

# External Benefits: Influence the World Around You

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

Public speaking skills allow people to influence the world through public leadership in society, including roles in commercial organizations, the volunteer sector, groups, and clubs. They can also enhance one's personal development and self-confidence. This lesson will focus on:

1. Public Leadership as Influence
2. Global Leadership as Influence
3. How Influence Works in Daily Life
4. How Everyone Can Influence the World

## 1. Public Leadership as Influence

Public speakers have the opportunity to influence others; they can use their knowledge of persuasion to motivate others to take collective action to achieve desired goals. There is a strong correlation between **leadership** and communication skills.

Leadership has been described as "a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task." Public speaking skills can be used to influence multiple people simultaneously, such as in a meeting or when addressing a large group.

Speaking skills can help when setting and agreeing to a motivating vision or future for a group or organization to ensure unity of purpose; creating positive peer pressure towards shared, high performance standards and an atmosphere of trust and team spirit; and driving successful collective action and results.

### IN CONTEXT

Martin Luther King, Jr., Winston Churchill, and Nelson Mandela are notable examples of effective **orators** who used oratory to have a significant impact on society. The influence of the great leaders may have been initially limited to moving an audience in person with written copies of their speeches distributed. With the invention of radio and television, listeners who could not attend in person were still influenced by the words of the speaker.

**Leadership**

A process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.

**Orator**

A skilled and eloquent public speaker.

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## 2. Global Leadership as Influence

Today, the reach of technology is pervasive and global. In the past, influencing others involved speaking directly to an audience face-to-face or having expensive equipment for broadcasting.

Today, modern communication technology coupled with the internet means that speakers can share messages and thoughts with audiences anywhere in the world for the cost of an internet connection and a camera, or simply a smart phone recorder.

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## 3. How Influence Works in Daily Life

Public speaking skills are not reserved for global leaders; anyone can use the same skills in his or her daily life to speak with confidence. Aristotle defined rhetoric as the "faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever."

**IN CONTEXT**

For example, imagine someone who wants to persuade his or her parents for money. Chances are that this person will work through strategies for persuading them why he or she needs the money and why the parents should provide it. He or she will reflect on what has and has not worked in the past, including previous successful and unsuccessful strategies. From this analysis, he or she constructs a message that fits the occasion and audience.

Now, imagine that the same person wants to persuade his or her roommate to go out to get Mexican food for dinner. He or she is not going to use the same message or approach that he or she used with the parents. The same logic exists in public speaking situations. Aristotle highlighted the importance of finding the appropriate message and strategy for the audience and occasion in order to persuade.

By training in public speaking and actually speaking in front of an audience, one develops a sense of self-confidence. Public speakers learn to overcome the fear of failure and lack of confidence in order to deliver a message to an audience. They learn to think about ideas, evaluate their truthfulness, and then organize them into a message to share with others.

The flip side of public speaking is listening; people can learn how to influence by learning how to listen.

Trained speakers know how to recognize sound logic, reasoning, and ethical appeals. A critical listener is less likely to be persuaded by unsound logic and fallacies or to take action that is not in his or her best interest.

## 4. How Everyone Can Influence the World

The world is still full of injustice, ranging from major issues such as poverty to minor issues such as people who cut in line.

Every prospective speaker should ask:

- Is there a particular cause that has personal significance for me?
- If I could change something about the world, what would I choose?
- If studying the art of public speaking will give me the tools to influence the world around me, how will I use them?



### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that there is a strong correlation between communication skills and **influential leadership**. Speakers can use knowledge of persuasion to motivate others to take collective action to achieve desired goals. Modern communication technology allows speakers to share their message and **influence audiences globally**, for the cost of an internet connection and

camera phone. Experienced speakers can use their skills to **accomplish simple goals in daily life** with new self-confidence. Trained speakers should ask, "**How will I use my skills to influence the world around me?**" and other relevant questions.

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## TERMS TO KNOW

### **Leadership**

A process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.

### **Orator**

A skilled and eloquent public speaker.