logos.** List specific examples of how the speaker uses logic to persuade her audience.
3. **Pathos.** How did the speaker appeal to emotion? What metaphors did she use? What other communicative strategies (wording, imagery, etc.) appealed to your emotions?
4. List at least one example of how the speaker uses positive motivation.
5. List at least one example of how the speaker uses negative motivation.
6. List at least one example of how the speaker appeals to safety needs.
7. List at least one example of how the speaker appeals to social needs.
8. List at least one example of how the speaker utilizes cognitive dissonance.

Sample Persuasive Speech

Title: Education behind Bars Is the Key to Rehabilitation

General purpose: To persuade

Specific purpose: By the end of my speech, my audience will believe that prisoners should have the right to an education.

Thesis statement: There should be education in all prisons, because denying prisoners an education has negative consequences for the prisoner and society, while providing them with an education provides benefits for the prisoner and society.

Introduction

Attention getter: "We must accept the reality that to confine offenders behind walls without trying to change them is an expensive folly with short-term benefits—winning battles while losing the war." These words were spoken more than thirty years ago by Supreme Court Justice Warren Burger, and they support my argument today that prisoners should have access to education.

Introduction of topic: While we value education as an important part of our society, we do not value it equally for all. Many people don't believe that prisoners should have access to an education, but I believe they do.

Credibility and relevance: While researching this topic, my eyes were opened up to how much an education can truly affect a prisoner, and given my desire to be a teacher, I am invested in preserving the right to learn for everyone, even if they are behind bars. While I know from our audience analysis activity that some of you do not agree with me, you never know when this issue may hit close to home. Someday, someone you love might make a mistake in their life and end up in prison, and while they are there I know you all would want them to receive an education so that when they get out, they will be better prepared to make a contribution to society.

Preview: Today, I invite you listen with an open mind as I discuss the need for prisoner education, a curriculum that will satisfy that need, and some benefits of prisoner education.

Transition: First I'll explain why prisoners need access to education.

Body

1. According to a 2012 article in the journal *Corrections Today* on correctional education programs, most states have experienced an

increase in incarceration rates and budgetary constraints over the past ten years, which has led many to examine best practices for reducing prison populations.

1. In that same article, criminologist and former research director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons states that providing correctional education is one of the most productive and important reentry services that our prisons offer.
    1. His claim is supported by data collected directly from prisoners, 94 percent of whom identify education as a personal reentry need—ranking it above other needs such as financial assistance, housing, or employment.
    2. Despite the fact that this need is clearly documented, funding for adult and vocational education in correctional education has decreased.
2. Many prisoners have levels of educational attainment that are far below those in the general population.
    1. According to statistics from 2010, as cited in the *Corrections Today* article, approximately 40 percent of state prison inmates did not complete high school, as compared to 19 percent of the general population.
    2. Additionally, while about 48 percent of the general public have taken college classes, only about 11 percent of state prisoners have.
    3. At the skill level, research from the United Kingdom, cited in the 2003 article from *Studies in the Education of Adults* titled "Learning behind Bars: Time to Liberate Prison Education," rates of illiteracy are much higher among the prison population than the general population, and there is a link between poor reading skills and social exclusion that may lead people to antisocial behavior.
3. Prisoner education is also needed to break a cycle of negativity and stigma that many prisoners have grown accustomed to.
    1. The article from *Studies in the Education of Adults* that I just cited states that prisoners are often treated as objects or subjected to objectifying labels like "*addict*, *sexual offender*, and *deviant*."
    2. While these labels may be accurate in many cases, they do not do much to move the prisoner toward rehabilitation.
    3. The label *student*, however, has the potential to do so because it has positive associations and can empower the prisoner to

make better choices to enhance his or her confidence and self-worth.

Transition: Now that I've established the need for prisoner education, let's examine how we can meet that need.

2. In order to meet the need for prisoner education that I have just explained, it is important to have a curriculum that is varied and tailored to various prisoner populations and needs.

    1. The article from *Corrections Today* notes that education is offered to varying degrees in most US prisons, but its presence is often debated and comes under increased scrutiny during times of budgetary stress.

        1. Some states have implemented programs that require inmates to attend school for a certain amount of time if they do not meet minimum standards for certain skills such as reading or math.
        2. While these are useful programs, prisoner education shouldn't be limited to or focused on those with the least amount of skills.
        3. The article notes that even prisoners who have attended or even graduated from college may benefit from education, as they can pursue specialized courses or certifications.

    2. Based on my research, I would propose that the prison curriculum have four tiers: one that addresses basic skills that prisoners may lack, one that prepares prisoners for a GED, one that prepares prisoners for college-level work, and one that focuses on life and social skills.

        1. The first tier of the education program should focus on remediation and basic skills, which is the most common form of prisoner education as noted by Foley and Gao in their 2004 article from the *Journal of Correctional Education* that studied educational practices at several institutions.

            a. These courses will teach prisoners basic reading, writing, and math skills that may be lacking.
            b. Since there is a stigma associated with a lack of these basic skills, early instruction should be one-one-one or in small groups.

2. The second tier should prepare prisoners who have not completed the equivalent of high school to progress on to a curriculum modeled after that of most high schools, which will prepare them for a GED.
3. The third tier should include a curriculum based on the general education learning goals found at most colleges and universities and/or vocational training.
    a. Basic general education goals include speaking, writing, listening, reading, and math.
    b. Once these general education requirements have been met, prisoners should be able to pursue specialized vocational training or upper-level college courses in a major of study, which may need to be taken online through distance learning, since instructors may not be available to come to the actual prisons to teach.
4. The fourth tier includes training in social and life skills that most people learn through family and peer connections, which many prisoners may not have had.
    a. Some population-specific areas of study that wouldn't be covered in a typical classroom include drug treatment and anger management.
    b. Life skills such as budgeting, money management, and healthy living can increase confidence.
    c. Classes that focus on social skills, parenting, or relational communication can also improve communication skills and relational satisfaction; for example, workshops teaching parenting skills have been piloted to give fathers the skills needed to more effectively communicate with their children, which can increase feelings of self-worth.

3. According to a 2007 article by Behan in the *Journal of Correctional Education*, prisons should also have extracurricular programs that enhance the educational experience.
    1. Under the supervision of faculty and/or staff, prisoners could be given the task of organizing an outside speaker to come to the prison or put together a workshop.
    2. Students could also organize a debate against students on the outside, which could allow the prisoners to interact (face-to-face or virtually) with other students and allow them to be recognized for their academic abilities.

3. Even within the prison, debates, trivia contests, paper contests, or speech contests could be organized between prisoners or between prisoners and prison staff as a means of healthy competition.
4. Finally, prisoners who are successful students should be recognized and put into peer-mentoring roles, because, as Behan states in the article, "a prisoner who...has had an inspirational learning experience acts as a more positive advocate for the school than any [other method]."

Transition: The model for prisoner education that I have just outlined will have many benefits.

3. Educating prisoners can benefit inmates, those who work in prisons, and society at large.
    1. The article I just cited from the *Journal of Correctional Education* states that the self-reflection and critical thinking that are fostered in an educational setting can help prisoners reflect on how their actions affected them, their victims, and/or their communities, which may increase self-awareness and help them better reconnect with a civil society and reestablish stronger community bonds.
    2. The *Corrections Today* article I cited earlier notes that a federally funded three-state survey provided the strongest evidence to date that prisoner education reduces the recidivism rate and increases public safety.
        1. The *Corrections Today* article also notes that prisoners who completed a GED reoffended at a rate 20 percent lower than the general prison population, and those that completed a college degree reoffended at a rate 44 percent lower than the general prison population.
        2. So why does prisoner education help reduce recidivism rates?
            a. Simply put, according to the article in the *Studies in the Education of Adults* I cited earlier, the skills gained through good prison education programs make released prisoners more desirable employees, which increases their wages and helps remove them from a negative cycles of stigma and poverty that led many of them to crime in the first place.
            b. Further, the ability to maintain consistent employment has been shown to reduce the rate of reoffending.

3. Education doesn't just improve the lives of the prisoners; it also positively affects the people who work in prisons.
    1. An entry on eHow.com by Kinney about the benefits of prisoners getting GEDs notes that a successful educational program in a prison can create a more humane environment that will positively affect the officers and staff as well.
    2. Such programs also allow prisoners to do more productive things with their time, which lessens violent and destructive behavior and makes prison workers' jobs safer.
4. Prisoner education can also save cash-strapped states money.
    1. Giving prisoners time-off-sentence credits for educational attainment can help reduce the prison population, as eligible inmates are released earlier because of their educational successes.
    2. As noted by the *Corrections Today* article, during the 2008–9 school year the credits earned by prisoners in the Indiana system led to more than $68 million dollars in avoided costs.

Conclusion

Transition to conclusion and summary of importance: In closing, it's easy to see how beneficial a good education can be to a prisoner. Education may be something the average teenager or adult takes for granted, but for a prisoner it could be the start of a new life.

Review of main points: There is a clear need for prisoner education that can be met with a sound curriculum that will benefit prisoners, those who work in prisons, and society at large.

Closing statement: While education in prisons is still a controversial topic, I hope you all agree with me and Supreme Court Justice Burger, whose words opened this speech, when we say that locking a criminal away may offer a short-term solution in that it gets the criminal out of regular society, but it doesn't better the prisoner and it doesn't better us in the long run as a society.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Ethos refers to the credibility of a speaker and is composed of three dimensions: competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism. Speakers develop ethos by being prepared, citing credible research, presenting information in a nonmanipulative way, and using engaging delivery techniques.
- Logos refers to the reasoning or logic of an argument. Speakers appeal to logos by presenting factual objective information, using sound reasoning, and avoiding logical fallacies.
- Pathos refers to emotional appeals. Speakers appeal to pathos by using vivid language, including personal stories, and using figurative language.
- Cognitive dissonance refers to the mental discomfort that results from new information clashing with currently held beliefs, attitudes, or values. Cognitive dissonance may lead a person to be persuaded, but there are other ways that people may cope with dissonance, such as by discrediting the speaker, seeking out alternative information, avoiding sources of dissonance, or reinterpreting the information.
- Speakers can combine positive and negative motivation with appeals to safety, social, or self-esteem needs in order to persuade.

EXERCISES

1. Ethos, or credibility, is composed of three dimensions: competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism. Of those dimensions, which is most important for you when judging someone's credibility and why?
2. Recount a time when you experienced cognitive dissonance. What was the new information and what did it clash with? What coping strategies, of the ones discussed in the chapter, did you use to try to restore cognitive balance?
3. How ethical do you think it is for a speaker to rely on fear appeals? When do fear appeals cross the line?
4. Imagine that you will be delivering a persuasive speech to a group of prospective students considering attending your school. What could you say that would appeal to their safety needs? Their social needs? Their self-esteem needs?