



PRESENTATION SKILLS

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THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE

- Who are some speakers you admire?
- Pick three speakers you admire.
- Explain one or more of your choices.
- Which of their speeches and phrases do you find particularly memorable, and why?

YOUR IMPRESSIONS

What are three words that come to mind when you hear the word "rhetoric"?

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- A look at the most successful speeches and pieces of writing in history will show that behind their polished prose, elegant logic, and smooth delivery lies a highly developed craft of composition and a labor of careful revision.

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- Some documents and speeches seem to capture the imagination of a nation or a culture. Their phrases are often repeated, their logic invoked by entire political coalitions or social movements.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S FAMOUS PHRASE


- *“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S VOW AT GETTYSBURG

- *“government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth”*

1980 RONALD REAGAN SPEECH

- *“Make America great again,”*

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- Why were these acts of oratory so powerful?
 - Can we explain what made them so effective?
 - And how can we improve our own writing and speaking so that it will influence the people who read or hear it?

THE ART OF ARGUMENT


- For more than two millennia, thinkers and writers have attempted to answer these questions.
- Their ideas and their concrete suggestions have come to make up what the ancient Greeks called *“ritorikí”*: the study of rhetoric, or what we might call **THE ART OF ARGUMENT**.


THE POWER OF PERSUASION

- rhetoric can be any kind of persuasive writing or speech.
- Its use is not confined to law or politics.
- In fact, in the age of mass media, persuasive messages surround us.
- The study of rhetoric allows us to both make and interpret arguments. Far from meaningless or merely academic, rhetoric has a real effect on people's behavior. Words move us to action. They drive our decisions—from what to buy to whom to elect, to whether or not to go to war.



A SHORT HISTORY OF RHETORIC

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- Persuasive speech is all around us—in newspaper articles, advertisements, fundraising appeals, and more.
 - Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter are now common forums for people to express and defend their opinions.

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- What is it that the author wants you to believe or do?
 - How do you know?
 - What evidence does the author use to support his or her opinion?
 - What type of language does he or she use for emphasis or description?



WHAT WORDS, PHRASES,
AND PASSAGES DO YOU
FIND MOST POWERFUL,
AND WHY?

SUBSTANCE

THE THESIS: PUTTING YOUR IDEA INTO WORDS

- The most important part of your argument is its ***SUBSTANCE***—that is, the idea you are trying to communicate or the point you are trying to prove.
- This can usually be summed up in a **thesis**: the statement of your argument in a single, declarative sentence.

THE MODES OF APPEAL

- **three primary modes of appeal**
- Aristotle called them the “artistic” proofs, because they require art or skill.

LOGOS

- “appeal to reason”
- it uses logical reasoning to convince an audience.
- For example, you might say the following:

Democracy always promotes the best interests of the majority of people in any decision because everyone in the group can advocate for their interests, and decisions are made by majority consensus.

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- This kind of statement is an example of what we call **deductive reasoning**.
 - It makes one or more propositions and then works through their logical implications. We can understand deductive reasoning by putting it in the form of a **sylllogism**, which is a series of statements that make each proposition explicit:


In a democracy, decisions are made by majority consensus.

While a consensus is being worked out, each person will be able to advocate for his or her own interests.

Therefore, decisions in a democracy will reflect the interests of the majority of the people.

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- By contrast, **inductive reasoning** makes probable conclusions from examples or pieces of evidence.

Democracy is good for the overall success of a country; many of the most powerful and prosperous nations in the world are ruled by democratic governments.

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- Such reasoning is always conclusive in proportion to how representative the example is.
 - In this case, our statement would be much more compelling if we could say that all of the most powerful and prosperous nations in the world were democracies.
 - If we only reason from the example of one particular country, or if we reason from many examples but must admit exceptions, then our argument is weaker.

ETHOS

- “ethical appeal”
- based on establishing the credibility of the speaker or writer (to include both, we may speak of the “rhetor”).
- Ethos is often deployed indirectly:

In fifty years of studying the governments of nations on every continent, I have found that the more democratic the government, the happier the people.


- At face value, this is an example of logos: an inductive claim about happiness based on examples from every continent.
- It also, however, serves subtly to remind the audience of the rhetor's expertise.
- A rhetor may establish ethos through actions as simple as using technical terms from a particular field to imply his or her knowledge of it.

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PATHOS

- the appeal to the audience's emotions
- These can be positive emotions, like pride or hope, or negative ones, like fear or hatred.

What is the alternative to democracy? Every man, woman, and child cowering in terror under the brutal rule of another Hitler, another Stalin! Not one home will be safe from the power of the State!

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- These modes of appeal are artistic in the sense that they involve an art that can be learned
 - “non-artistic” means of persuasion, by contrast, include things that do not rely on the skill of the rhetor, like cited sources, statistics, testimony, and proverbial wisdom.
 - Of course, you’ll probably need to mix in a little of the artistic modes in the process of using these, too; you’ll need a little logos in framing and interpreting facts, and maybe a little pathos in how you present moving testimony from a witness.
 - The nature of the thesis will suggest the nature of your composition and the kinds of persuasion it should employ.


IDENTIFYING MODES OF APPEAL

The following excerpt exemplifies multiple artistic modes of appeal. Which mode do you think is the **primary** appeal it relies on? Why?

"What are these threats of which I speak? What is this destruction of beauty—this substitution of man-made ugliness—this trend toward a perilously artificial world? In the few minutes that I have to devote to it, I can only suggest the trend.

"We see it in small ways in our own communities, and in larger ways in the community of the state of the nation. We see it in distressing form in the nation's capital, where I live. There in the heart of the city, we have a small but beautiful woodland area, Rock Creek Park. It is a place where one can go, away from the noise of traffic and of man-made confusions, for a little interval of refreshing and restoring quiet, where one can hear the soft water sounds of a stream on its way to river and sea, where the wind flows through the trees and a veery sings in the green twilight. Now they propose to run a six-lane arterial highway through the heart of that narrow woodland valley, destroying forever its true and immeasurable value to the city and the nation."

—Environmental activist Rachel Carson, ['Exceeding Beauty of the Earth/Speech to the sorority of women journalists, Theta Sigma Phi,'](#) Columbus, Ohio, April 21, 1954.

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- Though the other modes of appeal are also present, the primary mode of appeal in this passage is pathos. It expands a great deal on the inductive example with descriptions of the woodland's beauty in order to evoke sorrow at the tragedy of its loss.

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STRUCTURE


DESIGNING ARGUMENTS

- The old Latin term “*dispositio*,” or “arrangement,” refers to the division of a piece of speech or writing into its components.



Classical rhetoric divided a composition into five parts:

- (1) *exordium*, the introduction;
- (2) *narratio*, the statement of the context or situation;
- (3) *confirmatio*, the presentation of arguments and facts;
- (4) *refutatio*, the presentation and refuting of counterarguments; and
- (5) *peroratio*, the conclusion.

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- Of course, a given composition might have only some of these, and it might have them in any order, but there are some predictable patterns.
 - An essay responding to another piece of writing, for example, might be mostly *refutatio*;
 - a speech that had to give a lot of context for its point might need a lot of *narratio*


IDENTIFYING PARTS OF DISCOURSE


Can you identify what part of discourse the following excerpt comes from?

"I realize that there are still some who may say, 'Well, maybe you were able, Senator, to fake this thing. How can we believe what you say? After all, is there a possibility that maybe you got some sums in cash? Is there a possibility that you may have feathered your own nest?' And so now what I am going to do—and incidentally this is unprecedented in the history of American politics—I am going at this time to give this television and radio audience a complete financial history: everything I've earned, everything I've spent, everything I owe..."

"One other thing I should probably tell you, because if we don't they'll probably be saying this about me too: we did get something, a gift, after the election. A man down in Texas heard Pat on the radio mention the fact that our two youngsters would like to have a dog. And, believe it or not, the day before we left on this campaign trip we got a message from Union Station in Baltimore saying they had a package for us. You know what it was? It was a little cocker spaniel dog . . . black and white spotted. And our little girl—Tricia, the six-year-old—named it Checkers. And you know, the kids, like all kids, love the dog, and I just want to say this right now that regardless of what they say about it, we're gonna keep it."

—Richard Nixon, defending himself against accusations of the improper use of campaign donations in his famous ['Checkers' speech, September 23, 1952.](#)

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- ❖ *Exordium*, or introduction
 - ❖ *Narratio*, or contextual information
 - ❖ *Confirmatio*, or argument
 - ❖ *Refutatio*, or counterargument and refutation
 - ❖ *Peroratio*, or conclusion

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- Here Nixon addresses those who might want more proof that he did not engage in campaign misconduct by giving detailed financial information. In general, key signal phrases like "some may say" will help you to identify *refutatio* in the texts you read.