



Methods of Organizing Persuasive Arguments

Statement of Logical Reasons Pattern: straightforward organization in which the second-strongest reason is presented first, strongest last, and others in between. This method is most effective when listeners are apathetic, have no opinion, or are only mildly in favor of or opposed to your topic.

Proposition: I want my audience to vote in favor of the school tax levy on the November ballot.

- I. Income will enable the schools to restore vital programs. (2nd strongest)
- II. Income will enable the schools to give teachers the raises they need to keep up with the cost of living
- III. The actual cost to each member of the community will be very small (strongest)

Summary: When good reasons and evidence to support the proposal are presented, the proposal should be adopted.

Problem Solution Pattern: framework used to clarify the nature of the problem and for illustrating why the given proposal is the best one. Three general reasons are used:

1. There is a problem that requires action
2. The given proposal will solve the problem
3. The given proposal is the best solution because it will provide positive consequences. This pattern works well for a topic that is relatively unfamiliar to an audience.

Proposition: I want my audience to vote in favor of the school tax levy on the November ballot.

- I. The shortage of money is resulting in serious problems for public education. (statement of problem)
- II. The proposed increase is large enough to solve these problems.
- III. For now, a tax levy is the best method of solving the school's problem. (consequences)

Summary: When a problem is presented that is not or cannot be solved with current measures and the proposal can solve the problem practically and beneficially, the proposal should be adopted.

Comparative Advantages Pattern: organizational pattern in which a proposed change is compared to the status quo and demonstrated to be superior. It presents the proposition as one that ought to be adopted solely on the basis of the advantages of that proposition over what is currently being done. This approach works best when the audience agrees that a change is necessary.

Proposition: I want my audience to vote in favor of the school tax levy on the November ballot.

- I. Income from a tax levy will enable schools to raise the standards of their programs. (advantage 1)
- II. Income from a tax levy will enable schools to hire better teachers. (advantage 2)
- III. Income from a tax levy will enable schools to better the educational environment. (advantage 3)

Summary: When reasons are presented that show a proposal is a significant improvement over what is being done, then the proposal should be adopted.

Motivational Pattern: See tip sheet labeled "Monroe's Motivated Sequence."