introduction

At the gas pump, on eggs in the grocery store, in the examination room of your doctor’s office, everywhere you go, advertisers are trying to persuade you to buy their product. This form of persuasion used to be reserved for magazines and television commercials, but now it is unavoidable. One marketing research firm estimates that a person living in a large city today sees approximately 5,000 ads per day (Story, 2007). It is easy to assume that our over-exposure to persuasion makes us immune to its effect, but research demonstrates that we are more susceptible than ever. In fact, advertisers have gotten even better at learning exactly the right times and places to reach us by studying different audiences and techniques (Aral & Walker, 2012; Blackman, 2009; Rosendaal, Lapierre, van Reijmersdal, & Buijzen, 2011).

I do not read advertisements. I would spend all of my time wanting things.
~ Franz Kafka

We also encounter persuasion in our daily interactions. Imagine you stop at a café on your way to school, and the barista persuades you to try something new. While enjoying your espresso, a sales person attempts to persuade you to upgrade your home Internet package. Later, while walking across campus, you observe students who are enthusiastically inviting others to join their organizations. Within thirty minutes, you have encountered at least three instances of persuasion, and there were likely others emanating in the background unbeknownst to you. Amidst being persuaded, you were also actively persuading others. You may have tried to convince the Internet sales person to give you a better deal and an extended contract, and later persuaded a group of friends to enjoy a night on the town. Persuasion is everywhere.

what is persuasive speaking?

You are used to experiencing persuasion in many forms, and may have an easy time identifying examples of persuasion, but can you explain how persuasion works? Osborn and Osborn (1997) define persuasion this way: “the art of convincing others to give favorable attention to our point of view” (p. 415). There are two components that make this definition a useful one. First, it acknowledges the artfulness, or skill, required to persuade others. Whether you are challenged with convincing an auditorium of 500 that they should sell their cars and opt for a pedestrian lifestyle or with convincing your friends to eat pizza instead of hamburgers, persuasion does not normally just happen. Rather it is planned and executed in a thoughtful manner. Second, this definition delineates the ends of persuasion—to convince others to think favorably of
Chapter 16 Persuasive Speaking

The triumph of persuasion over force is the sign of a civilized society.

~ Mark Skousen

functions of persuasive speeches

So far, we have discussed the functions of persuasive speeches—to influence or reinforce—only peripherally as they relate to our working definition. Next, we turn to an in-depth discussion about how persuasive speeches function.

speeches to convince

Some persuasive speeches attempt to influence or reinforce particular beliefs, attitudes, or values. In these speeches, called speeches to convince, the speaker seeks to establish agreement about a particular topic. For instance, a climatologist who believes that global warming is caused by human behavior might try to convince an audience of government officials to adopt this belief. She might end her speech by saying, “In recent years, humans have been producing machines that expel CO2 either in their production, their consumption, or in both. At the same time, the level of CO2 in the atmosphere increased dramatically. The connection is clear to many of us that humans have caused this damage and that it is up to us to similarly intervene.” Throughout her speech, the scientist would likely recite a number of statistics linking human productivity with global warming in her effort to convince the government officials that both the causes and solutions to the climatic changes were a distinctly human problem.

speeches to actuate

Other times, persuasive speeches attempt to influence or reinforce actions. Speeches to actuate are designed to motivate particular behaviors. Think of a time when you found yourself up at 2 a.m. watching infomercials. Someone on the television screen was trying very hard to sell you a $20 spatula that morphed into a spoon with the click of a button. The salesperson described its utility and innovation for your kitchen, and he described why it would be a good purchase for you—after all, how does a busy person like you have time to use two different utensils? “But wait,” he would say, “there’s more!” In case he had not already convinced you that you needed this kitchen tool, he ended his spiel with a final plea—an extra Spoonatula for free. In this infomercial, the salesperson attempted to convince you that you needed to buy the kitchen tool—it will save you time and money. Thus, not only was the commercial an attempt to convince you to change how you felt about spoons and spatulas, but
also an effort to incite you to action—to actually purchase the Spoonatula. This illustrates a function of persuasive speeches, to motivate behavior.

**types of persuasive speeches**

Persuasive speeches revolve around propositions that can be defended through the use of data and reasoning. Persuasive propositions respond to one of three types of questions: questions of fact, questions of value, and questions of policy. These questions can help the speaker determine what forms of argument and reasoning are necessary to support a specific purpose statement.

*Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact.*  
*Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.*  
~ Marcus Aurelius

**propositions of fact**

Questions of fact ask whether something “can potentially be verified as either true or false” (Herrick, 2011, p. 20). These questions can seem very straightforward—something is or it is not—but in reality, the search for truth is a complex endeavor. Questions of fact rarely address simple issues such as, “is the sky blue?” They tend to deal with deep-seated controversies such as the existence of global warming, the cause of a major disaster, or someone’s guilt or innocence in a court of law. To answer these questions, a proposition of fact may focus on whether or not something exists. For example, in the U.S. there is a debate over the prevalence of racial profiling, the practice of law enforcement officers targeting people for investigation and arrest based on skin color. On one hand, the American Civil Liberties Union advances the proposition: “Racial profiling continues to be a prevalent and egregious form of discrimination in the United States” (ACLU, 2012, para. 2). They verify this claim using data from government studies, crime statistics, and personal narratives. However, journalist Heather MacDonald (2002) proposes that studies confirming racial profiling are often based in “junk science”; in fact she says, “there’s no credible evidence that racial profiling exists” (para. 1). To substantiate her proposition, MacDonald relies on a study of traffic stops on the New Jersey turnpike along with personal narratives, policy analysis, and testimony from a criminologist. The claim that racial profiling exists is either true or false, but there is evidence for and against both propositions; therefore no consensus exists.

While some propositions of fact deal with the existence of a particular phenomenon or the accuracy of a theory, others focus on causality. For example, the U.S. government appointed a commission to evaluate the causes of the nation’s recent economic crisis. In their report the commission concluded by proposing that recklessness in the financial industry and failures on the part of government regulators caused the economic crisis. However, Congressman Paul Ryan has proposed that Medicare is to blame, and the chief investment officer at JP Morgan has proposed that U.S. housing policy is the root cause of the problem (Angelides, 2011). Each of these three propositions of fact is backed by its own set of historical and economic analysis.

Propositions of fact may also be used to make predictions concerning what will happen in the future. In the summer of 2011, ten miles of a popular Southern California freeway were closed for an entire weekend. Motorists, news outlets, and government officials called the closure “Carmageddon” because they proposed there would be an “inevitable and likely epic traffic tie-up” (Kandel, 2011, para. 1). As a result of the predictions motorists stayed off the roads and made alternative plans that weekend resulting in much lighter traffic than expected. The proposition may have been true, but the prediction was not fulfilled because people were persuaded to stay off the freeway.

When advancing propositions of fact, you should focus on the evidence you can offer in support of your proposition. First, make sure that your speech contains sufficient evidence to back up your proposition. Next, take the time to interpret that evidence so that it makes sense to your audience. Last, emphasize the relationship between your evidence and your proposition as well as its relevance to the audience (Herrick, 2011).

*Bitter experience has taught us how fundamental our values are and how great the mission they represent.*  
~ Jan Peter Balkenende

**propositions of value**

Persuasive speakers may also be called to address questions of value, which call for a proposition judging the (relative) worth of something. These propositions make an evaluative claim regarding morality, aesthetics, wisdom, or desirability. For example, some vegetarians propose that eating meat is immoral because of the way that animals are slaughtered. Vegetarians may base this claim in a philosophy of utilitarianism or animal rights (DeGrazia, 2009).

Sometimes a proposition of value compares multiple options to determine which is best. Consumers call for these comparisons regularly to determine which products to buy. Car buyers may look to the most recent Car and Driver “10 Best Cars” list to determine their next purchase. In labeling a car one of the best on the market for a given year Car and Driver (2011) says...
that the cars “don’t have to be the newest, and they don’t have to be expensive . . . They just have to meet our abundant needs while satisfying our every want” (para. 1).

Both the vegetarian and car examples offer standards for evaluating the proposition. Since propositions of value tend to be more subjective, speakers need to establish evaluation criteria by which the audience can judge and choose to align with their position. When advancing a proposition of value, offer a clear set of criteria, offer evidence for your evaluation, and apply the evidence to demonstrate that you have satisfied the evaluation criteria (Herrick, 2011).

An inner process stands in need of outward criteria.  
~ Ludwig Wittgenstein

The 2005 disagreement between family members over removing a woman’s feeding tube after she had been in a coma for 15 years sparked a national debate over the value of life that highlights the importance of evaluation criteria. After years of failed medical treatments and rehabilitation attempts, Terri Schiavo’s husband petitioned the court to remove her feeding tube, initiating a legal battle with her parents that went all the way to the President of the United States (Cerminara & Goodman, 2012). Opposing sides in the debate both claimed to value life. To support his proposition that his wife had a right to die, Mr. Schiavo applied the evaluation criteria of quality of life and argued that she would not want to continue to live in a vegetative state (Caplan, 2005). Ms. Schiavo’s parents vehemently disagreed with his argument. They also claimed to value life and, with the support of religious groups, relied on the evaluation criteria of the sanctity of life to contend that she should be kept alive (Catholic Culture, 2005). Both sides gained widespread support based on people’s agreement or disagreement with their evaluation criteria. Despite intervention on behalf of both state and federal legislators, the courts eventually ruled that Mr. Schiavo had the right to have his wife’s feeding tube removed and allow her to die.

A policy is a temporary creed liable to be changed, but while it holds good, it has got to be pursued with apostolic zeal.  
~ Mahatma Gandhi

**propositions of policy**

Although the Schiavo case was rooted in a question of value, the debate resulted in a question of policy. **Questions of policy** ask the speaker to advocate for an appropriate course of action. This form of persuasive speech is used every day in Congress to determine laws, but it is also used interpersonally to determine how we ought to behave. A proposition of policy may call for people to stop a particular behavior, or to start one. For example, some U.S. cities have started banning single use plastic bags in grocery stores. Long before official public policy on this issue was established, organizations such as The Surfrider Foundation and the Earth Resource Foundation advocated that people stop using these bags because of the damage plastic bags cause to marine life. In this case local governments and private organizations attempted to persuade people to stop engaging in a damaging behavior—shopping with single use plastic bags. However, the organizations also attempted to persuade people to start a new behavior—shopping with reusable bags.

When answering a question of policy, speakers will typically begin by describing the status quo. If you are arguing that a change must be made, you must first identify the problem inherent in the current behavior, and then demonstrate that the problem is significant enough to warrant immediate consideration. Once you have established that there is a problem which the audience ought to consider, you can then offer your proposal for a preferable course of action (Herrick, 2011). Then, it is up to you to demonstrate that your proposed policy will have more benefits than costs.

In 2011 the U.S. Postal Service, the nation’s second-largest employer, told Congress it was facing an $8.3 billion budget shortfall (Bingham, 2011). To solve the problem, the Postal Service proposed that be permitted to end Saturday mail delivery and close some post offices. To make their argument, they first described the status quo saying that the demand for their service had dramatically decreased with the popularity of email and online bill-pay services. They explained that in preceding years they laid off workers and cut spending to help with the shortfall of revenue, but now another plan was necessary to avoid defaulting on their financial obligations. They offered evidence that people preferred ending Saturday mail to alternatives such as paying more for stamps or allocating more tax money to post offices (Bingham, 2011). Although they made a compelling case, the USPS still needed to overcome perceived disadvantages to their proposition such as the negative impact on businesses.
and rural towns (Bingham, 2011; Stephenson, 2012). A full year later, the policy proposition passed the U.S. Senate but continues to await approval in the House (Stephenson, 2012).

**choosing a persuasive speech topic**

In order to offer a persuasive speech, you must decide precisely what it is you want to talk about, to whom you will be speaking, and to what ends you hope the speech will lead. Persuasive speeches do not normally happen within a vacuum, even in a public speaking course where that might seem to be the case. In fact, most persuasive speeches serve as a response to larger circumstances—gas prices increase dramatically and drivers cannot afford to fill up their tanks; war veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and can find little governmental assistance for the necessary treatments; an election is forthcoming and candidates need to secure votes. These are just a few times when a persuasive speech would make sense. A driver might try to persuade their employer to embrace telecommuting as a response to the high rate of gasoline. Veterans with PTSD might stage speeches to a national audience imploring them to advocate for better mental health care for people who have fought in wars. And candidates, of course, will give many speeches during a campaign that tease out the various reasons they, and not another candidate, should be elected. Appendix A (at the end of the chapter) offers a lengthier list of possible topics for persuasive speaking, but keep in mind the advice that Burnett offers in Chapter 8 (public speaking: the virtual text) regarding topic selection. The topics in Appendix A are written as propositions that can be defended. Some are propositions of fact, others are propositions of value, and yet others are propositions of policy.

*If I can get you to laugh with me, you like me better, which makes you more open to my ideas. And if I can persuade you to laugh at the particular point I make, by laughing at it you acknowledge its truth.*

~ John Cleese

**approaching audiences**

When choosing a topic for your persuasive speech, it is crucial to consider the composition of your audience. Because persuasive speeches are intended to influence or reinforce an audience’s thoughts or behaviors, speakers must consider what and how the audience thinks, feels, and does. Your audience might be ambivalent about your topic, or they may be strongly opposed, in strong agreement, or somewhere along the spectrum. In persuasive speeches, it matters where they fall on this continuum. For instance, if you want to argue that abortion should be illegal and your audience is composed of pro-life advocates, your speech might seem like you are preaching to the choir. But if your audience is made up of staunch pro-choice activists, your speech would be raising a significant objection to a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and actions the audience was already committed to.

Decaro, Adams, and Jefferis offer advice for carrying out a thorough audience analysis in Chapter 5 of this book. Some questions you might ask before giving a speech include, “Who is hosting the speech?” Often this can provide a great deal of information about who will be in the audience. Audience members at a National Rifle Association gathering probably do not need to be convinced that the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—the right to keep and bear arms—is worth upholding. You should also ask, “Is the audience fairly heterogeneous?” In a public speaking class, you may be able to gauge that through your interactions with your fellow classmates before you make your way to the podium; but in other settings this may not be the case. If an organization is sponsoring or has invited you to speak, this is a question that can be directed to organizational staff with access to demographic information. Some demographics that may be useful as you craft your speech include age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or cultural background, socioeconomic status, religion, and political affiliation. Each of these characteristics is known to influence a listener’s beliefs, attitudes, values, and actions.

**receptive audiences**

Persuasive speakers will not generally address an audience that already fully agrees with them and is behaving in the way they would like, because that audience no longer needs to be persuaded. However, you may find yourself in situations that allow...
you to appeal to a **receptive audience** which already knows something about your topic and is generally supportive of, or open to, the point you are trying to make. For example, parents are generally interested in keeping their children safe. If you seek to persuade them that they should work with their kids to prevent them from being taken advantage of on social networking sites, they are likely to welcome what you have to say. Although they are already convinced that it is important to keep their children safe, this audience may not yet be persuaded that they have the need or ability to keep their kids safe in an online environment. In order to persuade this receptive audience, you should first attempt to foster **identification** with them by highlighting things you have in common. If you are a parent you might say something like, “I have two children and one of my biggest concerns is making sure they are safe.” If you are not a parent you might say, “one of the things I appreciate most about my parents is that I know they are always trying to keep me safe.” With these statements, you not only relate to the audience, but also demonstrate that you share a common concern.

**If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest rather than intellect.**

> ~ Benjamin Franklin

Next, offer a clear statement of purpose and tell the audience what you would like them to do in response to your message. If the audience is already likely to agree with your point, they will be looking for ways to act on it. Offer practical steps that they can take. Even if the steps must be carried out later (i.e. the parents in our example may have to wait to get home and start talking with their child about social networking habits), give them a way to respond to the message immediately and show their support. In this case you may have them write down the first thing they will say to their child, or practice saying it to the person next to them. Having them act on your message before leaving reinforces their already favorable response to what you are asking (Beebe & Beebe, 2003).

**I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.**  

> ~ Elie Wiesel

**neutral audiences**

Most of the groups that a persuasive speaker addresses are **neutral audiences**. These audiences are not passionate about the topic or speaker, often because they do not have enough information or because they are not aware that they should be concerned. Beebe & Beebe (2003) explain that the challenge in addressing a neutral audience is to foster their interest in your proposition. They offer a few tips for cultivating interest in a neutral audience. Begin by gaining their attention. To do this you might offer a story or statistic that relates the topic directly to the dominant demographic in the audience. If you are trying to convince first-year college students to avoid credit card solicitors on campus you might start with something like, “I know those t-shirts the credit card vendors are handing out are stylish and, best of all, free! But that t-shirt could cost you thousands of dollars before you even graduate.” Rather than beginning with a diatribe on the evils of debt, which many of them may not yet have experienced, you relate to their desire for a free t-shirt and a common belief they are likely to share, that “free” should not translate to “expensive.” If you cannot relate the topic directly to the audience, another approach is to relate the topic to someone they care about, like a family member or friend. Keep in mind that, while the receptive audience may be eager to respond immediately, the neutral audience may simply be more concerned about the topic or more inclined to consider the behavior change you are advocating (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). In this case, consider offering resources for more information, or a few minor steps they can take when they are ready.

**He who dreads hostility too much is unfit to rule.**

> ~ Lucius Annaeus Seneca

**hostile audiences**

Unfortunately, some audiences may be resistant or even hostile to your persuasive speech. A **hostile audience** may take issue with your topic or with you as a speaker. In this case, your primary goal is to persuade the audience to listen to what you have to say (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). Once they are willing to listen, then you will have the ability to change their minds in the future. Later in this chapter we will address ways that you can foster a better relationship with the audience by building your ethos. However, if the
The audience is opposed to your proposition, there are a few steps that you can take to encourage them to at least hear you out. If the audience is not likely to agree with your proposition, wait until later in the speech to offer it. Opening with a clear statement of purpose, which a receptive audience welcomes, will make an unreceptive audience more hostile to your goals. For example, if you begin by telling business owners that you think they should pay workers more, they are likely to think of all the reasons that will threaten their livelihood rather than listening to your message. Instead, begin by highlighting issues on which you agree. You might open with a discussion of the challenges businesses face in attempting to retain quality workers and increase productivity.

I have spent many years of my life in opposition, and I rather like the role.
~ Eleanor Roosevelt

Once you have identified areas of agreement, you can offer your proposition as a way of addressing your shared goals. To promote an increase in wages, you might explain that a study of more than 10,000 workers and managers in a variety of industries demonstrated that companies who pay their workers more are also more motivated to invest in new technology, enhance their management techniques, better train workers, and better deliver their services, all of which lead to higher productivity and increased profits (Applebaum & Bernhardt, 2004). Focusing on areas of agreement will make the audience more receptive to your proposition, but they will still hold some reservations. Acknowledge those reservations and demonstrate that you have given them ample consideration. Cite credible evidence that supports your proposition in light of those reservations. Showing that you understand and respect their opposing position is the most important step toward encouraging a hostile audience to at least hear you out.

**Persuasive Strategies**

- **Ethos**
  
  In addition to understanding how your audience feels about the topic you are addressing, you will need to take steps to help them see you as credible and interesting. The audience’s perception of you as a speaker is influential in determining whether or not they will choose to accept your proposition. Aristotle called this element of the speech **ethos**, “a Greek word that is closely related to our terms *ethical* and *ethnic*” (Campbell & Huxman, 2009, p. 232). He taught speakers to establish credibility with the audience by appearing to have good moral character, common sense, and concern for the audience’s well-being (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). Campbell & Huxman (2009) explain that ethos is not about conveying that you, as an individual, are a good person. It is about “mirror[ing] the characteristics idealized by [the] culture or group” (ethnic) (p.232), and demonstrating that you make good moral choices with regard to your relationship within the group (ethics).

While there are many things speakers can do to build their ethos throughout the speech, “assessments of ethos often reflect superficial first impressions,” and these first impressions linger long after the speech has concluded (Zarefsky, 2005, p.14). This means that what you wear and how you behave, even before opening your mouth, can go far in shaping your ethos. Be sure to dress appropriately for the occasion and setting in which you speak. Also work to appear confident, but not arrogant, and be sure to maintain enthusiasm about your topic throughout the speech. Give great attention to the crafting of your opening sentences because they will set the tone for what your audience should expect of your personality as you proceed.

I covered two presidents, LBJ and Nixon, who could no longer convince, persuade, or govern, once people had decided they had no credibility; but we seem to be more tolerant now of what I think we should not tolerate.
~ Helen Thomas

- **Logos**

  Another way to enhance your ethos, and your chances of persuading the audience, is to use sound arguments. In a persuasive speech, the **argument** will focus on the reasons for supporting your specific purpose statement. This argumentative approach is what Aristotle referred to as **logos**, or the logical means of proving an argument (Braet, 1992).

  When offering an argument you begin by making an assertion that requires a logical leap based on the available evidence (Campbell & Huxman, 2009). One of the most popular ways of understanding how this process works was developed by British philosopher Stephen Toulmin (Herrick, 2011). Toulmin explained that basic arguments tend to share three common elements: claim, data, and warrant. The **claim** is an assertion that you want the audience to accept. **Data** refers to the preliminary evidence on which the claim is based. For example, if I saw large gray clouds in the sky, I might make the claim that “it is going...”
Table 16.1   The Toulmin Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Argument</th>
<th>Argument With Backing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>data</strong></td>
<td>Obesity is a serious problem in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>claim</strong></td>
<td>The school needs more parking spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>warrant</strong></td>
<td>If I can’t find a place to park, there must be a shortage of spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>backing</strong></td>
<td>Processed foods contribute to obesity more than natural, or unprocessed, foods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“As a rule processed foods are more ‘energy dense’ than fresh foods: they contain less water and fiber but more added fat and sugar, which makes them both less filling and more fattening” (Pollan, 2007).

**Table 16.1**

The gray clouds (data) are linked to rain (claim) by the **warrant**, an often unstated general connection, that large gray clouds tend to produce rain. The warrant is a connector that, if stated, would likely begin with “since” or “because.” In our rain example, if we explicitly stated all three elements, the argument would go something like this: There are large gray clouds in the sky today (data). Since large gray clouds tend to produce rain (warrant), it is going to rain today (claim). However, in our regular encounters with argumentation, we tend to only offer the claim and (occasionally) the warrant.

To strengthen the basic argument, you will need **backing** for the claim. Backing provides foundational support for the claim (Herrick, 2011) by offering examples, statistics, testimony, or other information which further substantiates the argument. To substantiate the rain argument we have just considered, you could explain that the color of a cloud is determined by how much light the water in the cloud is reflecting. A thin cloud has tiny drops of water and ice crystals which scatter light, making it appear white. Clouds appear gray when they are filled with large water droplets which are less able to reflect light (Brill, 2003).

**Logic is the beginning of wisdom, not the end.**

~ Leonard Nimoy

The elements that Toulmin identified (see Table 16.1) may be arranged in a variety of ways to make the most logical argument. As you reason through your argument you may proceed inductively, deductively, or causally, toward your claim. **Inductive reasoning** moves from specific examples to a more general claim. For example, if you read online reviews of a restaurant chain called Walt’s Wine & Dine and you noticed that someone reported feeling sick after eating at a Walt’s, and another person reported that the Walt’s they visited was understaffed, and another commented that the tables in the Walt’s they ate at had crumbs left on them, you might conclude (or claim) that the restaurant chain is unsanitary. To test the validity of a general claim, Beebe and Beebe (2003) encourage speakers to consider whether there are “enough specific instances to support the conclusion,” whether the specific instances are typical, and whether the instances are recent (p.384). The opposite of inductive reasoning is **deductive reasoning**, moving from a general principle to a claim regarding a specific instance. In order to move from general to specific we tend to use **syllogisms**. A syllogism begins with a major (or general) premise, then moves to a minor premise, then concludes with a specific claim. For example, if you know that all dogs bark (major premise), and your neighbor has a dog (minor premise), you could then conclude that your neighbor’s dog barks (specific claim). To verify the accuracy of your specific claim, you must verify the truth and applicability of the major premise. What evidence do you have that all dogs bark? Is it
possible that only most dogs bark?
Next, you must also verify the accuracy of the minor premise. If the major premise is truly generalizable, and both premises are accurate, your specific claim should also be accurate.

Your reasoning may also proceed causally. **Causal reasoning** examines related events to determine which one caused the other. You may begin with a cause and attempt to determine its effect. For example, when the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, scientists explained that because many animals in the Gulf were nesting and reproducing at the time, the spill could wipe out “an entire generation of hundreds of species” (Donovan, 2010, para. 2). Their argument reasoned that the spill (cause) would result in species loss (effect). Two years later, the causal reasoning might be reversed. If we were seeing species loss in the Gulf (effect), we could reason that it was a result of the oil spill (cause). Both of these claims rely on the evidence available at the time. To make the first claim, scientists not only offered evidence that animals were nesting and reproducing, but they also looked at the effects of an oil spill that occurred 21 years earlier in Alaska (Donovan, 2010). To make the second claim, scientists could examine dead animals washing up on the coast to determine whether their deaths were caused by oil.

**pathos**
While we have focused heavily on logical reasoning, we must also recognize the strong role that emotions play in the persuasive process. Aristotle called this element of the speech **pathos**. Pathos draws on the emotions, sympathies, and prejudices of the audience to appeal to their non-rational side (Beebe & Beebe 2003; Reike, Sillars, & Peterson, 2009). Human beings are constantly in some emotional state, which means that tapping into an audience’s emotions can be vital to persuading them to accept your proposition (Dillard & Meijnders, 2002).

One of the most helpful strategies in appealing to your audience’s emotions is to use clear examples that illustrate your point. Illustrations can be crafted verbally, nonverbally, or visually. To offer a verbal illustration, you could tell a compelling story. For example, when fundraising for breast cancer research, Nancy Brinker, creator of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, has plenty of compelling statistics and examples to offer. Yet, she regularly talks about her sister, explaining:

Susan G. Komen fought breast cancer with her heart, body and soul. Throughout her diagnosis, treatments, and endless days in the hospital, she spent her time thinking of ways to make life better for other women battling breast cancer instead of worrying about her own situation. That concern for others continued even as Susan neared the end of her fight (Komen National, n.d.).

Brinker promised her sister that she would continue her fight against breast cancer. This story compels donors to join her fight.

Speakers can also tap into emotions using nonverbal behaviors to model the desired emotion for their audience. In the summer of 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives debated holding the Attorney General in contempt for refusing to release documents concerning a controversial gun-tracking operation. Arguing for a contempt vote, South Carolina Representative Trey Gowdy did not simply state his claim, instead he raised his voice, slowed his pace, and used hand motions to convey anger with what he perceived as deception on the part of the Attorney General (Gowdy, 2012). His use of volume, tone, pace, and hand gestures enhanced the message and built anger in his audience.

**Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel. It is to bring another out of his bad sense into your good sense.**

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

In addition to verbal and nonverbal illustrations, visual imagery can enhance the emotional appeal of a message. For example, we have all heard about the dangers of drugs, and there are multiple campaigns that attempt to prevent people from even trying them. However, many young adults experiment with drugs under the assumption that they are immune from the negative effects if they only use the drug recreationally. To counter this assumption regarding methamphetamines, the Montana Meth project combines controversial statements with
graphic images on billboards to evoke fear of the drug (see www.methproject.org/ads/print/ for some disturbing examples). Young adults may have heard repeated warnings that meth is addictive and that it has the potential to cause sores, rotten teeth, and extreme weight loss, but Montana Meth Project’s visual display is more compelling because it turns the audience’s stomach, making the message memorable. This image, combined with the slogan, “not even once,” conveys the persuasive point without the need for other forms of evidence and rational argument.

 Appeals to fear, like those in the Montana Meth Project ads, have proven effective in motivating people to change a variety of behaviors. However, speakers must be careful with their use of this emotion. Fear appeals tend to be more effective when they appeal to a high-level fear, such as death, and they are more effective when offered by speakers with a high level of perceived credibility (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). Fear appeals are also more persuasive when the speaker can convince the audience they have the ability to avert the threat. If audiences doubt their ability to avoid or minimize the threat, the appeal may backfire (Witte & Allen, 2000).

I would rather try to persuade a man to go along, because once I have persuaded him, he will stick. If I scare him, he will stay just as long as he is scared, and then he is gone.

~ Dwight D. Eisenhower

David Brooks (2011) argues that, “emotions are not separate from reason, but they are the foundation of reason because they tell us what to value” (para. 2). Those values are at the core of fostering a credible ethos. All of Aristotle’s strategies, ethos, logos, and pathos, are interdependent. The most persuasive speakers will combine these strategies to varying degrees based on their specific purpose and audience.

**ethics of persuasion**

In addition to considering their topic and persuasive strategy, speakers must take care to ensure that their message is ethical. Persuasion is often confused with another kind of communication that has similar ends, but different methods—coercion. Like persuasion, **coercion** is a process whereby thoughts or behaviors are altered. But in coercive acts, deceptive or harmful methods propel the intended changes, not reason. Strong and Cook (1992) contrasted the two: “persuasion uses argument to compel power to give way to reason while coercion uses force to compel reason to give way to power” (p. 7). The “force” that Strong and Cook mention frequently manifests as promises for reward or punishment, but sometimes it arises as physical or emotional harm. Think of almost any international crime film you have seen, and you are likely to remember a scene where someone was compelled to out their compatriots by way of force. Jack Bauer, the protagonist in the American television series 24, became an infamous character by doing whatever it took to get captured criminals to talk. Although dramatic as an example, those scenes where someone is tortured in an effort to produce evidence offer a familiar reference when thinking about coercion. To avoid coercing an audience, speakers should use logical and emotional appeals responsibly.

The pendulum of the mind alternates between sense and nonsense, not between right and wrong.

~ Carl Jung

Persuasive speakers must be careful to avoid using **fallacies** in their reasoning. Fallacies are errors in reasoning that occur when a speaker fails to use appropriate or applicable evidence for their argument. There are a wide variety of fallacies, and it is not possible to list them all here. However, speakers should watch for four common categories of fallacies: “fallacies of faulty assumption,” which occur when the speaker reasons based on a problematic assumption; “fallacies directed to the person,” which occur when the speaker focuses on the attributes of an individual opponent rather than the relevant arguments; “fallacies of case presentation,” which occur when the speaker mischaracterizes the issue; and “fallacies of suggestion,” which occur when the speaker implies or suggests an argument without fully developing it (Herrick, 2011, p. 256). See the Table 16.2 on the following page for examples of each of these types of fallacies. To learn more about fallacies, see Chapter 6 by Russ (Critical Thinking and Reasoning), or see the supplemental handout found on the Persuasive Speaking chapter homepage (www.publicspeakingproject.org/persuasive.html)

There are some positive steps you can take to avoid these pitfalls of persuasive speaking and ensure that you are presenting your message in the most ethical manner. We have already discussed some of these, such as offering credible evidence for your arguments and showing concern for the audience’s well being. However, you should also offer a transparent goal for your speech. Even with a hostile audience, where you may wait until later in the speech to provide the specific purpose statement, you should be forthcoming about your specific purpose. In fact, be truthful with your audience throughout the speech.
### Table 16.2 Examples of Fallacies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fallacies Directed to the Person</th>
<th>Fallacies of Case Presentation</th>
<th>Fallacies of Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Causal Fallacy</strong></td>
<td>It is cloudy outside, and I feel sick. Cloudy days make me sick.</td>
<td>It is appropriate to use fictional scenarios to demonstrate your point, but tell the audience that is what you are doing. You can accomplish this by introducing fictional examples with the phrase, “hypothetically,” or “imagine,” to signal that you are making it up (Beebe &amp; Beebe, 2003). Additionally, be sure to offer a mix of logical and emotional appeals. Blending these strategies insures that you have evidence to back up emotional claims, and that you are sensitive to the audiences’ emotional reactions to your logical claims. Attending to both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandwagon Fallacy</td>
<td>Everyone takes out a loan to buy a car, so you should too.</td>
<td><strong>Non Sequitur</strong> I don’t plan to vote today because I am moving next week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begging the Question</td>
<td><strong>Poisoning the Well</strong> Before the defense makes their closing statement, keep in mind that their client has not said one truthful word throughout the trial.</td>
<td>You should clean your room because I am going to do the laundry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marijuana is good for you because it is natural.</td>
<td><strong>Red Herring</strong> I should not be fined for parking in a red zone when there are so many people out there committing real crimes like robbery and murder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Appeal to Flattery</strong> First, I wanted to tell you that this is my favorite class. I tell all my friends how much I love it. I just think I deserve a better grade on my exam.</td>
<td>War is wrong, but in times of crisis we should support the president.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You are such a generous person, I know you’ll want to donate to this cause.</td>
<td><strong>Appeal to Misplaced Authority</strong> This diet is the best one for people with my health condition, Oprah said so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Paralepsis</strong> I’m not saying he cheated; he just did uncharacteristically well on that exam.</td>
<td>I want to visit the Museum of Modern Art. My English professor says they have the best collection anywhere!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If she wants to work for a crook, that’s her business.</td>
<td><strong>Either-Or</strong> Either you’re with us or against us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Arrangement</strong> I have so much to do today. I have to get my car fixed, finish a paper, take a nap, and pick my mom up from the airport.</td>
<td>Love it or leave it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>So many highly respected musicians will be there: Paul McCartney, Elton John, LMFAO, Billy Joel . . .</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
aspects will help you be more ethical and more persuasive.

The most important persuasion tool you have in your entire arsenal is integrity.

~ Zig Ziglar

organizing persuasive messages

Once you have selected your topic, know who your audience is, and have settled on an end goal for your persuasive speech, you can begin drafting your speech. Outlines are organized according to the particular speech, and the following organizational patterns are used routinely for persuasive speeches.

Monroe’s Motivated Sequence

Monroe’s Motivated Sequence is an organizational pattern that attempts to convince the audience to respond to a need that is delineated in the speech (Monroe, 1949). Five separate steps characterize the Motivated Sequence organization style:

1. The attention step should get the audience’s attention as well as describe your goals and preview the speech.

2. The need step should provide a description of the problem as well as the consequences that may result if the problem goes unresolved. In this step, the speaker should also alert audience members to their role in mitigating the issue.

3. The satisfaction step is used to outline your solutions to the problems you have previously outlined as well as deal with any objections that may arise.

4. In the visualization step, audience members are asked to visualize what will happen if your solutions are implemented and what will happen if they do not come to fruition. Visualizations should be rich with detail.

5. The action appeal step should be used to make a direct appeal for action. In this step, you should describe precisely how the audience should react to your speech and how they should carry out these actions. As the final step, you should also offer a concluding comment. See Figure 16.1 to see this method of arrangement illustrated.

direct method pattern

If your goal is to convince your audience to adopt a particular idea, you might prefer the direct method pattern as a way of organizing your speech. This pattern consists of a claim and a list of reasons to support it. Every piece of support in the speech directly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 16.1 Monroe’s Motivated Sequence Sample Outline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposition:</strong> You (the audience) should volunteer or donate at the Morris County Animal Protection Agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Attention step</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. When was the last time you saw a dog chained to a tree in a neighbor’s yard, heard about a puppy mill in your town, or went into a pet store only to find dogs and cats for sale?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. I work with the Morris County Animal Protection Group and I would like to share some ways in which you can help prevent these travesties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. First, I will describe some of the major problems in Morris County, and then I will tell you how you can get involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Need step:</strong> Many animals in Morris County are abused and neglected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. There are too many stray animals that are neither spayed nor neutered, resulting in an overabundance of cats and dogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. These animals often cannot find enough food to survive and the local shelter cannot accommodate such high populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The cost of local spay/neuter programs is too high for our agency to handle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III. Satisfaction step:</strong> Raising $1 million for the Morris County Animal Protection Agency can effectively solve these problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. We could afford to spay or neuter most stray animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Obtained animals could be fed and accommodated until a home can be secured for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Additionally, we could subsidize spay/neuter costs for local citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV. Visualization step:</strong> Imagine what we can do for our animals with this money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. What will it be like if we can carry out these actions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. What will it be like if we cannot do these things?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V. Action appeal step:</strong> Donate to the Morris County Animal Protection Agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. If you want to help protect the many struggling stray animals in Morris County, make a donation to our organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Your donation will make a real difference in the lives of our animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. We cannot effect real change for the animals of our county without each and every one of you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
supports the central claim you wish to make. As Jaffe (2004) points out, “It’s a good pattern to use when listeners are apathetic or neutral, either mildly favoring or mildly opposing your claim” (p. 329). The outline for a speech on vegetarianism in Figure 16.2 provides three reasons that vegetarianism provides useful health benefits for people struggling with obesity.

As the example in Figure 16.3 illustrates, the basic components of the causal speech are the cause and the effect. Such an organizational style is useful when a speaker needs to share the results of a new program, discuss how one act led to another, or discuss the positive/negative outcomes of taking some action. Through this pattern, the speaker can convince audiences to adopt a new belief about a particular phenomenon.

History creates comprehensibility primarily by arranging facts meaningfully and only in a very limited sense by establishing strict causal connections.

~ Johan Huizinga

causal pattern
Similar to a problem-solution speech, which was covered in Chapter 8, a causal speech describes a general cause and a specific effect. In other words, a causal pattern first addresses some cause and then shares what effects resulted. A causal speech can be particularly effective when the speaker wants to convince their audience of the relationship between two things. With sound causal reasoning, a speech of this sort can be used to convince the audience of something they were previously opposed to believing.

As the example in Figure 16.3 illustrates, the basic components of the causal speech are the cause and the effect. Such an organizational style is useful when a speaker needs to share the results of a new program, discuss how one act led to another, or discuss the positive/negative outcomes of taking some action. Through this pattern, the speaker can convince audiences to adopt a new belief about a particular phenomenon.

~ Samuel Butler

Neither irony nor sarcasm is argument.
Figure 16.4 Sample Outline
Refutation Pattern

(IImagine that the speaker is giving the speech at a recycling convention)

**Proposition:** Reusing products is better than recycling them.

I. Although Thomas argued that recycling is the most important individual act of environmental stewardship, I would like to argue that reusing is an even better way to care for our environment. (signaling and stating)

II. Reusing has several advantages over recycling. (providing evidence)
   A. Reusing reduces consumption.
   B. Reusing extends the life of a product before it needs to be recycled.
   C. It is cheaper to use reuse an item than to recycle it.

III. Given these advantages, it is more useful for people to reuse items when possible than it is to recycle them.

conclusion

The primary goal of persuasive speaking is to influence an audience’s beliefs or behaviors so that they can make necessary or positive change. Persuasive speaking is a vital skill in all areas of life, whether it is a political candidate convincing voters to elect them, an employee convincing the boss to give them a promotion, or a sales person convincing a consumer to buy a product, individuals must understand what persuasion is and how it functions.

When formulating a persuasive speech, remember to determine the type of question you seek to answer so that you can decide whether to offer a proposition of fact, a proposition of value, or a proposition of policy. Weave the topic and the proposition together to create a compelling argument for your specific audience.

Knowing your audience can help when it comes to choosing the appropriate strategies for convincing them that you are a credible speaker. Once you have established your credibility, you can advance both logical and emotional appeals to move your audience toward the belief or behavior you hope they will adopt. As you weave these appeals together, be sure to offer the most ethical arguments by avoiding fallacies and supporting emotional appeals with relevant evidence.

Once you have compiled the most relevant arguments and emotional appeals for a given audience, take care to organize your message effectively. Give thought to your persuasive goals and determine whether they can be best achieved through the use of Monroe’s Motivated Sequence, a direct method pattern, a causal pattern, or a refutation pattern.

The combination of a confident and credible speaker with the right organization of logical and emotional appeals can go far in swaying an audience.

*It's better to get smart than to get mad. I try not to get so insulted that I will not take advantage of an opportunity to persuade people to change their minds.*

~ John H. Johnson
review questions and activities

review questions

1. Early in the chapter the prevalence of persuasion was discussed. Think of an instance in which you knew you were being persuaded. What were you being persuaded to do? Was the persuader focused on changing your beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions? How do you know?

2. Imagine you are giving a persuasive speech on ______________ [you fill in the blank]. Draft a specific purpose statement on this topic for a speech to convince. Next, draft a specific purpose statement on the same topic for a speech to actuate.

3. Draft a proposition of fact, proposition of value, and proposition of policy for one or more of the following topics:
   a. Shortening class time
   b. Pro-anorexia images on social networking sites
   c. Airline fees

4. You have been invited to speak to administrators about increasing alumni support for the school. What steps will you take to build your ethos for this audience? What logical appeals will you make? How will you appeal to their emotions?

5. Identify the following fallacies (adapted from Labossiere, 1995):
   a. If those actions were not illegal, they would not be prohibited by law.
   b. Our team had a losing record until we won the last three games. I wore blue socks in the last three games. Blue socks are lucky, and if I keep wearing them, we can’t lose!
   c. The store Joe works at changed the dress code, requiring him to buy all new work clothes. When he went to the manager to complain, she told him that no one else voiced concern, so he must be the only one who had that problem.
   d. Your roommate has invited his classmate, Annie, over to work on a project. Before Annie arrives, your roommate explains that she will probably be late because she never helps with the work and always leaves him to take care of everything.

   Answers can be found on the bottom of page 16

6. Imagine you are giving a speech in which you hope to convince audience members to begin retirement planning while they are still in their twenties. Which of the organizational patterns described above best fits this topic? Why? Describe its advantages over the other organization styles for the specific purpose.

activities

1. Using a recent newspaper, locate an example of a proposition of fact, a proposition of value, and a proposition of policy, and underline each one. Then, see if you can locate the data, warrant, and backing for each of these claims. If you cannot locate one or more of the elements, write your own based on the information provided in the article.

2. Two organizations, Mercy For Animals (MFA) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), sponsor billboard advertisements to advocate that people transition to a vegetarian diet.
   MFA: http://www.mercyforanimals.org/advertisements.aspx

   Examine the billboards from each organization and consider the following:
   a. What logical claims are advanced by each organization’s billboards?
   b. Are there any logical fallacies on the billboards?
   c. What emotional appeals are used on the billboards?
   d. Are any of the emotional appeals unethical? If so, why?
   e. Which is the more ethically persuasive campaign? Why?
glossary

Argument
A proposition supported by one or more reasons or pieces of evidence.

Backing
Foundational evidence which supports a claim, such as examples, statistics, or testimony.

Causal Pattern
A speech designed to explain a cause-effect relationship between two phenomena.

Causal Reasoning
The process of formulating an argument by examining related events to determine which one caused the other.

Claim
The proposition you want the audience to accept.

Coercion
A process whereby thoughts or behaviors are altered through deceptive or harmful methods.

Data
Preliminary evidence on which a claim is based.

Deductive Reasoning
The process of formulating an argument by moving from a general premise to a specific conclusion.

Demographics
Statistical information that reflects the make-up of a group, often including age, sex, ethnic or cultural background, socioeconomic status, religion, and political affiliation.

Direct Method Pattern
A speech designed to present a claim with a list of several supporting pieces of data.

Ethos
The audience’s perception of a speaker’s credibility and moral character.

Evaluation Criteria
A set of standards for judging the merit of a proposition.

Fallacies
Errors in reasoning that occur when a speaker fails to use appropriate or applicable evidence for their argument.

Hostile Audience
An audience that is opposed to the speaker or to the persuasive proposition.

Identification
A connection that is fostered between the speaker and their audience by highlighting shared attributes or attitudes.

Inductive Reasoning
The process of formulating an argument by moving from specific instances to a generalization.

Logos
The logical means of proving an argument.

Monroe’s Motivated Sequence
An organizational pattern that attempts to convince the audience to respond to a need that is delineated in the speech through five sequential steps.

Neutral Audience
An audience that is neither open nor opposed to the persuasive proposition.

Pathos
The use of emotional appeals to persuade an audience.

Persuasion
The art of influencing or reinforcing people’s beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions.

Persuasive Speeches
Speeches which aim to convince an audience to think or behave in a particular way.

Proposition of Fact
An argument that seeks to establish whether something is true or false.

Proposition of Policy
An argument that seeks to establish an appropriate course of action.

Proposition of Value
An argument that seeks to establish the relative worth of something.

Receptive Audience
An audience that is generally supportive of, or open to, the persuasive proposition.

Refutation Pattern
A speech designed to anticipate the negative response of an audience, to bring attention to the tensions between the two sides of the argument, and to explain why the audience should change their views.

Speeches to Actuate
Persuasive speeches which seek to change or motivate particular behaviors.

Speeches to Convince
Persuasive speeches which seek to establish agreement about a particular topic.

Status Quo
The current situation.

Syllogisms
Reasoning beginning with a major premise, then moving to a minor premise, before establishing a specific claim.

Warrant
The (often unstated) connection between data and claim.

Answers to question 5:

a. begging the question, b. causal fallacy, c. bandwagon fallacy, d. poisoning the well
references


Chapter 16 Persuasive Speaking


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p. 3 California Traffic by Downtowngal http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1b/Interstate_10_looking_east_from_Crenshaw_Boulevard.jpg

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16-18
### Appendix A  Persuasive Speech Topic Ideas

| Environmental Topics | • Citizens should try to reuse items before recycling them.  
|• The U.S. should ban mountaintop removal as a mode of harvesting coal.  
|• Contemporary climate change is human-caused.  
|• Governmental funding for clean energy should be increased.  
|• All municipalities should offer public transportation.  
|• The U.S. should ratify the Kyoto Protocol.  
|• Bottled water should undergo the same quality testing as municipal water.  
|• Preservation is a better environmental sustainability model than is conservation.  
|• Hunting should be banned on all public lands. |

| Social Justice Topics | • The right to marry should be extended to gays and lesbians.  
|• Abortion should be illegal.  
|• State colleges should be free to attend.  
|• Martin Luther King, Jr. was the most influential leader of the civil rights movement  
|• The death penalty should be abolished.  
|• Convicted rapists should be sentenced to the death penalty.  
|• Women should receive equal pay for equal work.  
|• Affirmative action does not work and should be ended.  
|• Individuals and communities affected by environmental injustices should receive compensation. |

| Campus Life Topics | • Dorm rooms should have individual thermostats.  
|• Professors’ office hours should be held at reasonable hours, not 7 a.m. on Mondays.  
|• Free coffee should be provided in all classroom buildings before noon.  
|• Student fees at universities are too high.  
|• Dining halls should provide nutritional information for all meals.  
|• Student government leaders should host regular forums to answer questions from the general student population.  
|• Plagiarism should be prosecuted to the fullest extent. |

| Everyday Life Topics | • The legal drinking age should be lowered to 18.  
|• Frequent flyers should not be required to remove their shoes in airport security lines.  
|• Eating five meals a day is better than eating three.  
|• Smoking should be illegal in all public areas.  
|• Gmail is the best email service.  
|• All restaurants should offer vegan and vegetarian options or substitutes.  
|• Netflix and Hulu are better ways to watch movies and television shows.  
|• ATM fees should be outlawed.  
|• Proximity to religious facilities should have no bearing on alcohol sales. |

| Economic Topics | • Social security benefits should be guaranteed for those who pay in to the program.  
|• All multi-year jobs should include pension plans.  
|• The U.S. should spend less on wars and more on education.  
|• Everyone should be required to pay an equal percentage of taxes.  
|• A consumption tax is more just than an income tax.  
|• The minimum wage in the U.S. is too low.  
|• Multi-million dollar bonuses for corporate executives are unjust because they preclude better wages/reduced prices for others. |

| Quirky Topics | • Tacos are the greatest of human inventions.  
|• Ghosts are real.  
|• Short haircuts are more comfortable than long hairstyles.  
|• Bourbon should only be served “on the rocks.”  
|• Traditional eyeglasses make those who wear them look smarter.  
|• Eating chicken with a fork should be illegal. (An actual law in Gainesville, Georgia!) |