

Building Your Persuasive Speech Outline

Brief: To be effective, your persuasive speech outline needs to be your strategic plan of how you will move your audience to change their beliefs and behaviors.

Learning Objective: Understand how to tailor the components of an outline to support the strategic goals of a persuasive speech.

Key Terms:

- **Counterargument:** An argument that is opposed to another argument.

Tailor Outline Components to Persuasion

Like all other types of speeches, your persuasive speech will include four key components: an introduction, a body with main points and sub-points, a conclusion, and transitions. However, unlike other types of speech outlines, your persuasive speech outline needs to be more than just a map of how you will organize content. To be effective, your persuasive speech outline needs to be your strategic plan of how you will move your audience to change their beliefs and behaviors.



Introductions

All introductions should be designed to get the audience's attention, describe the topic, state the purpose, and give an overview of the speech and its main points. Your persuasive speech introduction will need to develop each of those elements even more. Your introduction needs to connect with your audience members so that they will care about your topic and purpose and be motivated to listen attentively to all of your argument—and ultimately be motivated to change.

Main Points and Sub-Points

As you construct your argument and choose which evidence to include in the body of your speech, you will need to continually ask yourself, “Will my audience find this evidence credible, emotionally compelling, and, ultimately, convincing?” Keep in mind that you may have identified the best evidence, but you may not be presenting that information in the best strategic order to build your argument.

As you develop your main points and sub-points, do not shy away from addressing counterarguments, which are arguments that are opposed to your own arguments. Your persuasive speech will ultimately be more convincing if you show your audience that you have considered all sides of an issue. Responding to a counterargument does not mean utterly obliterating it. You may concede it, minimize it, or question the supporting evidence or

underlying premise. Your goal is to not only articulate your position, but convince your audience that your argument is superior to other arguments.

Conclusions

Like all other types of speeches, persuasive speech conclusions should summarize your main points and restate the thesis. However, your persuasive speech conclusion needs to go further because this is where you'll make your final appeal for audience members to change their beliefs and behaviors.

If there is something specific you'd like your audience to do, provide them with any resources you can to make it easier, such as stamped addressed envelopes to send a letter or postcard to their local representative. It is difficult to motivate people to take action, but if you make it simple, they will be more likely to follow through.

Transitions

Planning how you will use transitions to tie the components of your speech together is especially important when you're preparing to deliver a persuasive speech.

Remember, you're appealing to audience members to make a change and, therefore, your credibility is extremely important. Audience members are much more apt to be convinced by your arguments if you demonstrate confidence in how you manage your speech delivery.

Emphasizing transition points with appropriate visual aids, body language, vocal delivery, and transitional words and phrases will go a long way to communicate with them that you're in command of the situation.

From Concept to Action

After you've identified your proposition, chosen your line of reason, selected an effective form of organization for your main and sub-points (evidence), and created your draft outline, it's time to review your draft outline to be sure that it's significantly tailored to a persuasive speech. Does your introduction connect with your audience members so that they will care about your topic and purpose and be motivated to listen attentively to all of your argument—and ultimately be motivated to change? Will your audience find the evidence you include in the body of your speech credible, emotionally compelling, and, ultimately, convincing? Have you addressed counter-arguments? Why or why not? In your conclusion, have you made a final appeal for your audience members to change their beliefs and behaviors? If there is something specific you'd like your audience to do, have you provided them with any resources you can to make it easier? And, finally, have you included transition points, with appropriate notations about visual aids, body language, vocal delivery, and transitional words and phrases?

OER IMAGE SOURCES:

"Change Arrows Clouds Sky Direction Start." Pixabay. <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/change-arrows-clouds-sky-direction-948024/>. Accessed 7 June 2019. [CC0]

OER TEXT SOURCES:

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