

Writing a Persuasive Speech



Persuasion ought to consider the Aristotelian principles of Ethos (Credibility), Pathos (Emotion), and Logos (Logic). How should the writer of a persuasive speech go about accomplishing these lofty goals?

1

Brainstorming an Argument

Persuasive speeches are often best when the speaker cares deeply about the subject. Brainstorm things that interest you. What do you often rant about to your friends? What is something you can talk about for ten minutes without notes?



2

Addressing the Audience

What does the audience need to know? Consider whether the audience agrees with the argument or not. If they do, consider adding something new or an exciting call to action. If not, consider how to respectfully address counter claims and how to present a compelling refutation. Make sure to back your claims with evidence!



3

Choosing a Roadmap

Consider how you will begin and end. Will you use a quote or story? How will you connect with the audience? How will you organize the speech? Consider branching out from the traditional five paragraphs. You might try an argument/refutation or comparative advantage organization style.



4

Selecting Beautiful Language

Famously skilled speakers are very careful in their language. They often use rhetorical devices like antithesis and alliteration, commonly set up in repeated phrases of three. Everyone remembers Julius Caesar's "I came, I saw, I conquered."



5

Finalizing the Outline

Speeches designed to be given extemporaneously are considered a finished product at the outline stage. The outline should be clear and concise, with simple, conversational language. Speakers may choose to include full sentences, such as transitions or important points.

