

## Lesson Note – Persuasive Presentations

### About Persuasive Presentations

**Persuasive presentations** are probably the most common types of presentation. Whenever you try to ask someone to do something or to believe something, that's a persuasive presentation. Consider these examples:

1. A chef tries to sell his new cook book.
2. A teacher tries to tell her students to study harder.
3. A doctor tells his patient to exercise more.

Persuasive presentations often include an informative presentation within them. For example, if a doctor wants to tell his patient to exercise more, he has to explain *how* to exercise. If a teacher wants her students to work harder, she has to explain *how* to do it.

In your fourth assignment, you will give a persuasive presentation. First, we'll look at some common mistakes people make in persuasive presentations, then we'll talk about how to make a good persuasive presentation.

### Common Mistakes in Informative Presentations

Have you ever tried to get someone to do something, but then they didn't go do it? If yes, that means your persuasive presentation was not effective, and you need to improve your communication skills. We'll look at three common mistakes that people make in persuasive presentations:

#### 1. Not building credibility

Imagine you are in a bookstore looking at cook books, and you walk by a person dressed like a chef trying to sell you his newest cook book. He says, "Hey, you should buy my new cook book!" What would you think?

You would probably think, *"Ok...but who are you? Why should I buy a cook book from you of all people?"*

**Solution: Establish your credibility at the beginning of the presentation.**

To continue the chef example, the chef should explain his credentials. He can say things like, *"I've been a chef for 20 years"* or *"I've studied with top chefs like Gordon Ramsey"* or *"This is my 3<sup>rd</sup> cook book and it's the best one yet."*

#### 2. Not building connection with the audience

**Connection** here means a feeling of similarity and trust with that person. Imagine it's the first day of class, and you meet a new teacher, and the teacher starts lecturing you on why you need to study harder. What would you think?

You might think, *"But you don't even know me. You don't know how hard I work. Why are you telling me to work harder? I already work very hard!"*

**Solution: Build connection with your audience at the beginning of the presentation**

To continue the teacher example, the teacher should build a connection with the students by saying something like,

*“When I was a student just like you, I didn’t know how to work hard. I thought working hard meant spending a lot of time doing homework. Raise your hand if you agree with me. OK looks like most people agree with me. But later, I learned that working hard also means maintaining communication with the teacher, submitting drafts of assignments and asking for the teacher’s feedback, and then actually acting on that feedback. So that’s what I mean when I tell you to work hard in my course.”*

Notice how the teacher establishes similarity and connection to the students. That makes the audience more willing to listen to you.

### 3. Making the request too big

Imagine a doctor telling his overweight patient, *“You need to exercise. I want you to exercise for 1 hour 3 times a week.”* How might the patient react? He might think, *“1 hour? 3 times a week? I can barely exercise for 10 minutes, and I definitely don’t have time to do it 3 times a week!”*

**Solution: Analyze your audience and make an appropriate ask**

In this example, the doctor needs to think about what his patient is able to accept and do. Perhaps he can ask the patient, *“How long can you exercise for right now? How much free time do you have every week?”* Then the doctor can give an appropriate recommendation like exercising for 10 minutes 2 times every week. Later, when the patient gets healthier and stronger, the doctor can increase his ask.

## The Structure of a Good Persuasive Presentation

There are three parts to any presentation: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. Let’s go over about what each part should talk about in a persuasive presentation.

### Introduction

The introduction of a persuasive presentation is basically the same as an informative presentation. In the introduction, you need to do four things:

1. Get the audience members’ attention
2. Convince the audience member that learning about your topic is important
3. Establish your credibility
4. Have a call-to-adventure at the end

In order to get the audience members’ attention, you can do things like asking them a question or telling a joke or telling a short story. That should lead to you explaining why the topic is important. Finally, explain why they should trust you to talk about this subject; you can talk about the research you did or your own experiences.

Here’s an example of an introduction for an informative speech on the why you should try eating vegan:

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*Raise your hand if you ever thought about going vegetarian or vegan?...OK so a few people. Joe, can you share with us why you thought about going vegan? .... Great, thank you Joe. So there are many reasons why people might think about going vegan. It’s a very important topic because what you eat affects your*

*health, and how healthy you are affects the quality of your life. I've done a lot of research on the benefits of being vegan, and I've also been a vegan for 8 years. So in today's presentation, I will share with you how we can live a healthier, more energetic life, through eating vegan.*

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Notice how it starts by getting the audience's attention, then it talks about why the topic is important, and then the speaker establishes credibility, and finally, speaker states the topic of the presentation.

## Body

The body is the main part of the presentation. In this section, you should first outline the main points you will talk about. Then you can go into each point in detail. It's very important that you **transition** between in point. The bolded sentences in the example below are transitions.

One big difference between an informative and a persuasive presentation is that in a persuasive presentation, you need to assume your audience does **not** want to do what you ask them to do. So for each point, you need to explain their view on the subject, and then explain why your view is better.

Another thing about persuasive presentations is that you might need to explain how to do the thing you want the audience to do in the body.

Here's an example of a body section for a speech on the benefits of eating vegan ("blah blah blah" means the speaker continues to talk):

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*There are three major benefits of eating vegan that I'll talk about in this presentation:*

- 1. Health benefits*
- 2. Environment benefits*
- 3. Spirituality benefits*

**Let's start with the first one.** *Many people worry that eating vegan is going to lack nutrition and be bad for health. Raise your hand if you think that. Ok so maybe that's half of the audience. Actually, many scientific studies have shown that people who eat vegan have a much lower risk for heart disease, and they live longer and healthier lives. Blah blah blah.*

**Next, let's look at about** *environment benefits. Did you know that meat is one of the biggest contributors to global warming? Ok, I see a lot of people shaking their heads. Well, in order to produce meat, we have to cut away a lot of forests. Eating vegan is not only good for your health, but it's good for the health of the Earth too! Blah blah blah.*

**Finally, let's talk about** *spirituality benefits. Did you know that when we feel the emotion of kindness, we improve our mental and physical health? A great way to practice kindness is to not eat meat because in modern society, animals that we eat are raised in terrifying factory conditions. Blah blah blah.*

**Now that we know why it's so great to eat vegan, let's talk about how you can start your vegan experiment.** *You can start simply by eating one meal a week that's vegan. Then, after a while, you can increase it to 2 meals a week. Blah blah blah*

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Notice how the body

1. outlines the main points
2. goes into detail about each main point
3. transitions between each point
4. states the audience's opposing view first, and then states the speaker's viewpoint

The outlining and transitioning really helps the audience follow along and not get lost. Also notice that the speaker first states the audience's view first, and then later explains a different viewpoint that the audience will hopefully accept. After explaining the reasons, the speaker explains how to start eating vegan.

## Conclusion

The conclusion of a persuasive speech is basically the same as an informative speech. In the conclusion, you should

1. Summarize the main points
2. Review why the topic is important
3. End with a do-able call-to-action

Here is an example of a conclusion continued from the above example:

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*So, in summary, there are three big benefits of eating vegan. First, it's great for your physical health. Eating vegan will reduce your risk of illness and improve how long you live and how healthy you are. Second, eating vegan helps the Earth by reducing pollution. Third, if eating vegan is a great spiritual practice to be a kinder human being. We eat three times a day (or maybe even more), so it's extremely important that we choose our food wisely. I hope that from my presentation, you will try eating vegan once a week. Thank you for your time.*

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Notice how the conclusion starts by summarizing the main points in the body, then restates the importance of the topic, and then ends with a small call-to-action.

## Check Your Understanding Questions:

1. Explain three common mistakes in persuasive presentations and their solutions.
2. What should happen in the introduction of a persuasive presentation?
3. What should happen in the body of a persuasive presentation?
4. What should happen in the conclusion of a persuasive presentation?