

# Defend Your Ideas

**A**N EFFECTIVE PERSUASIVE SPEECH establishes a fact, changes a belief, and moves an audience to act. In addition, a persuasive speech poses an argument as a solution to a problem. The audience must be convinced that the problem is important to them before you can convince them to act upon your solution.



## Objectives:



1. Describe guidelines for making a persuasive presentation.
2. Identify different approaches and techniques to defend ideas.

## Key Terms:



aversion	defend	persuade
broken-record technique	discredit	reframe
counter-attack	evidence	substantiate
credibility	inoculation	take-home message

## Persuasive Presentation Guidelines

Colleges and universities include the teaching of “soft skills” to maintain accreditation in applied science programs. Such skills include the ability to establish credibility, to make a persuasive technical design presentation, and to defend ideas. A good persuasive speech must cite facts, examples, and testimony that explain your topic and reinforce your opinions to give your ideas credibility.

## BE CREDIBLE

---

**Credibility** is being trustworthy or believable. Keep in mind that nonverbal communication will add impact to your presentation.

## PERSUADE

---

To **persuade** is to convince others about the credibility and value of an idea. You argue that your ideas are true or false, right or wrong, or better or worse than other alternatives. Your purpose is to move your audience to agree with your ideas and opinions.



**FIGURE 1.** Hands can be very expressive as a form of nonverbal communication.

## DEFEND

---

To **defend** is to preserve ideas, keep others persuaded, and maintain credibility. The need to defend ideas can be minimized by presenting a very persuasive message.

## GUIDELINES TO A PERSUASIVE PRESENTATION

---

You must know the material being presented, know what to say, and know what to do. To be certain your proposal is understood, you need to know the audience and what they are thinking, what they need to hear, and what “hot buttons” to avoid. Explain how your solution logically solves the problem or issue. Supply examples of places or situations where this proposal or belief has been proven correct. Then you can forestall opposition by showing how your proposal negates objections that might be raised.

The presentation must be concise, simple, and honest with a clear take-home message. The **take-home message** is a condensed explanation of an idea that sticks in people’s minds and will be remembered weeks later. It is critical that you make an impact in the first 30 seconds and the last 15 seconds of your presentation. These are the ideal times to emphasize your take-home message. You must incite the audience to action, not merely inform them of an issue. To appeal to their emotions, show enthusiasm and passion about your topic. You want your audience to become part of the solution and to walk away remembering your call to action.



## ON THE JOB...

### CAREER CONNECTION: Persuasive Speaking

Most people fear public speaking. Yet public speaking skills are needed in your professional and personal life. Delivery and content are the important ingredients for an effective persuasive presentation. However, every speech needs to be well written and interesting. Pick a controversial topic. You may choose a current event from local or world news. If there is an election, endorse a candidate or a ballot referendum. Pick an issue on which you can influence people's opinions. Be cautious with issues that audience members might find offensive (e.g., racist, religious, and anti-homosexuality topics).

Begin your preparation by writing a complete speech outline to help you organize your speech. Prepare visual aids to help convey the ideas. They must be easy to see and must look professional. Use sources to increase your credibility. When you cite a source, be sure to tell the audience the source and why it is trustworthy.

Delivery is how you use your voice and body to present your speech. Remember to speak loudly and slowly. Do not read your speech word for word because it prevents you from developing a good rapport with your audience.

## Techniques to Defend Ideas

How can you defend an idea? When your ideas are attacked during a presentation, you can choose to avert the attack, counter-attack, or further substantiate your ideas.

### AVERSION

**Aversion** is the act of defending an idea by deflecting or sidestepping an attack. This approach preserves your ideas by deflecting the target to avoid a direct hit by the attacker. You can reframe. To **reframe** is to present an attack from a different point of view.

### COUNTER-ATTACK

A **counter-attack** is the act of defending your ideas by attacking the credibility of an attacker. Counter-attack techniques attempt to analyze and show the weaknesses in the attacker's counterargument. This approach creates a direct confrontation with the attacking member of the audience.

### SUBSTANTIATE

To **substantiate** is to dispel an attack by arguing that your idea is based on logical proof and evidence. **Evidence** is information or data that is helpful in forming a conclusion. This

approach requires being well prepared for the presentation by knowing the elements, logic, and rationale of your message and explaining how these support your ideas. Substantiating requires you to understand possible objections that critics might make, while providing evidence that dispels criticism and destroys the credibility of the attacker's counterargument. Substantiating techniques are contingent on knowing the material. You must know and refer to the relevant, established, and supportive research base of your ideas. You should connect the ideas to examples with evidence and proof.

## **AVERSION TECHNIQUES**

---

Aversion techniques are methods for avoiding a direct confrontation or attack. You should isolate the simplest, most powerful elements in your design, focusing on the take-home message. Then use the broken-record communication approach in the face of counterarguments. The **broken-record technique** is the act of repeating the same simple and powerful elements of one's presentation in response to any counterargument. Getting sidetracked on tangential arguments can discredit your entire presentation. Therefore, you should enforce the take-home message by repeating it in several ways.

### **Preempt Technique**

In the preempt technique, you use interaction with the audience members in weeks prior to your presentation to test their feelings and general thoughts about your main ideas. Their feedback enables you to tailor your presentation to fit their predispositions.

### **Inoculation**

**Inoculation** is the presentation of a counterargument within your message that refutes potential counterarguments. Audience members thus perceive that counterarguments are not valid.

### **Reframe**

"Reframing" the attack can be a method to deflect it. Reframing avoids direct confrontation and can promote interaction rather than attack. The reframe technique restates any attacking statement in terms that make it seem irrelevant to the main point of the presentation. In using this technique, you should make the attack appear that it is inputting "apples" when the presentation is about "oranges."

You can reframe the attack statement as an offer to discuss a controversial topic with an audience member after the presentation. This helps make it clear that addressing the attack during the presentation will not be productive for the audience.

## COUNTER-ATTACK TECHNIQUES

Counter-attack techniques are methods for discrediting the attacker's point of criticism to preserve your ideas. To **discredit** is to nullify any belief the audience might have found in the attacker's counterargument. This approach creates a direct confrontation with the attacking member of the audience.

You can keep the attacker on the defensive by asking questions and by pointing out weaknesses in the attacker's ideas. Also, speak about the credibility of yourself and those with whom you have collaborated. In addition, question the information source quoted by the attacker. Your goal is to show that the attacker is not knowledgeable enough to substantiate his or her claims.

## VISUAL AIDS

You should prepare simple and effective visual aids that show evidence that supports your ideas. You have learned that a picture is worth a thousand words. Visual aids must be uncomplicated so the audience can comprehend all of the information in 30 seconds or less.

## CONCLUSION

Your conclusion must condense your ideas in a few words. Restate your main idea and the supporting information. Also, emphasize the action or attitude you want to persuade the audience to remember and enact. Then restate your take-home message.



FIGURE 2. Visual aids should never be complicated.

## Summary:



In your persuasive presentation, you will propose a solution to a problem. A good persuasive speech cites facts, examples, and testimony that explain your topic and reinforce your opinions to give your ideas credibility. You argue that your ideas are true or false, right or wrong, or better or worse than other alternatives. Your persuasive argument needs to evoke an emotional response from the audience.

You may need to defend your position using methods of aversion, counter-attack, and further substantiating your ideas. A method of defense may be to reframe. Another method of defense is to counter-attack. A technique to dispel any attack is to substantiate your information by arguing that your idea is based on logical proof

and evidence. Just remember it is critical that you make an impact in the first 30 seconds and the last 15 seconds of your presentation. These are the ideal times to emphasize your take-home message. In addition, your conclusion will be a call to action.

### Checking Your Knowledge:

---



1. Beginning with your introduction, what are four other elements needed to make an effective persuasive presentation?
2. How can you establish credibility with your audience?
3. What is the best way you can forestall opposition to your argument?
4. Explain the negative and positive approaches you can use to visualize your message.
5. What are the two most powerful times in your presentation that you can enforce your take-home message?

### Expanding Your Knowledge:

---



Prepare a persuasive presentation using an idea or cause you can defend with emotion and passion. Research your background information to establish your credibility, and direct your comments to motivate your audience to remember and enact your idea. Be prepared to defend your argument and substantiate your point of view.

Along with other students, present persuasive speeches to share ideas and arguments about controversial issues.

### Web Links:

---



#### Persuasive Speeches

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/how-to-write-a-persuasive-speech.html>

#### Persuasive Speech Topics

<http://www.persuasive-speechesnow.com/persuasive-speech-TOPICS.html>

#### Persuasive Speaking

<http://www.speechoutline.com/admit-a-negative-point-for-persuasive-communication/>