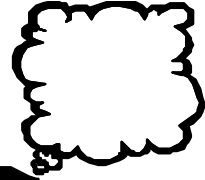




**Language Arts Lesson 8**  
**Speaking Applications (Grades 4-6)**

**Instruction 8-4**  
**Persuasive Presentations**

A Persuasive Presentation, unlike other presentations, tries to get the audience to do something. So it's kind of like a TV commercial. A TV commercial tries to get you to buy something. A Persuasive Presentation does too. It tries to get you to buy an idea, a position, a plan of action or a point of view.



A good Persuasive Presentation can change people's attitudes. Or reinforce attitudes they already hold. It can motivate them to act. A political campaign speech or a job interview is a Persuasive Presentation.



A Persuasive Presentation can be a powerful tool. But you have to prepare it carefully.



### **Writing Your Presentation**

When you pick a topic for a Persuasive Presentation, select an issue with two or more sides to it. You are going to present the most convincing arguments for your side, of course. But if there's no disagreement, there's no need to persuade anybody of anything.

Once you've selected your topic, develop your thesis statement -- the clearest possible statement of the position you intend to argue. Here is an example of a good thesis statement:

As the world's greatest superpower, the United States has the right to act as the world's policeman.

Obviously, many people disagree with this -- which is what makes it a good thesis statement.

Next, do research. Gather the evidence you need to support your position -- from books, magazines, personal experience, etc. Then write your presentation. For general guidelines, refer to the Instruction on writing Informative Presentations (Instruction 8-2). The format should be much the same: Introduction, Body and Conclusion. But in a Persuasive Presentation, you should always end with a "call to action." A "call to action" means telling the audience what you want it to do. Here are some examples:



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Vote for Maria Santana for Class President.

Support Senate Bill 46077 -- write Senator Inoue today.

Don't let them feed us that greasy, unhealthy slop -- boycott the school cafeteria.

Don't let them close the Downtown Library -- write to Mayor Bloomberg today.

Support the farm workers -- don't buy California grapes.



As you develop the arguments for your position, ask yourself these questions:

Is there strong, credible evidence for my case?

Does the evidence support my thesis statement?

What attitudes or beliefs do my audience and I share?  
How can I use these beliefs to further my argument?

In order to persuade your audience, you must convince them that you know what you are talking about. So tone is very important. You must appear objective, even-handed and rational. Don't go overboard trying to convince your audience -- let the evidence do it for you.



### **Delivering Your Persuasive Presentation**

The tips we gave on delivering a Narrative Presentation will be helpful here. But since you are trying to get the audience to do something, you must strive for the utmost enthusiasm, sincerity and credibility.

As you know, there are four different speaking styles. One of them is definitely best when you are making a Persuasive Presentation. But we thought we ought to review them all here:

**Impromptu** -- a spontaneous and unrehearsed speaking style. This allows for an informal, natural feel and good eye contact with the audience. But it makes it difficult to present the detailed evidence you need for an effective Persuasive Presentation.



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**Manuscript** -- in this approach, the speech is written out completely and read word-for-word to the audience. This limits eye contact but allows for an exact recital of facts and figures. However, since many people write in long complex sentences, the speech may sound boring and put the audience to sleep.

**Memorized** -- in this style, the speech is written out completely and memorized. This allows for more eye contact with the audience but can be difficult to pull off. If you forget even one part of your speech it can throw off your entire argument.

**Extemporaneous** -- in this style, you speak from prepared notes in a conversational manner. This is by far the best choice for a Persuasive Presentation, since it allows you to prepare carefully and still interact with the audience. You can include graphs and other visual aids. And you can read from your notes when you need to present a statistic or quote with absolute accuracy.

Here are the steps involved in preparing an extemporaneous presentation.

1. Write out the entire presentation.
2. If you didn't start out by making a full outline, do it now.
3. Reduce your outline to a series of key words or phrases. Put them on index cards. These are the notes you will be speaking from.
4. Put any quotes or statistics on individual cards so that you can read them accurately.
5. Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse, rehearse, rehearse! It takes a lot of hard work to sound extemporaneous and natural.

Good Luck.

