

Audience Opinion of You and Your Topic

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn that the favorability of a speaker can be considered in relation to both the speaker and the topic. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Favorability of the Speaker
2. Favorability toward the Topic

1. Favorability of the Speaker

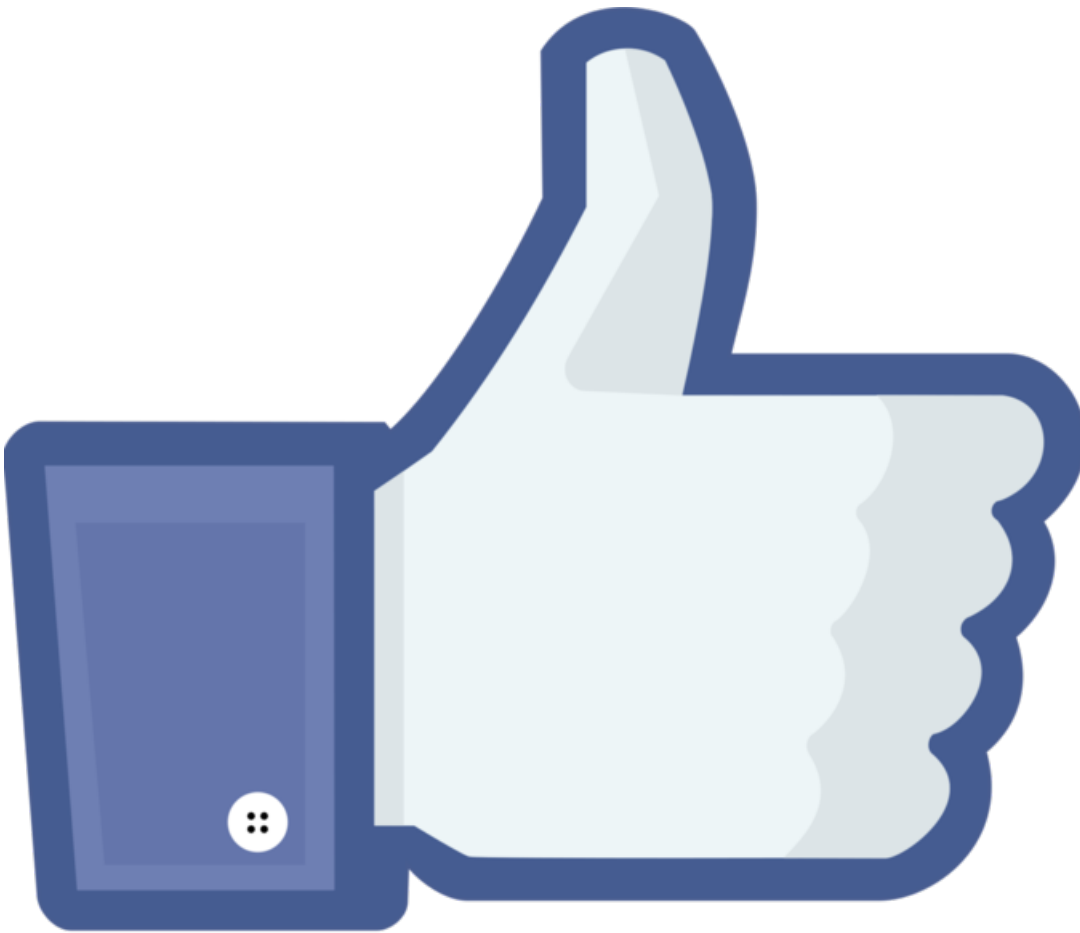
National opinion polls are conducted regularly to report on the **favorability** of celebrities and politicians.

IN CONTEXT

In 2012, regular reports were created based on changes in favorable and unfavorable ratings for Mitt Romney and Barack Obama. Pollsters used surveys to sample the nation to determine how people rated the candidates on a number of different questions, and reported the favorability of Mitt Romney and Barack Obama as it changed based on the survey results.

You may not be a prominent speaker or politician who is the focus of opinion polls, but your audience is likely to have an opinion about you prior to the speech. Quintilian, a classical rhetorician, insists that the speaker is "a good man speaking well. " The speaker should strive to be a morally and ethically good man or woman, and strive to be viewed by other as such.

When preparing your speech, consider how your audience might rate you. Do you need to do "damage" control or repair your reputation before or while you are speaking? What is your favorability rating with your audience? How many thumbs up would you get from your audience?



TERM TO KNOW

Favorability

The quality or degree of being viewed favorably.

3. Favorability toward the Topic

You will also notice that opinion pollsters report on the attitudes of large group of people about different topics of national interest.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Consider Congress or particular pieces of legislation, such as health care. Does Congress have a high favorability rating? What is the favorability rating for the Health Care Act? The overall favorability rating may be good nationally, and better in some regions than others, but bad particularly among members of the Republican Party in Congress.

If you are speaking about a topic that is currently popular with the media, you are likely to find different opinion polls to assist you.

If your topic is more local and personal, you may want to collect your own data. You can conduct a simple survey with rating scales to find out exactly how your audience views the topic or thesis for your speech. You might also want to informally data mine by checking your followers or friends who may be similar to your audience; how many "likes" are expressed?



SUMMARY

Your audience is likely to have an opinion about you prior to the speech. Your **favorability** can be determined by what the audience members think of you **as a speaker**, as well as how they feel **toward your topic**. To find favorability ratings about national topics, look at opinion polls on the attitudes of large group of people that may represent or include your audience. To find favorability ratings about local community topics, conduct a survey with your audience or informally mine online data for negative and positive sentiments among your social media friends and followers, who may be similar to your audience.

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TERMS TO KNOW

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