

Unit 6 Giving Persuasive Presentations

In this unit, you will be looking at the following:

- Strategies used in persuading
- Examples of persuasive presentations
- Persuading versus informing
- Giving reasons and building arguments



The video excerpts for this unit can be found at www.garneteducation.com/passport-video

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1 Strategies used in persuading

- 1.1** When was the last time that you persuaded someone to do something? Were you successful? Why/why not? Think about the role of language in the success or failure. Prepare to share your ideas with the rest of the class.
- 1.2** Work with a partner. You are going to role-play a situation where you try to persuade your partner to do something. Read the instructions below to prepare for a discussion with your partner. Make use of your conclusions from the discussion in Exercise 1.1 in your preparation.

Student A: Read the information in the report on page 58 and use it to help you prepare the opening for a persuasive presentation. Your goal is to persuade people not to waste water. Try out your presentation with your partner.

Student B: Read the report on page 58. Based on the information in this report, build an argument in favour of raising the current taxes on water. Try to persuade the person sitting next to you.

- 1.3** Think about the activity you have just completed. What strategy was your partner using to try and persuade you to do what he/she wanted? Was it effective? Why/why not? If not, what might have worked better?



- 1.4** Read the statements on the next page and mark on a scale of 1 to 5 how important you think they are. Prepare to explain the reasons for your choices.

- 1 = not important at all
- 2 = might be important sometimes
- 3 = important
- 4 = very important
- 5 = extremely important

	1	2	3	4	5
Before giving a persuasive presentation, you must be very clear what your objectives are. You should have specific goals.					
Before giving a persuasive presentation, you must think hard about your audience. You should decide what they probably already know and anticipate any barriers they might have.					
In a persuasive presentation, you should especially work on motivating your audience and arousing their interest.					
In a persuasive presentation, you must use a professional package such as PowerPoint.					
In a persuasive presentation, you must dress in formal clothes.					
In a persuasive presentation, you should argue your case by appealing to the audience's emotions.					
In a persuasive presentation, you should argue your case by using facts.					
In a persuasive presentation, you should keep to your position and not modify your ideas.					


2 Examples of persuasive presentations


2.1 Below are four typical situations when you might be asked to give a persuasive presentation. Can you add any other examples? For instance, when might you have to give a persuasive presentation in your own academic subject area?

- a) IT: Students have been asked to compare three different programs and decide which one they think is the best for a particular application.
- b) Law: Students have been asked to argue a case.
- c) Business: Students have been asked to present their ideas for a marketing plan.
- d) Architecture: Students have been asked to defend various types of building design and propose which one they think is the most effective.

3 Persuading versus informing

We looked at the general structure of oral presentations in Unit 1. However, there are some important differences between informative presentations and persuasive presentations.

- 3.1**  **31** You are going to hear two openings for a presentation about the same general topic. Make a note of any differences that you notice. Which opening is the most persuasive? Why?

- 3.2**  **32** Now listen to the conclusions of the presentations from Exercise 3.1. Once again, make a note of any differences that you notice.

- 3.3** Compare your ideas with the ones in the table on the next page.

Informative presentations

General introduction

The speaker introduces him/herself.

The overview

The speaker tells the audience what the topic of the presentation will be. The main focus is on sharing information.

'In my presentation today, I'm going to talk about cycling to the campus rather than coming by car.'

The body

The speaker talks about the presentation topic in detail. The content is neutral, with a focus on sharing information.

The conclusion

The speaker lets the audience know that he/she is about to finish.

'That brings us to the end of my presentation today. Thank you very much for listening. If anyone has any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.'

The chance for discussion

The speaker gives the audience the opportunity to ask questions.

Persuasive presentations

General introduction

The speaker introduces him/herself.

The overview

The speaker tells the audience what the topic of the presentation will be. The main focus is on achieving a particular objective.

'In my presentation today, I'm going to focus on why I strongly believe that more people should be cycling to the campus rather than coming by car.'

The body

The speaker talks about the presentation topic in detail. The content is strategic, with a focus on giving reasons and building arguments (see Exercise 4).

The conclusion

The speaker lets the audience know that he/she is about to finish. The speaker reminds the audience of his/her main objective.

'That brings us to the end of my presentation today. As I'm sure you'll now agree, travelling to the campus by bicycle can offer you a number of distinct advantages, not only in terms of helping the environment, but also in terms of saving you money and raising the level of your personal safety. Thank you very much for listening. If anyone has any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.'

The chance for discussion


The speaker gives the audience the opportunity to ask questions.


3.4 Prepare a persuasive presentation opening and conclusion on one of the topics below:

- a) being a vegetarian
- b) exercising regularly
- c) extending the university library opening hours
- d) using Macintosh computers instead of PCs
- e) free topic (you choose)

4 Giving reasons and building arguments

In order to persuade people, in the body of your presentation you must be able to state your opinions and then support them by giving reasons and building convincing arguments.

4.1  **33** Listen to an excerpt from a presentation in which the speaker tries to persuade the audience that British policemen shouldn't carry guns. What specific reasons does the speaker put forward to support this opinion?

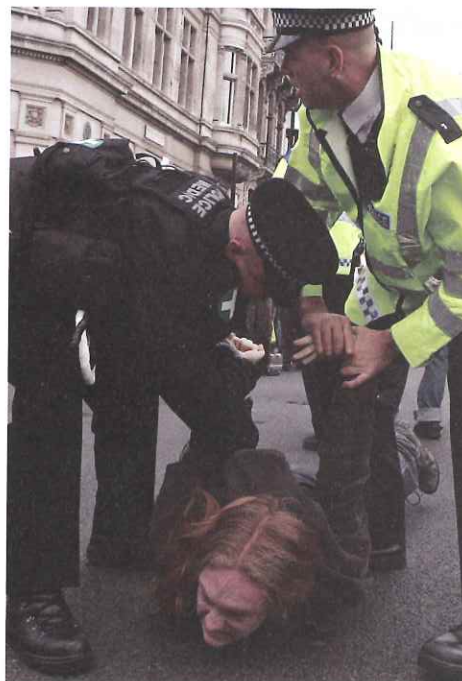
4.2  **33** The presenter uses two particular techniques to help him build his arguments. These are listed below. Listen to the presentation excerpt again and try to make a note of the language he uses in each technique.

Technique A:

Making a statement and then listing the supporting points in a sequence.

Technique B:

Introducing a typical opposing argument, but then giving an answer to it or explaining why it is not a valid argument.



4.3

Choose one of the topics *b–f* below. Give your opinion and prepare a persuasive argument using techniques A and B. An example has been done to help you. You can also look at the examples in Language focus 12 below.

a) **Example topic:**

Smoking on campus

Example argument:

I strongly believe that smoking on campus should only be allowed in clearly marked areas. Aside from the fact that smokers are potentially damaging the health of the people around them, there's also the issue of fire safety. The fire alarms went off five times last month, and in each case, it was thought to be due to careless smokers.

But maybe some of you are thinking, what about individual rights? Well, I'm not suggesting that people shouldn't have the right to smoke; obviously, they should. All I'm saying is that they should smoke in an area that doesn't affect other people.

- b) 24-hour licensing laws
- c) Internet censorship
- d) gun ownership
- e) animal experimentation
- f) free topic (you choose)



Language focus 12

Techniques for building arguments

Listing supporting points in sequential order

- a Aside from the fact that ..., there's also the issue of ...
- b For one thing, ...; for another ...
- c First of all ...; second ...; third ...
- d On the one hand ...; on the other ...

Introducing a typical opposing argument

- e But maybe some of you are thinking, what about ...?
- f Of course, the usual response is ...
- g Some people would say ...

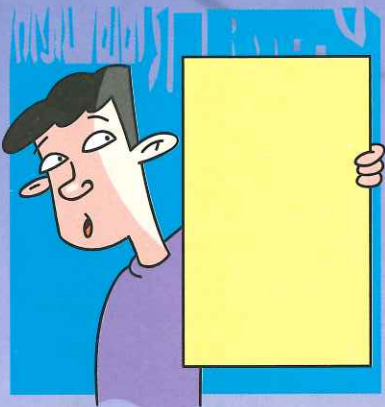
Refuting an opposing argument with a counterargument

- h But I'm not suggesting ... All I'm saying is ...
- i Actually, all the evidence shows ...
- j In fact, the opposite is true. In my experience ...

- 4.4** Prepare a 15- to 20-minute persuasive presentation on a topic of your own choosing. Make sure that you structure your information appropriately and that you use some of the language and techniques covered in this unit.

Oral presentation top tip 6

Speaking from note cards



If you are worried about forgetting your presentation content, one thing you can do is to make yourself a set of note cards. Note cards can be very helpful for public speakers, because they can serve as a reminder of the presentation structure and help to keep it on track. This is especially true for speakers not using presentation slides such as PowerPoint.

As well as the presentation content, note cards can also include reminders about the delivery, e.g., when to ask for questions; when to pause; when to tell a joke. Two example note cards are shown below.

1 Introduction

How many of you here regularly eat junk food?

[Ask for a show of hands]

5 Conclusion

More fruit and vegetables is better for your health.

[Ask for questions]

Some dos and don'ts of using note cards

✓😊 **Do** keep the writing on your note cards to an absolute minimum. The cards should only be a reminder of what you want to talk about next.

✓😊 **Do** use only one side of each note card.

✓😊 **Do** make sure that you write on your cards clearly. If your handwriting is really bad, print or type. It is also a good idea to use colour coding for the different parts.

✓😊 **Do** make sure that your cards

are in the right order and number them carefully. It can be helpful to punch a hole in the top corner of your note cards and thread them onto a key ring. That way, if you accidentally drop your cards, at least you'll be able to find your place again easily.

✗😞 **Don't** just talk to your cards. Remember that to keep the audience's attention, you must make frequent eye contact with them.

✗😞 **Don't** try to use too many cards.

Text for Exercise 1.2

Read through the information below and use it to help you prepare the opening for a persuasive presentation. Your goal is to persuade people not to waste water.

Averting a water crisis

If current trends in water policy and investment hold or worsen, we will soon face threats to the global food supply, further environmental damage and ongoing health risks for the hundreds of millions of people lacking access to clean water. These findings come from *Global Water Outlook to 2025: Averting an Impending Crisis*, a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) released on World Food Day. Using sophisticated computer modelling, the report projects that by 2025, water scarcity will cause annual global losses of 350 million metric tons of food production – slightly more than the entire current US grain crop.

'Unless we change policies and priorities, in 20 years there won't be enough water for cities, households, the environment or growing food,' cautioned Dr Mark Rosegrant, lead author of the report and senior research fellow at IFPRI. 'Water is not like oil. There is no substitute. If we continue to take it for granted, much of the earth is going to run short of water or food – or both.'

Due in part to rapid population growth and urbanization in developing countries, water use for households, industry and agriculture will increase by at least 50 per cent in the next 20 years. Increased competition for water will severely limit the availability of water for irrigation, which in turn will seriously constrain the world's production of food.

Declines in food supply could cause prices to skyrocket, and higher prices will lead to significant increases in malnutrition, since many poor people in developing countries already spend more than half their income on food.

'For hundreds of millions of poor farmers in developing countries, a lack of access to water for growing food is the most important constraint they face,' said Frank Rijsberman,

director general of IWMI. 'If countries continue to underinvest in building strong institutions and policies to support water governance and approaches to give better access to water to poor communities, growth rates for crop yields will fall worldwide in the next 25 years, primarily because of water scarcity.'

According to the report, it would take only a moderate worsening in global water policy to bring about a genuine water crisis. If governments continue to cut spending on crop research, technology and infrastructure, while failing to implement institutional and management reforms, global grain production will drop by ten per cent over business-as-usual levels, equivalent to losing the entire annual grain crop of India.

Fundamental changes in water policies and investment priorities could achieve substantial benefits and sustainable use of water. For example, the report recommends pricing water to reflect its cost and value.

'Although water subsidies are commonplace in developing countries, they tend to benefit relatively wealthy people,' explained Dr Peter Hazell, director of Environment and Production Technology at IFPRI. 'Making affluent people pay for water would encourage them to conserve. It would also free up financial resources to provide clean, safe water to poor people.'

The report also recommends increased investment in crop research, technological change and rural infrastructure to boost water productivity and growth of crop yields in rain-fed farming, which will account for half the increase in food production between 1995 and 2025.

Source: International Food Policy Research Institute. 2002. *New report projects impending water crisis, solutions to avert it*. Press release, October 16. Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute.

End of Unit Checklist

You have now completed Unit 6. Read through the statements below and make a record of your progress by ticking the most appropriate boxes.

5 = I feel very confident about this.

4 = I feel confident about this.

3 = I feel quite confident about this.

2 = I don't feel very confident about this.

1 = I still don't understand this at all.

For anything that you rate as a 2 or a 1, go back to that part of the unit and look at the material again.

	5	4	3	2	1
I know some different strategies for persuading people.					
I know when I might be required to give a persuasive presentation for my studies/in the workplace.					
I know what the main differences are between informative and persuasive presentations.					
I know how to use two different techniques for giving reasons and building arguments.					
I know some key language for giving reasons and building arguments.					
I know how to use note cards effectively (Dos) and how to avoid some common mistakes (Don'ts).					