

Group Membership

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WHAT'S COVERED

1. Primary and Secondary Group Membership
 - a. Primary
 - b. Secondary
2. Tips for the Speaker

1. Primary and Secondary Group Membership

The members of your audience may be from different groups or they may all be part of the same group. Group membership describes an association with two or more people.

In general, one can look at two types of groups:

- Primary
- Secondary

1a. Primary

Primary group membership shapes the attitudes, values, and beliefs of its members; the members are likely to reflect or express those when listening to a speaker.

Audience members who are part of a primary group that is more long lasting will share experiences with the other group members who shape their beliefs, attitudes, and world views.

Also, one may have to agree to a set of norms or values which are shared by all members in order to become a member of a group. Some group memberships involved selection by other group members and initiation into the group.



TERM TO KNOW

Primary Group

A small social group whose members share personal and lasting relationships. The family is the most important primary group.

1b. Secondary

Secondary groups, in contrast to primary groups, are large groups involving formal and institutional relationships. Secondary relationships involve weak emotional ties and little personal knowledge of one another.

Most secondary groups are short term, beginning and ending without particular significance. They may last for years or may disband after a short time. The formation of primary groups happens within secondary groups.

Primary groups can be present in secondary settings.

➦ **EXAMPLE** When you are attending a university you are part of a secondary group at a student activity; while at the university you may form friendships or relationships that will last a lifetime, which would be a primary group.



Generally speaking, the longer and more actively one is involved with a group the more likely the member is to share ideas and profess beliefs shared by other group members.

➦ **EXAMPLE** Members of a college club may share only an interest in a particular sport or activity, whereas members of a fraternity or sorority may be more involved by living together like a family and professing similar attitudes and beliefs.



TERM TO KNOW

Secondary Group

A large group involving formal and institutional relationships. Secondary relationships involve weak emotional ties and little personal knowledge of one another.

2. Tips for the Speaker

Foreknowledge of the audience's affiliations and the associated values, beliefs, and attitudes will help the

speaker prepare the message.

You may be speaking to members who are all part of the same group, such as an on-campus sobriety or DeMolay; the members of the two groups will have different shared background experiences and beliefs based on their membership in that group.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that an important **tip for speakers** is to gain foreknowledge of the audience's affiliations and the associated values, beliefs, and attitudes. This will help speakers prepare their message. Group members can classify their membership in two categories: **primary** (family or fraternal organizations) and **secondary** (clubs, associations, or colleges). Generally speaking, the longer and more actively one is involved with a group, the more likely the member is to share ideas and profess beliefs shared by other group members.

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TERMS TO KNOW

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