Applying Evidence in a Persuasive Speech

Audience members believe logic and evidence are important in speeches, but they have difficulty with 1) identifying evidence and intellectual appeals, 2) distinguishing between logical and illogical messages, and 3) determining the difference between high-quality evidence and low-quality evidence.

The following tips will help you highlight evidence and maintain your credibility in persuasive speeches:

Tip 1 – Make it obvious that evidence is being presented

- Evidence forms the foundation for the logical argument and includes factual statements and/or opinions.
- Audience members must be aware and accept that the evidence exists.
- Large amounts of evidence tend to persuade audience members who are not personally involved with the topic.

Tip 2 – Utilize logical-sounding phrases

- These phrases cue audience members to listen for upcoming evidence.
- Examples: “therefore”, “as a result”, “it is only logical that”, “it is possible to conclude.”

Tip 3 – Incorporate up-to-date evidence to support your arguments

- The more recent your information and evidence is, the more useful it will be in supporting your argument.
  - For contemporary topics, a good rule of thumb is to locate the most recent sources.

Tip 4 – Include evidence and oral citations

- Evidence and oral citations increases your perceived credibility.
Briefly cite the source credentials before stating the evidence. ex. “A 2016 New York Times article explains...[evidence].”

“In President Obama’s 2008 election speech, he stated ... [evidence].”

**Tip 5 – Incorporate both narrative and statistical evidence**

- You can support your argument by citing firsthand experiences.
  - If your audience initially disagrees with your argument, personal examples and experiences are considered to be more persuasive.
  - If your audience initially agrees with your argument, statistical evidence is considered to be more persuasive.

- A combination of both personal narratives and statistical evidence will work in any speech