

Persuasive Speeches on Questions of Policy

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about a specific type of persuasive speech. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Questions of Policy
2. Problem-Solution
3. Problem-Solution with Cause
4. Comparative Advantages of Solutions
5. Monroe's Motivated Sequence

1. Questions of Policy

One focus of persuasive speaking is questions of **policy**, which advocates a change from the **status quo**, or the way things are today. There is a "should," or at least an implied "should," in the thesis statement. The speaker wants the plan proposed by the speech to become policy.

Questions of policy contrast with questions of fact, which state that something is, exists or does not exist, and questions of value, which state that something is good, bad, beautiful, or perhaps worthwhile.

The following sections describe some different ways to organize persuasive speeches around questions of policy.



TERMS TO KNOW

Policy

A principle of behavior, conduct, etc., thought to be desirable or necessary, especially as formally expressed by a government or other authoritative body.

Status Quo

The state of things; the way things are, as opposed to the way they could be.

2. Problem-Solution

One way to organize a persuasive speech on a question of policy focuses on defining a problem and a solution by covering three basic points:

1. The need: Convince the audience that there is a problem that must be addressed or a need for change. It is essential to get the audience to believe that a problem exists so they will implement a plan for a solution.
2. The Plan: Convince the audience that it is not good enough to just sit around and complain. Tell them what actions they must take. Be sure to address any aspects of the solution that might make the audience less willing to act.
3. The Practicality: Show the audience that the plan can succeed. Address the implications, cite expert testimony, and reference the successful implementation of similar plans in other places.

3. Problem-Solution with Cause

Consideration of the causes. Discussing the causes of the problem directs attention to specific points that the solution must address.

The basic points of this organization are:

1. The problem: Describe the nature and extent of the problem. Specifically, describe that the problem exists and how important or big the problem is.
2. The causes: Consider the direct relationship between the problem and its causes. Think about the problem as an "effect," and consider the causes that produced the effect. Show a direct relationship between the problem and causes, not just a correlation where one thing occurred before, after, or at the same time as another.
3. The solution: Use the causes as criteria to evaluate the solutions. If the speech says that the problem was caused by x, y and z, then the solution or new policy needs to address x, y, and z in order to solve the problem.

4. Comparative Advantages of Solutions

When the audience is already aware of and accepts that there is a problem, the speech can focus primarily on comparing the advantages of one solution over another, as follows:

1. Summarize the problem briefly: Do not focus on convincing the audience to believe that there is a problem that needs to be solved.
 2. Compare different solutions: Discuss different solutions, and find the one that solves the most aspects of the problem. Compare one solution with others to select and propose the best to the audience.
 3. Final appeal: Ask the audience to accept and implement that solution as the policy.
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5. Monroe's Motivated Sequence

Another powerful method of structuring a persuasive message is by using a motivated sequence.

The organizational plan developed by Alan Monroe focuses on developing a psychological need in the audience and then illustrating how to satisfy that need by supporting the plan or policy advocated in the speech, as follows:

1. Attention: Get the audience's attention using a detailed story, shocking example, dramatic statistic, or quotations.
2. Need: Show how the topic applies to the psychological need of the audience members. The premise is that action is motivated by audience needs. Go beyond establishing that there is a significant problem; show that the need will not go away by itself. Convince the audience members that they each have a personal need to take action.
3. Satisfaction: Solve the issue. Provide specific and viable solutions that the government or community can implement.
4. Visualization: Tell the audience what will happen if the solution is or is not implemented. Be visual and detailed. Paint a picture for the audience of what they will experience and what the world will look like when the need is satisfied through the speech's plan.
5. Action: Tell the audience members what specific action they can take to solve the problem and change existing policy.

The advantage of **Monroe's motivated sequence** is that it emphasizes what the audience can do. Too often, the audience feels like a situation is hopeless; Monroe's motivated sequence emphasizes the actions the audience can take.



TERM TO KNOW

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

A method of persuasion developed by Alan H. Monroe, based on establishing a psychological need for action in the audience and demonstrating how to satisfy the need by taking action.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that there are four basic organizational patterns for speeches on **questions of policy**: **problem-solution**, **problem-solution with cause**, **comparative advantage of solutions**, and **Monroe's motivated sequence**. Problem-solution considers the need (or the problem to be solved), the plan (or the solution to the problem), and the practicality (how well the solution will work). Problem-solution with causes considers the nature and extent of the problem and the direct relationship between the problem and its causes, and uses the causes as criteria to evaluate potential solutions. Comparative advantages of solutions summarizes the problem briefly, compare different solutions to find the one that solves the most aspects of the problem, and ask the audience to accept and implement the most advantageous solution. Monroe's motivated sequence is attention, need,

satisfaction, visualization, and action.

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