

4.4.7: Sample Persuasive Speech

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the structural parts of a persuasive speech.

Here is a generic, sample speech in an outline form with notes and suggestions.

Attention Statement

Show a picture of a person on death row and ask the audience: does an innocent man deserve to die?

Introduction

Briefly introduce the man in an Illinois prison and explain that he was released only days before his impending death because DNA evidence (not available when he was convicted), clearly established his innocence.

A statement of your topic and your specific stand on the topic:

“My speech today is about the death penalty, and I am against it.”

Introduce your credibility and the topic: “My research on this controversial topic has shown me that deterrence and retribution are central arguments for the death penalty, and today I will address each of these issues in turn.”

State your main points.

“Today I will address the two main arguments for the death penalty, deterrence and retribution, and examine how the governor of one state decided that since some cases were found to be faulty, all cases would be stayed until proven otherwise.”

Body

Information: Provide a simple explanation of the death penalty in case there are people who do not know about it. Provide clear definitions of key terms.

Deterrence: Provide arguments by generalization, sign, and authority.

Retribution: Provide arguments by analogy, cause, and principle.

Case study: State of Illinois, Gov. George Ryan. Provide an argument by testimony and authority by quoting: “You have a system right now...that’s fraught with error and has innumerable opportunities for innocent people to be executed,” Dennis Culloton, spokesman for the Governor, told the *Chicago Tribune*. “He is determined not to make that mistake.”

Solution steps:

1. *National level*. “Stay all executions until the problem that exists in Illinois, and perhaps the nation, is addressed.”
2. *Local level*. “We need to encourage our own governor to examine the system we have for similar errors and opportunities for innocent people to be executed.”
3. *Personal level*. “Vote, write your representatives, and help bring this issue to the forefront in your community.”

Conclusion

Reiterate your main points and provide synthesis; do not introduce new content.

Residual Message

Imagine that you have been assigned to give a persuasive presentation lasting five to seven minutes. Follow the guidelines in Table 4.4.7.1 and apply them to your presentation.

Table 4.4.7.1: Sample Speech Guidelines

1.Topic	Choose a product or service that interests you so much that you would like to influence the audience’s attitudes and behavior toward it.
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2. Purpose	Persuasive speakers may plan to secure behavioral changes, influence thinking, or motivate action in their audience. They may state a proposition of fact, value, definition, or policy. They may incorporate appeals to reason, emotion, and/or basic needs.
3. Audience	Think about what your audience might already know about your topic and what they may not know, and perhaps any attitudes toward or concerns about it. Consider how this may affect the way that you will present your information. You won't be able to convert everyone in the audience from a "no" to a "yes," but you might encourage a couple to consider "maybe." Audiences are more likely to change their behavior if it meets their needs, saves them money, involves a small change, or if the proposed change is approached gradually in the presentation.
4. Supporting Materials	Using the information gathered in your search for information, determine what is most worthwhile, interesting, and important to include in your speech. Time limits will require that you be selective about what you use. Consider information that the audience might want to know that contradicts or challenges your claims and be prepared for questions. Use visual aids to illustrate your message.
5. Organization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write a central idea statement, which expresses the message, or point, that you hope to get across to your listeners in the speech. 2. Determine the two to three main points that will be needed to support your central idea. 3. Prepare a complete sentence outline of the body of the speech, including solution steps or action items.
6. Introduction	Develop an opening that will <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. get the attention and interest of your listeners, 2. express your central idea/message, and 3. lead into the body of your speech.
7. Conclusion	The conclusion should review and/or summarize the important ideas in your speech and bring it to a smooth close.
8. Delivery	The speech should be delivered extemporaneously, using speaking notes and not reading from the manuscript. Work on maximum eye contact with your listeners. Use any visual aids or handouts that may be helpful.

Key Takeaway

A speech to persuade presents an attention statement, an introduction, the body of the speech with main points and supporting information, a conclusion, and a residual message.

Exercises

1. Apply this framework to your persuasive speech.
2. Prepare a three- to five-minute presentation to persuade and present it to the class.
3. Review an effective presentation to persuade and present it to the class.
4. Review an ineffective presentation to persuade and present it to the class

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