

Persuasive Speech Assignment

Basic Guidelines

This is a persuasive speech, focused on persuading the audience to support some new idea or even better, some change in public policy. The speech must be 5-7 minutes in length. The delivery must be extemporized. Note cards are allowed, but no more than seven cards, with no more than 15 words per card will be allowed. Cards will be checked before the speech. **Excessive note cards or speech scripts will not be allowed. Reading a speech is not an extemporized delivery, and therefore not a passing speech.** Turn in a complete key-phrase outline of your speech before you speak. Your outline/research/preparation is worth 100 points. Your delivery is worth the other 100 points.

Detailed Guidelines

For this speech, your goal is to persuade the audience to accept some thesis. Choose a topic for which there is actually the opportunity to change audience opinion or behavior, or to persuade the audience to vote for a change in public policy. Stay away from topics that are not controversial, not current, or those for which the audience would already agree with you. For example, choosing to persuade the audience to stop smoking cigarettes would not be good because very few people in the audience smoke cigarettes. As another example, persuading the audience that violence against women is bad would not be good because everyone would already agree with that. The best topics are those for which you find some problem in the world, figure out what kind of public policy could be adopted to solve that problem, and then persuade the audience to support a vote on that policy. Examples of public policies would be laws, regulations, reforms, programs, and/or propositions. You get to choose the topic (as long as it is appropriate). Whatever topic you choose, register it with Professor Kahn. Once a topic has been chosen by another student, it is no longer a good topic choice for you to choose. We don't need more than one speech on the same topic. However, if you choose do that the same topic anyway, then you have an especially high burden to make sure it is not too repetitive to the audience. You will not be allowed to do a reserved topic if your scheduled day is before that reserved topic.

Research is required for this speech. You must use and orally **cite at least four credible published sources**. Not all sources are equally impressive to college professors, or other critical audiences. The research is worth 30 points of your 100 point outline grade. Questionable website sources are worth zero. Good website sources are worth 6 points. Questionable printed sources are worth 5 points. Good printed sources are worth up to 8 points. Learn how to use the online library database to find magazines, newspapers, and journals as sources to support your speech. Get out of the habit of doing all website based research. You will not stand out as an impressive researcher if all of your sources, even good sources, are from websites. An MLA styled Works Cited list is required on your outline.

Visual Aids are **not** required, for this speech. However, if your topic cannot be effectively argued without visual aids, then you should use them, and use them well.

Whatever organizational pattern you choose, be sure that you are developing clear and well supported arguments. Make sure they are strong, logical, and complete. Make sure your claims are supported with reasons, and that your reasons are supported with evidence, cited from credible sources.

Your speech will need an introduction and a conclusion. Your introduction will need three parts: a hook, a clarification of your topic and how you came to choose it, and finally a preview of what your main points are going to be. Your conclusion will need a review of your main points, and a clincher.

Submit a formal key-phrase outline of your speech at the beginning of class on your speech day.

Grading Criteria

Strive for strong extemporization. This means that you will have spent enough time writing a clear speech and practicing it properly that you can deliver it with strength and confidence, without relying too heavily on your notes. You cannot pass by reading your speech.

Strive for meaningful eye contact and connection with the audience. Maintain that connection and be sure to connect with all areas of the audience.

Strive for good gestures and body movements. Move your body to a different part of the stage when you transition between main points. Avoid distracting movements such as playing with jewelry, hands in pockets, or pacing/dancing/rocking movements with your feet and body.

Strive for a professional appearance. Dress professionally. Casual, every-day attire fails to establish personal ethos. To be an A-level speaker, you must dress like an A-level speaker.

Strive for a dynamic delivery. That is, you should seem to be interested in your own speech, and you should communicate that enthusiasm to the audience with your vocal style and body movements.

Strive for appropriate and variable vocal pitch, volume, rate, and tone, based on the nature of the speech content.

Strive for clear and interesting external transitions between main points.

Strive for a flawless formal, logical and complete outline. To be formal, the outline should use formal and consistent notation style and indentation. It should be a final draft without errors. It should be stapled and clean. To be logical, it should demonstrate logical subordination and coordination. To be complete, it should show, in logical outline format, all the speech content in key phrase format. See the sample outline on this document for a good model of what your outline might resemble.

Personal Checklist

I want an A on this speech, so I will make sure of the following:

- I will choose a topic that will be a current, controversial, and a good use of the audience's time.
- I will not read my speech. I will speak from minimal note cards.
- I will dress to impress on my speech day.
- I will be on time on my speech day.
- I will have my outline neatly printed and stapled.
- I will practice my speech many times so that I know how long it will be.
- I will create and practice an interesting hook for the very beginning of my speech, without using false starts.
- I will create and practice external transitions between my main points.
- My research will demonstrate impressive skills at finding highly credible, printed sources.
- I will speak with passion and enthusiasm, making it clear that the arguments are important to me.

Sample Persuasive Speech Outline

Please visit Prof. Kahn's webpage to see sample persuasive outlines. This Work Cited shows ample evidence of reliable resources. It all shows the level of detail your work cited must include.

Works Cited

- Graw, M., and H.G. Konig. "Fatal Pedestrian–bicycle Collisions." *Forensic Science International* 126.3 (2002): 241. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 11 Aug. 2001.
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