

Persuasive Speech Assignment

Overview:

The purpose of your persuasive speech is to change your audience's attitudes, actions, or beliefs about a topic of your choice. In this speech, you are not only helping your audience understand your topic, but you are also changing the way that they think, what they feel, or what they do.

When selecting a topic for your persuasive speech, you should ask yourself a series of questions about each topic that you consider:

1. Is this an appropriate topic for a persuasive speech?
2. Is this a topic in which I am interested? Is this topic important to me? Do I feel strongly about this topic and believe that it should be important to others?
3. Will my audience be interested in this topic?
4. How much does my audience already know about this topic?
5. Is this a topic about which I can actually change my audience's attitudes, actions, or beliefs? If your topic is not controversial at all, or if everyone in your audience already agrees with you, then you will not be changing their minds about anything. Likewise, if your topic is too controversial and is an issue about which your audience already has strong beliefs, you are unlikely to change your audience's attitudes, actions, or beliefs.
6. Will persuading my audience about this topic help somebody in some way?

After selecting a topic, you should develop a specific purpose and thesis statement for your persuasive speech. Decide which pattern of organization is best for presenting your main points, and incorporate support materials as you develop your speech outline. Use one of the Persuasive Speech Outline templates in the following section to help plan and organize your speech.

Organizing your speech:

Though there are several patterns of organization that can be used effectively for a persuasive presentation, there are two that usually work best.

The first is the **problem-cause-solution** format. In this type of persuasive speech, your first main point explains the problem(s) associated with your topic, the second main point explains the cause(s), and the final main point proposes the solution(s).

The second pattern of organization that is especially effective for a persuasive speech is the **comparative** format. In this pattern of organization, each main point is an argument or reason that supports your thesis and shows why your solution is a better option than the alternative. If you choose this pattern of organization, you should make sure that each of your main points is an argument that supports your thesis and that each main point is a separate argument or point of comparison.

Research: For this speech, you will need to conduct outside research. You should consult a variety of sources, such as newspaper articles, magazines, peer-reviewed academic journals, books, and websites. You should include a references list in APA format with your outline. During your speech, you should orally cite at least five different sources.

Visual Aids: For this speech, you should use some type of visual resource to enhance your speech.

Notes: While planning your speech, you will develop a full sentence presentation outline that you will turn in before you give your speech. When you give your speech in class, you should use only **one notecard** with a keyword speaking outline.

Length: 6–8 minutes

What you need to bring to class:

Workshop day:

- 2 copies of your outline
- Peer workshop evaluation
- Stopwatch or other timer

Speech day:

- Instructor evaluation form
- Peer evaluation form
- Final draft of your presentation outline
- List of references in APA format
- Previous drafts of your speech outline
- Peer workshop form from workshop day