Persuasive Speaking

Focus Questions

1. What are the three bases of persuasion?
2. What organizational structures are most effective for persuasive speeches?
3. Are one-sided or two-sided speeches more persuasive?
4. How do speakers manage hostile audiences?
Welcome to persuasive speaking. Although most of us won’t give persuasive speeches regularly, nearly all of us will do so at times. In some cases, we’ll be asked to make persuasive presentations. For instance, your manager might want you to persuade a potential client that your firm can provide it with the best service. In other cases, your own values and commitments will compel you to speak in an effort to persuade others to ideas or actions that you think are right or desirable.

In this chapter we’ll focus on persuasive speaking. As you’ll discover, much of what you’ve learned in previous chapters applies to the specific communicative occasion of persuasive speaking. First, we’ll clarify what persuasive speaking is. Second, we’ll discuss three cornerstones of persuasion and means of building your credibility as a speaker. Next, we’ll identify organizational patterns that are particularly effective for persuasive speeches. Fourth, we’ll identify guidelines for effective persuasive speaking. To close the chapter, we’ll consider a sample persuasive speech, noting how it embodies principles covered in this and preceding chapters.

Understanding Persuasive Speaking

Persuasive speeches are presentations that aim to change others by prompting them to think, feel, or act differently. You may want to change people’s attitudes toward policies, candidates for office, or groups of people. You may want to alter the strength of attitudes toward or against particular ideas, people, or policies. You may want to change how people act, perhaps convincing them not to smoke or drink, to use seatbelts, to donate blood, or to volunteer for community service. In each case, your goal is persuasive: You aim to change the people with whom you speak.

In thinking about persuasive speaking, it’s important to keep three characteristics in mind (Table 17.1). First, like all other communication, persuasive speaking is interactive. The transactional model of communication that we discussed in Chapter 1 is as relevant to persuasive speaking as to other kinds of communication. Effective persuasion is not something speakers do to listeners. Instead, it is engagement between a speaker and listeners. Although the speaker may be in the spotlight, the listeners are very much part of effective persuasive speaking, from planning to delivery. Speakers should consider listeners’ experiences, expectations, values, and attitudes when they first think about topics and how to approach them.
Visual aids and dynamic extemporaneous delivery increase persuasive impact.

developing strong persuasive speeches, speakers need to keep listeners in mind: What kinds of evidence will they find impressive? Which experts will they respect? What is likely to lead these particular listeners to respect the speaker? In delivering persuasive speeches, speakers need to establish and maintain visual and personal connections with listeners and respond to feedback. After a persuasive speech, listeners may ask questions. Effective speakers respond in an open-minded manner that demonstrates respect for listeners. Throughout persuasive speaking, then, speakers and listeners are engaged in a transactional communicative process.

Persuasion is also not the same as coercion, or force. The great rhetorical scholar Aristotle distinguished between what he called inartistic proofs and artistic proofs. Aristotle taught that persuasion relies on artistic, not inartistic, proofs. An inartistic proof is one that doesn’t require any art or skill on our part. We don’t have to consider or respect others to get what we want using inartistic proofs. For instance, if you hold a gun to someone’s head and say, “Give me $100 or I’ll shoot you,” you may get the money. In that sense, you’ve been effective, although you might wind up in jail for breaking the law. However, you haven’t been artistic, and you haven’t engaged in persuasion. To do that, you would need to provide the other person with reasons that convince her or him to give you the money. You would use reasons and words to motivate—not force—the other to do what you want.

Finally, persuasive impact usually is gradual, or incremental. Although sometimes people undergo rapid, radical changes, that’s the exception more than the rule. Usually, we move gradually toward new ideas, attitudes, and actions. When we hear a persuasive speech, we compare its arguments with our experience and knowledge. If the speaker offers strong arguments, good evidence, and a coherent organization, we may shift our attitudes or behaviors. If we later encounter additional persuasion, we may shift our attitudes.
Is interactive between speaker and listeners
Is not coercive
Impact usually is incremental or gradual

further. Over time and with repeated encounters with persuasive material, we may change our attitude or behaviors.

This incremental character of persuasion suggests that to be effective, speakers should understand the attitudes and behaviors of listeners and adapt the persuasive goal accordingly. For example, assume you believe the electoral college should be abandoned in national elections, and you want to persuade others to your point of view. How would an effective persuasive speech differ if you knew in advance that listeners strongly favored the current electoral college system or if you knew that they already have some reservations about the electoral system? The incremental nature of persuasion suggests that it would be unrealistic and ineffective to try to persuade listeners in the first case to support repeal of the electoral college. A more realistic and effective initial speaking goal would be to persuade listeners that there are some disadvantages to the current electoral system. In this instance, you would be effective if you could reduce the strength of their position favoring the electoral college.

In the second case, it might be appropriate to try to persuade listeners to sign a petition advocating abolition of the electoral system. Because the second group of listeners already have reservations, you can build on those and lead them closer to a particular action.

Now that we have a foundation for understanding persuasive speaking, we’re ready to consider how the process works.

The Three Cornerstones of Persuasion

The cornerstones of effective persuasion were identified more than 2,000 years ago. Teachers in ancient Greece and Rome understood that effective speaking, especially persuasive speaking, is essential to democratic societies. Thus, learning to speak effectively and persuasively was central to the education of citizens. These ancient teachers recognized three cornerstones of persuasion, which are also called three forms of proof, or reasons people believe.

One of the greatest ancient teachers was Aristotle. He labeled these three kinds of proof ethos, pathos, and logos (Kennedy, 1991). Although these three forms of proof are also important in other kinds of speaking, they assume special prominence when we engage in persuasion (Figure 17.1). We’ll discuss each of these and why it contributes to persuasive impact.

Ethos

Ethos refers to the perceived personal character of the speaker. We are more likely to believe the words of people whom we think are good and ethical. We tend to attribute high ethos to people if we perceive that

• They have integrity
• They can be trusted
The Three Cornerstones of Persuasion

- They have good will toward us
- They know what they are talking about
- They are committed to the topic (show enthusiasm, dynamism)

Listeners will have confidence in you and what you say if they think you mean well, are trustworthy, have relevant expertise, care about your topic, and have good character. Conversely, listeners are likely not to place confidence in speakers they think are uniformed, uninvolved with the topic, untrustworthy, manipulative, or otherwise of poor character.

—Carl—

Last year I had a teacher who didn’t know anything about the subject. She made a lot of really vague statements and when we tried to pin her down on specifics, she would blow off hot air—saying nothing at all. Nobody in the class thought she had any credibility.

Because ethos is critical to persuasive impact, you should do what you can to demonstrate to your listeners that you are of good character. Table 17.2 identifies specific ways that you can influence listeners’ perceptions of your ethos.

Pathos

The second reason people believe speakers is pathos. Pathos refers to emotional proofs, or reasons to believe in something. Logical proofs are not the only ones that affect what we believe. We are also influenced by our feelings: passions, personal values, and perceptions. Emotional proofs address the more subjective reasons we believe in people, ideas, causes, and particular courses of action.
Table 17.2 Demonstrating Ethos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Ethos</th>
<th>Ways to Demonstrate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good will toward listeners</td>
<td>Identify common ground between you and listeners</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Show respect for listeners’ attitudes and experiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Show that what you’re saying will benefit them</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>Provide strong support for your claims</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Document sources of support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Address concerns or objections to your position</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate personal knowledge of the topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Be ethical in using supporting materials</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairly address other points of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate that you care about listeners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamism</td>
<td>Speak with strong volume and inflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assume a confident posture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use gestures and kinesics to enhance forcefulness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be energetic in presentation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Aristotle taught his rhetoric students that emotions can affect judgments, including whether listeners agree with what a persuasive speaker advocates. In preparing your persuasive presentation, you want to develop ways to help your listeners not just understand your ideas but also feel something about them. You may want them to feel positively about what you advocate. You may want them to feel negatively about some problem you are seeking to solve. You may want them to feel outraged about an injustice, compelled to help others, or afraid of a policy or possibility. Arousing feelings such as these adds to the persuasive impact of your speech. Table 17.3 identifies concrete ways to enhance pathos in your speech.

—Melanie—

Last night I saw an ad on television that was asking viewers to help children who were starving in other countries. At first, I paid attention, but it just went over the top. The pictures were so heartbreaking that I just couldn’t watch. I felt disgusted and guilty and mainly, mainly what I really felt was turned off.

Melanie makes an important point. Appeals to emotions are powerful—and dangerous. They easily alienate listeners instead of involving them. We don’t like to feel bad, to feel unpleasant emotions, so we’re likely to tune them out, as Melanie did. Emotions that tend to lead to discomfort include fear and guilt, so speakers should be very cautious in appealing to them. You may want your listeners to fear what will happen if they don’t do what you advocate, but you don’t want them to be so overwhelmed by fear that they are paralyzed and thus unable to act. If you appeal to listeners’ fears, do so in moderation and without excessive dramatics. Guilt can also be both aversive and disabling.

Technology
This Web site maintained by Merriam-Webster provides a listing of several other sites that discuss the use of pathos, logos and ethos.
Generally, it’s more effective to encourage listeners to do something they will feel good about (send money to help starving children overseas) than to berate them for what they are or aren’t doing (eating well themselves while others starve, not contributing in the past). The bottom line is that you want to appeal to listeners’ emotions to get them involved with your speech, not for the sake of emotional arousal itself.

### Logos

The third reason we believe in things is logos, which is rational or logical proofs. For many of us, logical proofs are what first come to mind when we think about persuasion. We provide logical proofs when we offer arguments, reasoning, and evidence to support claims in persuasive speeches.

#### Forms of Reasoning

Most reasoning can be divided into one of two basic forms. **Inductive reasoning** begins with specific examples and uses them to draw a general conclusion. **Deductive reasoning** begins with a conclusion and then shows how it applies to specific examples. Suppose you want to present a speech arguing that global temperature change is damaging our environment. To reason inductively, you would start by citing specific places where global climate change is occurring and document the harm in each case. Then you would advance the general conclusion that global climate change threatens life on our planet. Reasoning deductively, you would reverse that order, beginning with the general conclusion and then showing how it is supported by specific cases.
The Toulmin Model

Another way to think about reasoning was provided by philosopher Stephen Toulmin (1958; Toulmin, Rieke, & Janik, 1984). Toulmin explained that logical reasoning consists of three primary components: claims, grounds for the claims, and warrants that connect the claims and the grounds for them. In addition to these three basic parts of logical reasoning, Toulmin’s model includes qualifiers and rebuttals. Figure 17.2 shows the Toulmin model of reasoning.

The first component of Toulmin’s model is the claim. A claim is an assertion. For instance, you might advance this claim: “The death penalty doesn’t deter crime.” On its own, that claim is not convincing.

To give persuasive impact to a claim, you need to provide some grounds for believing it. Grounds are evidence or data that support the claim. As we saw in Chapter 14, evidence includes examples, testimony, statistics, analogies, and visual aids. For example, you might cite statistical evidence showing that crime has not diminished when states enacted the death penalty or that crime has not risen when states repealed the death penalty.

Consider a second example. You assert the claim that global climate change is harming the planet. Grounds, or evidence, to support that claim might include statistics to document the occurrence of global climate change, detailed examples of people whose lives have been negatively affected by changes in the earth’s temperature, testimony from distinguished and unbiased scientists, or visual aids that show changes over time. All these kinds of evidence support your claim that global climate change is harming our planet.

Grounds are necessary to support claims. However, they aren’t sufficient. There must be something that links the grounds to the claim. That something is a warrant, which justifies the relevance of the grounds to the claim. You’ve probably heard the word warrant in connection with law enforcement. If a police officer wants to search the home of Pat Brown, the officer must obtain a search warrant from a judge. The officer shows the judge evidence suggesting that Pat Brown has engaged in criminal activity. If the judge agrees that the evidence links Brown to criminal activity, a search warrant is issued.

**Discussion Questions**

Of the three appeals—ethos, logos and pathos—which appeal has the most effect on you? Which appeal has the least effect on you?
However, if the judge thinks the evidence is insufficient to link Brown to criminal activity, a warrant is not issued.

Warrants operate the same way in persuasive speaking. If listeners perceive your evidence as relevant to the claim and as supporting it, they’re likely to believe your claim. Let’s return to a previous example. To support your claim that the death penalty does not deter crime, you provide statistics showing that crime rates do not increase when states repeal the death penalty. If the statistics were compiled by the Department of Justice, your listeners may perceive them as justifying the claim. However, if your statistics were compiled by a group dedicated to opposing the death penalty, your listeners might not accept your claim. In the second case, listeners might perceive the source of the evidence as biased and therefore not trustworthy. In that case, there would not be a warrant to justify linking the evidence to the claim.

A **qualifier** is a word or phrase that limits the scope of your claim. “Women are more interpersonally sensitive than men” is a very broad claim—so broad that it is difficult to support. A more supportable claim would be qualified: “In general, women are more interpersonally sensitive than men” or “Some women are more sensitive than some men” or “In many situations, women tend to be more interpersonally sensitive than men.” The three qualified claims are more supportable.

Finally, Toulmin’s model includes **rebuttal**, which anticipates and addresses reservations that listeners are likely to have about claims. As we’ve noted
repeatedly, effective speakers consider listeners. Part of the process of considering listeners is to anticipate their reservations or objections to claims that you will advance. You demonstrate respect for listeners when you acknowledge their reservations and address them in your speech. In thinking about listeners’ reservations about the claim that the death penalty does not deter crime, the speaker might realize that listeners could say to themselves, “It may not deter all crimes, but I’ll bet it deters serious crimes such as homicide.” If the speaker has reason to think listeners may resist the claim on this basis, the speaker would offer a rebuttal to the reservation. It would be effective for the speaker to cite the *New York Times* 2000 investigative report that shows that since 1976 states without the death penalty have not had higher rates of homicide than states with the death penalty.

Logical proof is essential to effective persuasion. By developing careful reasoning, you should be able to create logical appeals that are sound, effective, and ethical. Later in this chapter we’ll discuss some of the most common kinds of reasoning fallacies so that you can avoid them when you make persuasive presentations.

### Building Credibility

We’ve already introduced the term *ethos* and noted its importance to effectiveness in persuasive speaking. Now we want to consider ethos in more depth because of its critical role in persuasion.

#### Understanding Credibility

Another word for *ethos* is *credibility*, which is the willingness of others to believe a person has personal integrity, is positively disposed toward them, and can be trusted. Notice that credibility is tied to the willingness of others to believe things about a person. This means that a speaker’s credibility doesn’t reside in the speaker. Instead, it is conferred by listeners or not conferred if they find a speaker untrustworthy, uninformed, or lacking in good will.

In recent years, we’ve heard a lot about credibility gaps and lack of credibility of national figures. This means that many people have lost confidence in many politicians and other public figures. They no longer find many politicians credible. It’s easy to understand why citizens don’t find some national leaders credible. When a senator campaigns on a promise to restrict illegal immigration and then she or he is found to employ an undocumented alien, credibility withers. Likewise, when congressional representatives proclaim the importance of fiscal responsibility while bouncing checks themselves, they lose credibility as advocates of government financial responsibility. We believe in people who practice what they preach, and we grant credibility to people who seem to have personal experience with what they talk about.

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**Class Activity**

Bring copies of four different newspapers to class. Form groups of 4-5 students. Have each group examine a newspaper and select a story from the front page. Each group should identify what major claims are being asserted by the article and determine whether evidence is provided. Next, the students should consider if the data and evidence used to support the claims were linked to the story effectively. Finally, students should consider if qualifiers were presented to limit the scope of the claims made in the article.

**InfoTrac College Edition Workbook**

Have your students complete activity 15.3 in the *InfoTrac College Edition Workbook* (Modeling Arguments) to gain a better understanding of deductive and inductive arguments and how to model an argument using Toulmin’s Model of Reasoning.

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Most Americans perceive Colin Powell as highly credible.
The greatest teacher I ever had taught a class in government policies and practices. Before coming to campus, he had been an adviser to three presidents. He had held a lot of different offices in government, so what he was teaching us was backed up by personal experience. Everything he said had so much more weight than what I hear from professors who’ve never had any practical experience.

Credibility arises from the three cornerstones of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. Listeners are likely to find speakers credible if they demonstrate their personal integrity, establish emotional meaning for their topics, and present ideas logically and with good evidence.

Types of Credibility
Credibility is not a static quality. Instead, it can change in the course of communication (Figure 17.3). Have you ever attended a public speech by someone you respected greatly and been disappointed in the presentation? Did you think less of the speaker after the speech than before? Have you ever gone to a presentation without knowing much about the speaker and been so impressed by what he or she said that you changed an attitude or behavior? If so, then you know from personal experience that credibility can increase or decrease as a result of a speech.

Initial Credibility  Some speakers have high initial credibility, which is the expertise and trustworthiness listeners recognize before a presentation begins. Initial credibility is based on titles, positions, experiences, or achievements that are known to listeners before they hear a speech. For example, most listeners would grant General Colin Powell high initial credibility on issues of military goals and strategies. A former inmate of a state prison would have high initial credibility in a speech on prison conditions.

Derived Credibility  In addition to initial credibility, speakers may also gain derived credibility, which is the expertise and trustworthiness that listeners recognize as a result of how speakers communicate during presentations. Speakers earn derived credibility by organizing ideas clearly and logically, including convincing and interesting evidence, and speaking with dynamism.

Figure 17.3
Developing Credibility

- Soyana -
and force. Speakers who are not well known tend not to have high initial credibility, so they must derive credibility from the quality of what they say.

Terminal Credibility The credibility that a speaker has at the end of a presentation is terminal credibility, which is the cumulative expertise, goodwill, and trustworthiness listeners recognize in a speaker. It is a combination of initial and derived credibility. Terminal credibility may be greater or less than initial credibility, depending on how effectively a speaker communicates.

Building Credibility
As you plan, develop, and present a persuasive speech, you should aim to build your credibility so that you can be most effective. To summarize what we’ve discussed about credibility, here are ways in which you can establish your initial credibility and build it throughout a speech:

- State your qualifications for speaking on this topic: experiences you have had, titles or jobs you hold, research you have done.
- Show listeners that you care about them—that your speech is relevant to their welfare.
- Appeal to listeners’ emotions, but be careful of overwhelming or alienating listeners with overly dramatic appeals.
- Reason carefully, and avoid reasoning fallacies.
- Use effective and ethical supporting materials.
- Use verbal and nonverbal communication to show you care about the topic and are involved with it.
- Respond to questions with open-mindedness and fairness.

Organizing Speeches for Persuasive Impact
In Chapter 15, we discussed ways to organize speeches. The principles you learned there apply to persuasive speaking:

- Your introduction should capture listeners’ attention, provide a clear thesis statement, and preview what your speech will cover.

Communication Highlight

Good Will and Credibility

More than 2,000 years ago, the ancient Greek rhetorician Aristotle wrote that a speaker’s credibility depended on listeners’ perceptions of the speaker’s intelligence, character, and good will. Since Aristotle’s time, research has established empirical support for strong links between credibility and perceived intelligence and character. Yet the influence of good will on credibility has been less thoroughly studied.

In 1999 Jim McCroskey and Jason Teven reported research that showed perceived good will is positively linked to perceptions of likableness and believability. In other words, when listeners think a speaker cares about them and has ethical intentions toward them, they are likely to trust and like the speaker. The practical implication of this study is that speakers who want to be judged as credible should establish good will toward listeners. According to McCroskey and Teven (1999), goodwill tends to be established in three ways: showing understanding of listeners’ ideas, feelings, and needs; demonstrating empathy, or identification, with listeners’ feelings as valid; and being responsive to listeners by being attentive and reacting to listeners’ communication.

Class Activity
Form groups of 4–5 students. Have groups identify the communication behaviors associated with each stage of credibility [i.e., initial, derived, terminal]. Share the lists. Which communication behaviors are similar? Which communication behaviors are dissimilar? Which communication behaviors, if any, remain constant across all three stages?

Discussion Questions
Ask your students: How do you develop your initial credibility as a speaker? As a public speaker what do you do to develop derived credibility? How could a speaker measure terminal credibility?
• Your conclusion should summarize main points and end with a strong closing statement.
• You should provide internal summaries of main points.
• You should provide smooth transitions between points and parts of a speech.
• The body of your speech should be organized to reinforce your thesis and show listeners how your ideas cohere.

Building on these general principles for organizing public communication, we want to focus on special organizational concerns relevant to persuasive speaking. We will discuss two topics: the motivated sequence pattern, which is especially well adapted to persuasive goals, and the merits of one-sided and two-sided presentations.

Motivated Sequence Pattern

Any of the organizational patterns that we discussed in Chapter 15 can be used to structure persuasive speeches. Table 17.4 shows how each of the eight patterns we discussed could support a persuasive thesis.

In addition to the eight patterns we have already discussed, there is a ninth structure that can be highly effective in persuasive speaking. In the 1930s, public speaking scholar Alan Monroe developed the motivated sequence pattern for organizing speeches (Monroe, 1935). It has been widely used in diverse communication situations, and it has proven quite effective (Gronbeck et al., 1994; Jaffe, 1995). The primary reason for the effectiveness of the motivated sequence pattern is that it follows a natural pattern of human thought by gaining listeners’ attention, demonstrating a need, offering a solution, and then helping them visualize and act on the solution. This pattern progressively increases listeners’ motivation and personal involvement with a problem and its solution. The motivated sequence pattern includes five sequential steps, summarized in Table 17.5.

The first step is attention, in which listeners’ attention is drawn to the subject. Here a speaker makes a dramatic opening statement (“Imagine this campus with no trees whatsoever”), shows the personal relevance of the topic (“The air you are breathing right now exists only because we have trees”), or otherwise catches listeners’ attention. Later in this chapter, we’ll discuss additional ways to capture listeners’ initial attention.

The second step establishes need by showing that a real and serious problem exists (“Acid rain is slowly but surely destroying the trees of this planet”). Next is the satisfaction step, in which a speaker recommends a solution (“Stronger environmental regulations and individual efforts to use environmentally safe products can protect trees and thus the oxygen we breathe”). The fourth step is visualization, which increases listeners’ commitment to the solution identified in the satisfaction step by helping them imagine the results that would follow from adopting the recommended solution (“You will have ample air to breathe, and so will your grandchildren. Moreover, we’ll all have the beauty of trees to enrich our lives”). Finally, speakers move to the action step, which involves a direct appeal for concrete action on the part of listeners (“Refuse to buy or use any aerosol products,” “Sign this petition that I am sending to our senators in Washington, D.C.”). The action step calls on listeners to take action to bring about the solution a speaker helped them visualize.
Lloyd Bennett works for a public relations firm that wants to convince Casual Cruise Lines to become a client. Lloyd could use any of the eight basic organizational patterns to structure his speech to persuade the cruise line to hire his firm.

### Table 17.4 Organizing for Persuasion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Thesis and Main Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chronological</strong></td>
<td>Our firm can move Casual Cruise Lines into the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Originally Casual Cruise Lines attracted customers whose average age was 58.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>In recent years, that customer base has shrunk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>To thrive in the years ahead, Casual Cruise Lines needs to appeal to younger customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spatial</strong></td>
<td>Our proposal focuses on redesigning the space on cruise ships to appeal to the 30- to 45-year-old market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>In the staterooms, we propose replacing the conventional seafaring motif with abstract, modernistic art.</td>
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<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>In the public area of the lower deck, we propose replacing the current coffee shops with sushi and espresso bars and adding fitness rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>On the upper deck, we propose building hot tubs beside the pool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topical</strong></td>
<td>Our firm has the most experience advertising cruise lines and the most innovative staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Our firm has increased revenues for three other cruise lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Our firm has won more awards for innovation and creativity than the others Casual Cruise Lines is considering for this account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Star</strong></td>
<td>Let’s consider how younger customers might be attracted if we revamped ship décor, activities, and cuisine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Younger customers like modern décor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Younger customers want youthful activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Younger customers want trendy foods.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wave</strong></td>
<td>The theme we propose is: “No shuffleboards and no kids—Casual Cruise Lines”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>If you’re too young for shuffleboard, you’re ready for a Casual Cruise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>If you’re too old to babysit, you’re ready for a Casual Cruise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparative</strong></td>
<td>Our plan targets younger customers, not older ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Shorter cruises for the busy lifestyle of 30- to 45-year-olds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Onboard dancing and night clubs, which are favorite leisure activities of 30- to 45-year-olds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Adding 24-hour espresso bars and onboard fitness rooms speaks directly to the interests of 30- to 45-year-olds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem–solution</strong></td>
<td>We have a solution to Casual Cruise Lines’ inability to attract younger customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Casual Cruise Lines hasn’t been able to get a substantial share of the lucrative 30- to 45-year-old market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Our advertising campaign specifically targets this market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause–effect</strong></td>
<td>The advertising campaign we propose will attract young, affluent customers by appealing to their interests and lifestyle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Our proposal’s emphasis on luxury features of the cruise caters to this market’s appreciation of extravagance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Our proposal to feature adults-only cruises caters to this market’s demonstrated preferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Our proposal to offer 2- to 4-day cruises meets this market’s interest in long weekend getaways.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17.5 The Motivated Sequence Pattern

1. Attention: Focus listeners' attention.
2. Need: Demonstrate that a real problem exists.
3. Satisfaction: Propose a solution to solve the demonstrated problem.
4. Visualization: Give listeners a vision of the impact of the solution.
5. Action: Ask listeners to think, feel, or do something to bring the proposed solution into being.

Velma

I've heard a lot of speeches on discrimination, but the most effective I ever heard was Cindy’s in class last week. Other speeches I’ve heard focused on the idea that discrimination is wrong, but that’s something I already believe, so they weren't helpful. Cindy, on the other hand, told me how to do something about discrimination. She showed me how I could act on what I believe.

Velma’s commentary highlights why the motivated sequence pattern is especially suited to persuasive speaking: It goes beyond identifying a problem and recommending a solution. In addition, it intensifies listeners' desire for a solution by helping them visualize what it would mean and gains their active commitment to being part of the solution. When listeners become personally involved with an idea and with taking action, they are more enduringly committed.

Sharpen Your Skill

Using the Motivated Sequence Pattern

Think about how you might organize a speech using the motivated sequence pattern. Write a thesis and five main points for a motivated sequence appeal.

Thesis:

1. Attention .......................................................................................................................................
2. Need ..................................................................................................................................................
3. Satisfaction ....................................................................................................................................
4. Visualization ..................................................................................................................................
5. Action ..............................................................................................................................................

Comparing One-Sided and Two-Sided Presentations

Perhaps you are wondering whether it’s more effective to present only your point of view or both sides of an issue in a persuasive speech (the question generally is not relevant to informative speeches). That’s an important question, and it's one that communication scholars have studied in depth. Research conducted to discover whether one-sided or two-sided presentations are more effective suggests that the answer is, “It depends.” More specifically, it depends on the particular people a speaker will address, which reminds us again that good audience analysis is critical to effective public speaking. Decisions of whether to present one or more than one side of an issue depend on the particular listeners for whom a speech is intended.
Listeners’ Expectations  Speakers always should try to learn what listeners expect so that they don’t disappoint listeners by failing to meet expectations. In educational settings, listeners are likely to expect speakers to discuss more than one side of an issue (Lasch, 1990). On the other hand, at campaign rallies, candidates often present only their side on issues because they are speaking to committed supporters. Expectations may also be shaped by pre-speech publicity. Imagine you decide to attend a speech after seeing a flyer for a presentation on the pros and cons of requiring all students at your school to purchase computers. You would be surprised and probably irritated if the speaker presented only the pros or only the cons of the proposed requirement.

Listeners’ Attitudes  It makes a difference whether listeners are likely to be disposed toward your ideas (Griffin, 1991). If they already favor your position, then you may not need to discuss alternative positions in depth. However, if listeners favor a position different from yours, then it’s essential to acknowledge and deal with their views. If your listeners oppose what you propose, it’s unlikely that you will persuade them to abandon their position and adopt yours. With an audience hostile to your views, it’s more reasonable to try to lessen their hostility to your ideas or to diminish the strength of their commitment to their present position (Trenholm, 1991).

Failure to consider opposing ideas listeners hold diminishes a speaker’s credibility because listeners may assume that the speaker either is uninformed of another side or is informed but is trying to manipulate them by not discussing it. Either conclusion lessens credibility and the potential for impact on listeners. Speakers have an ethical responsibility to give respectful consideration to listeners’ ideas and positions. Doing so encourages reciprocal respect from listeners for the ideas you present. R. J.’s commentary illustrates this.

–R. J.–

In my ROTC unit there’s a lot of bad will toward the idea of gays in the military. Some of the guys have really strong feelings against it, so I was interested in what would happen at a required seminar last week with a guest speaker who was arguing that gays should be allowed in the services. He was really good! He spent the first ten minutes talking about all of the concerns, fears, and reasons why officers and enlisted personnel disapprove of having gays in the military, and he showed a lot of respect for those reasons. Then he presented his own ideas and showed how they answered most of the concerns people had. I won’t say everyone was persuaded 100% that gays should be allowed in, but I will say he managed to get a full hearing with a group that I thought would just turn him off from the word go. Since he talked to us, I’ve heard some of the guys saying that maybe gays wouldn’t be a problem.

Listeners’ Knowledge  What an audience already knows or believes about a topic should influence decisions of whether to present one or more sides of
an issue. Listeners who are well informed about a topic are likely to be aware of more than one side, so your credibility will be enhanced if you include all sides in your presentation (Jackson & Allen, 1990). Also, highly educated listeners tend to realize that most issues have more than one side, so they may be suspicious of speakers who present only one point of view.

In some instances, speakers know that listeners will later be exposed to counterarguments. In such cases, it’s advisable to inoculate listeners. **Inoculation** in persuasion is similar to inoculation in medicine. Vaccines give us limited exposure to diseases so that we won’t contract them later. Similarly, persuasive inoculation immunizes listeners in advance against opposing ideas and arguments they may encounter in the future. When listeners later hear the other side, they have some immunity to arguments that oppose your position (Kiesler & Kiesler, 1971). For example, in political campaigns, candidates often make statements such as this: “Now my opponent will tell you that we don’t need to raise taxes, but I want to show you why that’s wrong.” By identifying and dispelling the opposing candidate’s ideas in advance, the speaker improves the chance that listeners will vote for her or him.

Listeners are more likely to be persuaded by arguments that oppose yours if you haven’t inoculated them against those arguments. In fact, research indicates that of the three options—one-sided only, two-sided, or two-sided with refutation of the other side—generally the most persuasive strategy is to present both sides and refute arguments for the other side (Allen et al., 1990).

**Sharpen Your Skill**

**Deciding Whether to Present One or Two Sides**

Apply what you have learned to decide whether you should present one or two sides in your persuasive speech.

1. Are your listeners likely to expect to hear more than one side of the issue?
   - A. How much education do they have?
   - B. Has there been any prespeech publicity?
   - C. Is there any reason to think that listeners do or do not care about hearing both sides?

2. What are your listeners’ attitudes toward your topic?
   - A. Do they have a position on the topic? If so, is it the same as yours?
   - B. How strongly do listeners hold their opinions on the topic?

3. What level of knowledge about the topic do your listeners have?
   - A. Do they know about more than one side of the issues?
   - B. How much information about the topic have they already gained?

4. Are your listeners likely to encounter counterarguments after you speak?

There is no quick and easy formula for deciding whether to present one-sided or two-sided discussions of a topic. Like most aspects of public speaking, this decision involves judgment on a speaker’s part. That judgment should be
informed by ethical considerations of what listeners have a right to know and what content is necessary to represent fairly the issues about which you speak. In addition, judgments of whether to present more than one side should take into account listeners’ expectations, attitudes, and knowledge and the likelihood that listeners have been or will be exposed to opposing arguments.

Guidelines for Effective Persuasive Speeches

Already in this chapter we’ve discussed some guidelines for effective persuasive speaking. For instance, we discussed the importance of developing a speech that has the three cornerstones of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. We also emphasized the importance of speaker credibility, and we identified concrete ways in which you can build yours when you speak. We extended our previous discussion of organizing speeches to discuss the motivated sequence pattern and the merits of presenting one or two sides of arguments. In addition to these guidelines, three other principles are important for effective persuasive speaking.

Build Common Ground with Listeners

In any communication context, common ground is important. That general principle has heightened importance in persuasive speaking. A persuasive speaker is trying to move listeners to a point of view or action. It makes sense that they are more likely to be willing to move with the speaker if they feel they have some common ground with him or her. Listeners may think, “If we share all of these values and concerns, then maybe I should rethink my position on this one issue we disagree on.”

Kenneth Burke is one of the most distinguished theorists of language in our era. According to Burke (1950), people are divided from one another: They differ in experiences, attitudes, values, and so forth. At the same time, there is overlap between people: We share some experiences, values, language, and so forth. Burke thinks communication is the primary way in which people transcend their divisions and enlarge what is common to them. Burke sees of building common ground as a process of identification, or recognizing and enlarging commonalities between communicators.

Effective persuasive speakers work to find similarities between themselves and their listeners and to bring those similarities into listeners’ awareness. A few years ago, a student of mine wanted to persuade his listeners that fraternities are positive influences on members’ lives. From polling students on campus, Steve knew that many held negative stereotypes of “frat men.” He reasoned that most of his
listeners, who did not belong to Greek groups, would be likely to view him both negatively and as different from them. This is how he established common ground in opening his speech:

*You’ve probably heard a lot of stories about wild fraternity parties and “frat men” who spend most of their time drinking, partying, and harassing pledges. I confess, I’ve done all of that as a brother in Delta Sigma Phi. I’ve also spent every Sunday for the last semester volunteering in the Big Brother Program that helps underprivileged kids in the city. And I’ve built friendships with brothers that will last my entire life. Like many of you, I felt a little lost when I first came to this campus. I wanted to find a place where I belonged at college. Like you, I want to know people and be involved with projects that help me grow as a person. For me, being in a fraternity has done that.*

This is an effective opening. Steve began by showing listeners that he realized they might hold some negative views of fraternity men. He went further and acknowledged that he personally fit into those stereotypes. But then Steve challenged the adequacy of the stereotypes by offering some information that didn’t fit with them. Volunteering as a Big Brother isn’t part of the “party guy” image. Having recognized and challenged stereotypes his listeners were likely to hold, Steve then began to build common ground. Most of his listeners could remember feeling lost when they first came to college. Most of them could identify with wanting to belong and to grow as people. Steve’s opening successfully identified similarities between him and his listeners, so they were open to considering his argument that fraternities are valuable.

**Adapt to Listeners**

Effective persuasion focuses on *particular* listeners. A good persuasive speech is not designed for just anyone and everyone. Instead, it is crafted with particular listeners in mind. It is adapted to specific listeners’ knowledge, attitudes, motives, experiences, values, and expectations. The methods of audience analysis that we discussed in Chapter 13 should help you learn who your listeners are and what they know, believe, and expect in relation to your topic.

As a speaker, your job is to apply what you learn about your listeners as you develop and present your speech. In his speech on the values of fraternities, Steve adapted to his listeners by showing that he understood common stereotypes of “frat men” and that there was some truth to them. In this way, Steve showed his listeners that he had thought about their ideas and he didn’t wholly reject them. This enhanced Steve’s credibility and his listeners’ willingness to open their minds to what he had to say.

In 1998 Raymond W. Smith, chairperson of Bell Atlantic, spoke about hate speech on the Internet. Smith spoke at the Simon Wiesenthal Center of Tolerance (Smith, 1998). Although Smith spoke against censoring hate speech on the Internet, he realized that his largely Jewish organization had acute knowledge of the dangers of hate speech. In his opening remarks Smith said,

*Neo-Nazis and extremists of every political stripe who once terrorized people in the dead of night with burning crosses and painted swastikas are now sneaking up on the public—especially our kids—through the World Wide Web.*
Notice that Smith established common ground with his listeners. Although he would argue against censorship, he let his listeners know that he was well aware of group hatred and the harms it has caused. Within his speech, Smith further adapted to his listeners by quoting distinguished Jewish leaders, who had high credibility with listeners.

Knowing that many of his listeners favored censorship, Smith presented a two-sided speech. He began by considering the arguments of those who favor censorship, treating them thoroughly and respectfully. He then turned to the other side (the one he favored): not censoring hate speech on the Internet.

Smith argued that censorship will not get to the source of the problem, which is hate. Instead, he said the solution is to teach tolerance and respect to all people. In making this argument, Smith adapted to his listeners at the Wiesenthal Center by saying,

*While cyberhate cannot be mandated or censored out of existence, it can be countered by creating hundreds of chatlines, home pages, bulletin boards, and Web sites dedicated to social justice, tolerance, and equality for all people. . . . Moral leadership can have a tremendous impact. Quite simply, we need more Simon Wiesenthal Centers.*

Smith effectively adapted to his listeners by acknowledging their cultural history, quoting authorities they respected, and thoughtfully considering the argument for censorship. Therefore, his listeners were then willing to give an equally thoughtful hearing to Smith’s argument against censorship.

### Avoid Fallacious Reasoning

A fallacy is an error in reasoning. The word *fallacy* is derived from the Latin word *fallācia*, which means “deceit.” Fallacies present false, or flawed, logic. Despite the original meaning, deceit, fallacies may be intentional or unintentional. Either way, they are not effective with educated or thoughtful audiences. They detract from a speaker’s credibility because they suggest that the speaker is not ethical. To be effective and ethical, you should avoid fallacies in your speeches. To be a critical listener, you should be able to recognize fallacies used by others. We’ll discuss eight of the most common fallacies in reasoning. This should allow you to avoid these fallacies in your speaking and to identify and resist them if they are part of others’ communication.

**Ad Hominem Arguments** In Latin, the word *ad* means “to” and *hominem* means “human.” Thus, ad hominem arguments are ones that go to the person instead of going to the idea. It is not ethical to argue for your point of view by attacking the integrity of someone who has taken a stand opposing yours.

“You can’t trust what George Boxwood says about the importance of a strong military. After all, he never served a day in the military.” Although it may be true that George Boxwood didn’t serve in the military, that alone doesn’t discredit his argument about the importance of a strong military. Mr. Boxwood may have researched the topic vigorously, interviewed members of all military branches, and studied historical effects of strong and weak military forces. Mr. Boxwood’s own service—or lack thereof—is not
directly relevant to the quality of his argument for a strong military. Unethical speakers sometimes try to undercut people whose positions oppose their own by attacking the people, not the arguments. Critical listeners recognize this fallacy and won’t be persuaded.

*Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc*  This is a Latin phrase meaning “after this, therefore because of this.” Sometimes when one thing follows another we mistakenly think the first thing caused the second. Unethical speakers sometimes try to persuade us to think that a coincidental sequence is causal. For instance, the U.S. economy faltered and verged on recession after George W. Bush was named president. Does that mean Bush and his administration caused the economic slowdown? Not necessarily. To support the claim that Bush caused the economic slowdown, a speaker would need to demonstrate that specific policies implemented by Bush dampened the economy.

*Bandwagon Appeal*  When I was a child, I often tried to persuade my parents that I should be allowed to do something because all of my friends were doing it. Invariably, my parents rejected that reason and replied, “If all of your friends jumped off the roof, would you do it?” When I was 8 years old, of course that answer exasperated me. But my parents were right. They rejected the *bandwagon appeal*, which argues that because most people believe or act a particular way, you should too. Crowd attitudes are not necessarily correct, as Columbus and Galileo proved. Thoughtful listeners won’t be persuaded to your point of view just because lots of other people are. It’s more ethical and effective to give them good reasons why they should agree with you.

*Reduction to Absurdity*  This fallacy involves pushing an idea to the point that it becomes ridiculous. Another term for the fallacy is *slippery slope*, meaning that once we take the first step, more and more steps inevitably will follow until some unacceptable consequence results. For example, an unethical speaker who wanted to argue against a proposal to restrict logging in a protected environmental area might state, “Restrictions on logging is only the first step. Next, the environmentalists are likely to want to prohibit any timber cutting. Pretty soon, we won’t be able to build homes or furniture.” The idea that we won’t have lumber to build homes and furniture is extreme. It has little to do with the question of whether we should restrict logging in one particular area. Critical listeners don’t find it credible when speakers reduce arguments to absurdities.
Hasty Generalization  A **hasty generalization** is a broad claim based on too few examples or too limited evidence. It is unethical to assert a broad claim when you have only anecdotal or isolated evidence or instances. Consider these examples of hasty generalizations based on inadequate data:

Three congressional representatives have had affairs. Therefore, members of Congress are unethical.

Some environmentalists have illegally blocked loggers and workers at nuclear plants. Therefore, environmentalists are radicals who take the law in their own hands.

Four of our star basketball players left college for pro careers this year. Therefore, basketball players aren’t serious students.

In each case, the conclusion is based on very limited evidence. The generalization is hasty, fallacious, and unethical.

Red Herring Argument  Years ago fox hunters sometimes dragged a dead fish across the trail of a fox to see whether the dogs would be diverted in the wrong direction (Gass, 1999). The smell of the fish, originally a herring, was meant to divert the hunting dogs from the point of the hunt. Speakers who try to deflect listeners from relevant issues engage in red herring arguments. They say something that is irrelevant to their topic or that doesn’t really respond to a listener’s question. The point is to divert the listener from something the speaker can’t or doesn’t want to address.

Either–Or Logic  What is wrong with this statement: Either abolish fraternities on our campus or accept the fact that this is a party school where dancing and drinking are more important than learning. The fallacy in this statement is that it wrongly suggests there are only two options: either getting rid of fraternities altogether or letting partying eclipse academics. Are there no other alternatives? Might it be possible to work with fraternities to establish policies limiting parties to weekends? Might it be possible to increase the quality of academics so that students are motivated to be more involved with learning? In most instances, either–or thinking is simplistic and fallacious.

Reliance on the Halo Effect  The **halo effect** occurs when we generalize a person’s authority or expertise in a particular area to other areas that are irrelevant to the person’s experience and knowledge. It is fallacious to think that because a person is knowledgeable on particular topics, he or she is knowledgeable on all topics. It’s also unethical to quote someone you think the audience will respect when that person has no qualification as an expert on your topic. Politician Bob Dole urges men to use Viagra. Actress Florence Henderson tells radio listeners to use a particular cleaning product. Olympic champion Mary Lou Retton tells us Wheaties will build up our bodies. Famous public figures appear in the mustache advertisements promoting milk. Are any of these people experts on the products they are urging us to buy and use?

To be effective and ethical, persuasive speakers should avoid fallacies in reasoning (Table 17.6). Relatedly, effective, critical listeners should be able to detect fallacies in reasoning and to resist being persuaded by them.
Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on persuasive speaking. After noting the many situations in which persuasive speaking occurs, we identified ethos, pathos, and logos and the cornerstones of effective persuasion, and we highlighted ways in which speakers can incorporate each into presentations. Extending this, we discussed credibility, which is especially important in persuasive speaking. We identified three types of credibility—initial, derived, and terminal—and discussed ways in which speakers can build their credibility during the process of planning, developing, and presenting persuasive speeches. The next section of the chapter reviewed general organizational principles and highlighted organizational concerns that are particularly relevant to persuasive speaking. We introduced the motivated sequence pattern, which can be very powerful in moving listeners to accept and act on persuasive appeals. We also discussed the merits of one-sided and two-sided presentations, and we identified criteria for choosing which will be most effective in particular situations and with particular listeners.

The last section of the chapter provided guidelines for persuasive speaking. The first is to build common ground between a speaker and listener. The second is to adapt to particular listeners by tailoring a persuasive speech to their expectations, knowledge, experiences, motives, values, and attitudes. The third is to avoid fallacies in reasoning, which are usually ineffective and always unethical.

Following the advice presented in this and previous chapters should allow you to prepare and present a persuasive speech that has impact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 17.6</th>
<th>Fallacies in Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ad hominem attack</strong></td>
<td>You can’t believe what Jane Smith says about voting because she doesn’t vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post hoc, Ergo propter hoc</strong></td>
<td>The new flextime policy is ineffective because more people have been late getting to work since it went into effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bandwagon appeal</strong></td>
<td>You should be for the new campus meal plan because most students are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reduction to absurdity</strong></td>
<td>If we allow students to play a role in decisions about hiring and tenure of faculty, pretty soon students will be running the whole school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hasty generalization</strong></td>
<td>People should not be allowed to own rottweilers because there have been three instances of rottweilers attacking children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Either–or</strong></td>
<td>Tenure should be either abolished or kept as it is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red herring argument</strong></td>
<td>People who own rottweilers should think about switching to cats. Let me tell you why cats are the ideal pet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reliance on the halo effect</strong></td>
<td>World-famous actor Richard Connery says that we should not restrict people’s right to own firearms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication In Our Lives

CD-ROM

Encourage your students to utilize the CD-ROM to watch and analyze the multimedia version of the persuasive speech scripted at the end of the chapter. Have your students evaluate the effectiveness of the speech based on the planning choices made by the speaker, the quality of the organization of the speech, the effectiveness of the supporting materials used in the speech, the speaker’s adaptation to listeners, the speaker’s credibility, and the speaker’s connection to the audience.
Communication In Our Lives ONLINE

For chapter review, use your Communication in Our Lives CD-ROM for quick access to the Communication in Our Lives Web site at the Wadsworth Communication Café (http://www.wadsworth.com/product/0534564224) and to launch the Experiencing Communication in Our Lives multimedia scenarios.

The Communication in Our Lives Web site features access to InfoTrac College Edition and interactive activities, updated Web links, and a review quiz for each chapter. You can complete chapter activities or quizzes and, if requested, email them to your instructor.

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For Further Reflection and Discussion

1. What would be needed to transform the sample speech in this chapter into an informative speech? How would the introduction and main points change, if at all? Would different or additional evidence be needed?
2. What do you consider particularly effective and ineffective choices made by Rebecca in her speech? Explain your evaluations.
3. Compose alternative transitions that could be used to move listeners from one claim to the next and from one part of the speech to the next.
4. How effectively did Rebecca introduce evidence? Did she provide adequate background information to render the sources credible to listeners?
5. Was the problem–solution pattern an effective choice for organizing this speech? Why or why not? Would the speech have been as effective if it had followed a solution–problem organization?
and add interest. How does she use time to shape the speech?

7. Go to Vital Speeches in your InfoTrac College Edition. Select Daniel Rose’s November 15, 2001 speech, “In the Days Ahead: New York and Boston After September 11.” How does his crafting of the speech adapt to the situation in America after the terrorist attacks? Do you perceive the structure of the speech as problem–solution or motivated sequence?

Experiencing Communication In Our Lives

CASE STUDY: Persuasive Speech: The Case for Graduated Licensing

The following speech is featured on the Experiencing Communication in Our Lives section of the CD-ROM that accompanies this book. Click on the “Speech Interactive” icon, then click “Persuasive Speech” to launch the audiovisual presentation of Rebecca Ewing’s Speech.

Rebecca Ewing was a junior at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill when she presented the following persuasive speech for a course in public speaking. The assignment was to present a 4- to 6-minute speech that had two main points and at least two references. Rebecca graciously gave her permission for me to reprint her speech here so that other students could learn to analyze public speaking and could study how a persuasive speech is crafted.

The text of the speech is printed in its entirety. To the left of the speech you will find comments that call your attention to choices Rebecca made in developing her persuasive message. As you read Rebecca’s speech and the commentary on it, you should critically assess the choices she made in planning, researching, developing, organizing, and presenting her ideas.

Although Rebecca’s speech is strong, it is not perfect. As you read it, consider how it could be made even more effective. Also think about different ways you might accomplish the speaker’s objectives; can you identify alternative organizational structures, kinds of evidence, transitions, and so forth? After the speech there are a series of questions to guide your thinking about what Rebecca did and might have done.

The Case for Graduated Licensing

By Rebecca Ewing

It was a typical Friday night in a small town in Florida just two short years ago. Two 13-year-old girls, Margaux and Crystal, were planning a night out at the mall. At around 7:30 P.M. Crystal and Margaux met up with seven other friends. The group decided to head to another friend’s apartment.

One of the teenagers, Nick, who had just turned 16, agreed to drive the eight of them to the friend’s apartment. Soon two in the group were up front and the other seven were sardined in the back of Nick’s Honda. None of the teens in the back seat could wear seatbelts.

Once on the highway, Nick quickly picked up speed. Then the girls became frightened and told Nick to slow down. Instead of slowing, Nick accelerated to 85 miles per hour and began to tailgate other cars. Eventually, Nick lost control of his car and jumped the median into oncoming traffic, resulting in a head-on collision. What happened next is
every parent’s nightmare. Nick and the front seat passenger survived, due to airbags. However, of the seven teens crammed into the back seat, only two survived, and both were severely injured. Regrettably, Margaux and Crystal did not make it (Barr, 1998, p. 79).

Sixteen-year olds are faced with an incredible responsibility when it comes time to get their driver’s license. But are they equipped to handle difficult driving situations? Is a 16-year-old mature enough to handle such an awesome responsibility? Every year, so many teenagers have their lives cut short in tragic car accidents due to lack of proper training and too much freedom at too young an age.

Sixteen is just too young for people to be driving without adult supervision. I think that the evidence I will present to you today will convince you to agree with me that 16 is too young for unsupervised driving. After I’ve established the dangers of giving licenses to 16-year-olds, I will propose a solution that has already proven its effectiveness in eight states.

I know that many of you are shaking your heads in disagreement. You are probably thinking that getting your driver’s license was a rite of passage. That’s the way it’s always been. Why change the law now? What I believe is that we need to change the law to save lives like Margaux’s and Crystal’s and maybe yours and mine. Statistics show that 16- and 17-year-olds are responsible for 11% of car crashes, but they make up only 2% of the driving population (Cohen, 1997; Sharpe et al., 2001). This is a problem.

Why are teen drivers responsible for so many car crashes? A study conducted by the University of North Carolina’s Highway Safety Research Center concludes—and I quote—"A major reason so many young people are involved in auto accidents is that they are poorly trained" (Henry, 1996, p. 128). Teenagers are poorly trained by both drivers’ education and parents. Parents need to take their children’s passage into adulthood and driving more seriously. Parents don’t spend enough quality time teaching their sons and daughters to drive defensively and to master good driving techniques.

Another reason for the high rate of teenage driving accidents is attitudes. For instance, most teenagers believe that driving is a ticket to new freedoms. They get caught up in the excitement of driving and they make tragic mistakes. Take the story about Nick. If he had been more experienced and mature, he probably would not have piled seven people into the back of his small car. He probably wouldn’t have sped excessively. He probably wouldn’t have tailgated, especially at high speed. The Reader’s Digest conducted an interview asking 400 teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 about their experiences with other teen drivers who had not been drinking and were not under the influence of drugs. The results are shocking (Barr, 1998, p. 79).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have You Ever Been with a Teen Driver Who . . .</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Put so many a passengers in the car that there weren’t enough seatbelts?</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drove 20 mph or more over the speed limit?</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailgated, cut off, or tried to bump another vehicle?</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did at least one of these activities?</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings make it clear that teenagers do not have the maturity of judgment required to handle the responsibility of driving without supervision. So what should we do about this?

One approach to this problem would be to raise the age at which teens can get a driver’s license. According to an article in *U.S. News and World Report*, drivers who are over age 21 have fewer crashes and other problems than do younger drivers (Cohen, 1997, p. 80). Many countries don’t even license drivers under 18.
However, in America, where mass transportation is less available, teenagers often need to drive to work and school, and parents want to stop chauffeuring. So raising the age for getting a driver's license to 18 or older is unlikely to gain support here.

So, what can we do? The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration urges states to adopt graduated licensing programs that extend the time required to qualify for the right to drive without supervision. The graduated licensing program is also known as the three-tiered system, and it has been adopted in eight states.

Let me explain how the system works. In the first stage a person under the age of 16 can obtain a learner's permit that allows him or her to drive only when accompanied by a licensed adult (Cohen, 1997, p. 80). During this stage the teenager becomes familiar with traffic rules and regulations. During this first stage the novice driver also encounters unexpected situations and difficult driving conditions with the guidance of a licensed adult.

Stage two begins when a teenage has driven safely for one year. Then the driver is issued a provisional license that allows him or her to drive without supervision during daylight hours. Drivers with provisional licenses must still be accompanied by a licensed adult for nighttime driving (Henry, 1996, p. 128).

Stage three occurs if someone with a provisional license has driven for six months without having any accidents and without getting any tickets. Then the person can obtain an unrestricted driver's license. This completes the three-tiered system.

There is evidence that the three-tiered system works. Studies in California, Oregon, and Maryland have found crashes involving teenage drivers drop 5% to 16% when the three-tiered system is in effect (Cohen, 1997, p. 80). Now that's a dramatic difference and a promise of lives that can be saved.

The drop in teen accidents has impressed legislators in other states to work for passage of the graduated licensing program in their states. The more quickly more states adopt the graduated licensing program, the more lives will be saved.

I've shown you that 16 is too young to drive without supervision, and I've demonstrated that a three-tier licensing system, or a graduated licensing program, reduces the number of accidents involving young drivers.

So I urge each of you to contact your state legislators and politicians and ask them to support a graduated licensing program. It just might save the life of a sister, brother, friend. It might save your life.

The graduated licensing program allows teenagers to accept the responsibilities that should go along with the privilege of driving. It encourages them not to make the mistakes that Nick made. Had he gone through a graduated licensing program, Crystal and Margaux might not be dead today.

References

You can apply what you’ve learned in this chapter to analyze this sample speech. Respond to the following questions under “Evaluation” and then press the “Submit” button at the end of the form. You may compare your answers with my suggested responses. These questions are also available on the Communication in Our Lives Web site under Activities for Chapter 17.

1. Did Rebecca provide a strong introduction with an attention device, a clear thesis, and a clear preview?

2. Are the sources of evidence credible? Why or why not? Is there any reason to suspect that the sources are biased?

3. What other kinds of evidence might the speaker have used to strengthen the persuasive impact of her message?

4. Did Rebecca’s speech reflect awareness of ethos, pathos, and logos?

5. How did Rebecca adapt the message to listeners who were 19- to 24-year-old college students? Can you think of additional ways she might have adapted this message to these particular listeners?