

Unit 5: Listening, Viewing, Speaking—Communicating Face to Face

Overview

Few things in life give us as much pleasure as speaking of, listening to, and observing the world around us. We soothe a grieving friend with kind words. We hear a song that reminds us of a friend or place. We see pictures and images each day that help us feel the wonder of life. Language and images are mediums of communication. We use them to send and receive messages.



Music can remind us of a friend or place.

For the most part, these messages are used in valid and honest ways. We use messages to inform ourselves or others about important events. We use messages to try to persuade others of important ideas and behavior. For example, some viewers might be moved to stop smoking by images of lung cancer victims. Other times, we can be persuaded by speeches to vote for worthy political candidates.

These messages can also be used in invalid and dishonest ways. All too often, we see ads that make untrue claims about products. Such ads claim that owning a certain car or drinking a particular soft drink will solve all of our problems. We will suddenly find romance, excitement, or a sense of self-worth. Other times, we may hear speeches in which candidates for political office claim they can make us all wealthy. Perhaps these same candidates promise to quickly and easily stop crime on our streets.

Most of us want to make good decisions. Learning how to separate truth from exaggerations and outright lies can help us do this. Being a well-informed voter and wise consumer is not easy. We are daily bombarded with images and words hoping to persuade us to do this, buy that, and vote this way.

In this unit, you will study the propaganda techniques used in advertising and speeches. To fully understand these techniques, you will create your own commercial or advertisement. You will also compose and deliver your own political speech.

Because this is a unit on communicating in a valid and respectful way, you will also learn and practice how to participate in a class discussion. Anyone can take the floor and speak in a discussion. However, a good participant knows how to improve a discussion by being both a good speaker *and* a good listener.

Bandwagon

Bandwagon: being urged to do something just because everyone else is supposedly doing it

Example: An ad in a magazine shows a large group of attractive high school students all wearing Conqueror sweatshirts. Below the picture are the words: “Have you noticed what everyone is wearing these days?”

Analysis: The picture and caption suggest that you should join this large group of good-looking people in wearing this brand of sweatshirt. However—the notion that *everyone else is wearing this brand and so shouldn't you* is not a very good reason for buying and wearing this sweatshirt. There may be better sweatshirt values on the market. In addition, do students really want to let the crowd choose the clothes they will wear?

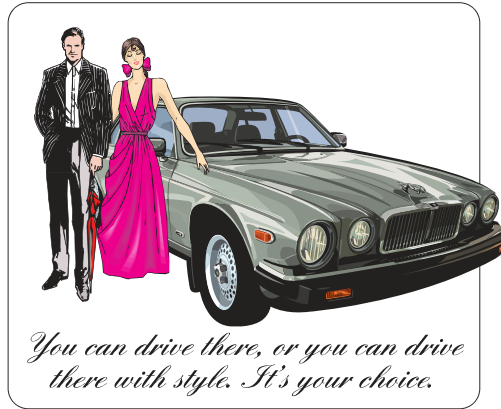


Snob Appeal

Snob Appeal: associating prestige or elitism with a particular product

Example: In a television commercial, a smartly dressed man and woman drive their foreign-made luxury automobile along manicured country roads to an exclusive-looking restaurant, while a voice says: “You can drive there, or you can drive there with style. It’s your choice.”

Analysis: This ad is another example in which consumers are offered high status in exchange for money. It suggests that others will see you as having style if you are seen in this car.



Playing the Numbers

Playing the Numbers: using statistics to make a product or idea attractive

Example: The voice-over in a commercial claims that four out of five dentists recommend the active ingredient in Crown toothpaste.

Analysis: True, dentists do think the active ingredient, fluoride, is important to healthy teeth. However, there are 20 other brands of toothpaste that also contain this active ingredient.



Interpreting Advertisements: Searching for the Truth

Most of the ads we see or hear come at us in brief bursts. They rely on quick images or a brief voice-over which seems to come out of nowhere, and seems to have authority. Effective ads are the ones that are most difficult to analyze. They make us feel rather than think. However, with a few skills, you can learn to read them—to understand how they attempt to work on us. To analyze an ad, apply the following questions:

- What item or behavior is being sold?
(Is it a consumer item such as a car or pair of jeans or mouthwash? Is it a behavior such as voting for a political candidate or joining a religious group?)
- Does the ad attach something to the product being sold?
(Does the ad sell high status with a car? Does it sell romance with a pair of jeans? Does it sell a return to a Great America with a political candidate?)
- What emotion or desire does the ad hope to touch?
(Does the ad aim at our need to be well liked? Does it aim at our desire to have high status? Does it aim at our desire to feel younger or older? Does the ad sell a desire to return to a better or wealthier time?)
- To what audience or age group does the ad speak?
(Does the ad use young adults or senior citizens? Would young adults or middle-aged persons or senior citizens identify with the product? Would young adults or middle-aged persons or senior citizens identify with whatever is attached to the product?)
- What persuasion technique(s) does the ad use?
(Does the ad use a testimonial or the techniques of flag-waving, name-calling, plain folks, etc.?)






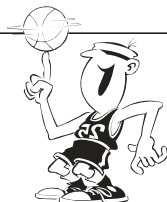


Another persuasive technique is the use of words that we have come to see as positive or negative. For example, if the word *used* makes us think a product is no longer of value, an ad will sell a *used* item as *pre-owned*. The negative of a car having only part of its life left is transformed into a positive—someone else has taken care of all the kinks and bugs in the car!

Certain words we use have taken on associations that affect how we respond to them. *Skinny* describes someone who weighs less than the average person. To be *skinny* suggests that one ought to gain weight. The word *thin* or *slim* has a positive **connotation**, or association. The word *skinny* has a negative *connotation*, or association.

Advertisers or anyone wanting to add a good feeling to their images or language may use positive words. To describe someone who is reluctant to spend his money, you could use the word *frugal* or the word *cheap*. *Frugal*, however, would make him a smart spender, whereas *cheap* would make him appear selfish.

Words that carry strong connotative value can be used to influence people's feelings and thinking about an issue, subject, or consumer product. When we watch or listen to advertisements, we want to recognize when we are being moved by connotative language. Is that car *used* or is that car just *pre-owned*?

Positive Words	Negative Words
 <p>He <i>chatted</i> with me all through the afternoon.</p>	 <p>He <i>jabbered</i> at me all through the afternoon.</p>
<p>He is <i>devoted</i> to his art collection.</p> 	 <p>He is <i>fanatical</i> about his art collection.</p>
<p>He <i>showed</i> me his new basketball shoes.</p> 	<p>He <i>flaunted</i> his new basketball shoes.</p> 

Propaganda: Separating Truth from Exaggeration

A good way to learn to read the propaganda and persuasive reasoning in ads is to produce some yourself. Most ads are based in some truth. However, the advertisers exaggerate that truth to make the product or belief something more than it really is in reality. Below is the process for the creation of an ad for a product called *StudyAid*. (Note: *StudyAid* is not a real product.)

StudyAid

What is it?

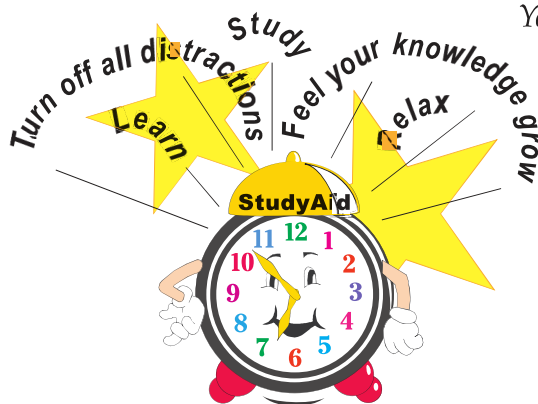
StudyAid is a small talking clock. It is similar to an alarm clock, except that instead of an alarm it speaks.

What does it do?

StudyAid works like an alarm clock. When you begin studying, you push the start button. *StudyAid* then says, in a soothing voice:

Begin your journey to make yourself a successful student. First, turn off all distractions. If you are distracted by the television or music, turn them off. Then, drive your mind as you would a car or a bicycle. Guide it through your study material. Don't push it too hard. As you go, read carefully, write clearly, and think critically. In a short while you'll feel your knowledge grow. Now begin.

In exactly 30 minutes, *StudyAid* will say, in a soothing voice:



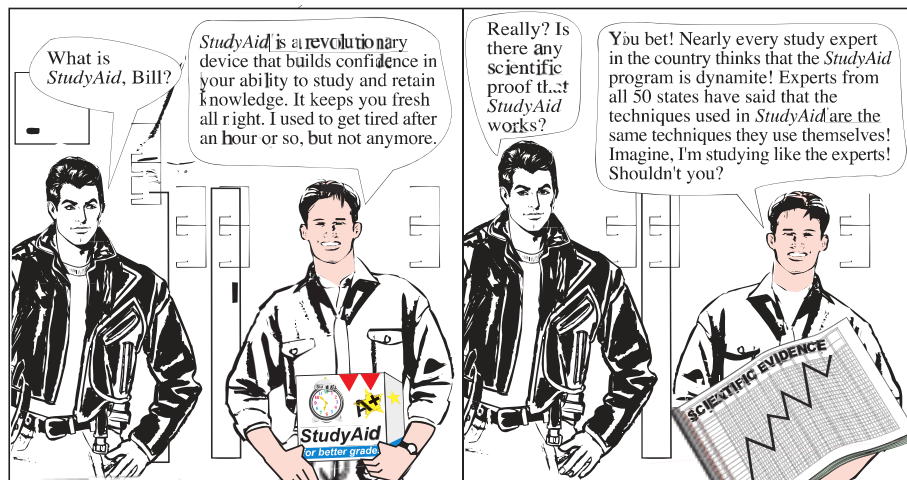
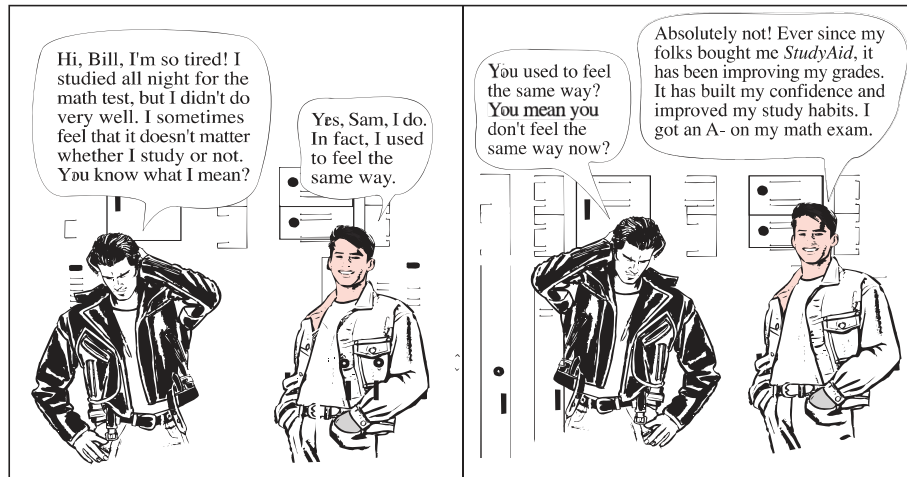
You've studied well. Now take a break and let your mind deeply absorb your new knowledge. Go get a drink or walk around and stretch. In seven minutes, StudyAid will sound a loud but soothing alarm. Return to your study place and begin to study again.

Once you have turned on *StudyAid*, it will continue to alert you every 30 minutes to take a break and then return to your study place and continue. When you are through studying, simply turn the off switch.

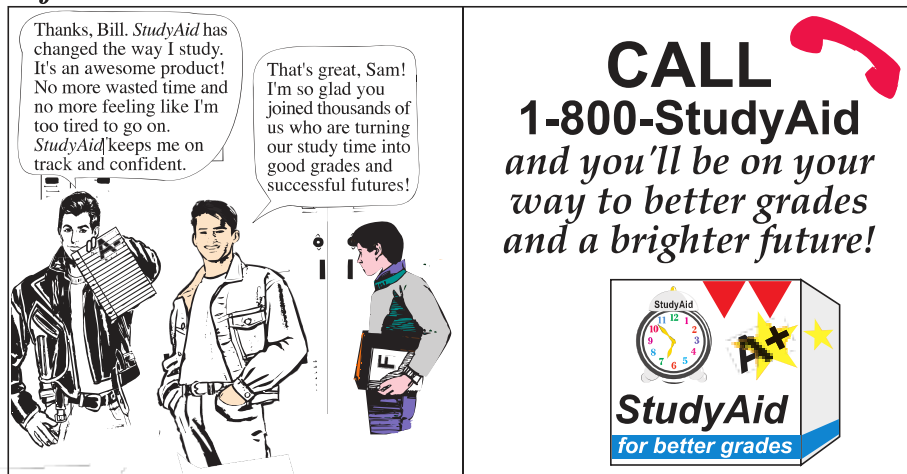
Why does it help?

StudyAid simply takes a few commonly known techniques for studying and turns them into a timing device. Study experts have shown that after studying for about 30 minutes, most high school students begin to lose their concentration. A short break then actually helps students remember what they've studied and helps refresh them to begin studying again.

The following is a representation of a television commercial made for *StudyAid*.



A few weeks later...



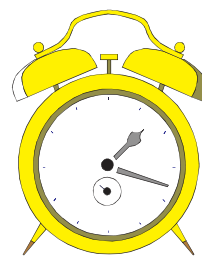
The following is an analysis of the different propaganda techniques used in the above commercial for *StudyAid*:

Testimonials: Bill claims that “nearly every study expert in the country” thinks the *StudyAid* program works. Note, however, that we don’t find out who has decided that these experts really are experts. Are they students who have done well? Are they people who teach study courses? What makes them experts?

Weasel Words and Phrases: Bill says that the experts think the program is “dynamite.” It’s an explosive word, but what is the intended meaning of these experts? Does *dynamite* mean “good” or “great” or...? Similarly, Sam calls *StudyAid* “awesome.” This word is used so often that it has lost its original meaning. We know Sam thinks *StudyAid* is helpful in some way, but exactly how and how much is not conveyed in this feel-good word, *awesome*.

Plain Folks: Note that Bill and Sam are just two typical students. They are plain folks, like you and me.

Card-Stacking: Note that this ad presents a slanted view of *StudyAid*. It may be true that the techniques *StudyAid* urges students to use are helpful; however, these are not new techniques. In addition, these techniques, such as taking a break every 30 minutes, are not a part of the product *StudyAid*. *StudyAid* is just a high-tech alarm clock. Anyone could do what *StudyAid* does simply by setting an alarm clock or just glancing at a clock every now and then. *StudyAid* is a clock that helps you keep track of time. Did the experts say that *StudyAid* is effective or just that the techniques *StudyAid* tells students to use are effective? It also uses an electronic voice to remind you to relax and turn off distractions. However, anyone could remind himself or herself to do these things simply by hanging a sign in one’s study place.



Anyone could do what *StudyAid* does simply by setting an alarm clock.

Loser/Winner: Notice that in the last frame, there is a student who has received an F on his test. This image implies that either you use *StudyAid* and are a winner, like Bill and Sam, or you don’t use *StudyAid* and you are a loser, like the student with the failing grade.

Bandwagon: In the ad for *StudyAid*, Bill says that he is so glad Sam has joined thousands of students who are turning their study time into good grades and successful futures. Bill is suggesting that the rest of us should join everyone else who has jumped on the bandwagon.

Playing the Numbers: In the ad, Bill says that “experts from all 50 states” agree with the techniques used in *StudyAid*. Finding one expert in each state who agrees with these techniques may not be very meaningful. A company which can spend large sums of money could track down someone it considers an “expert” in each state who endorses the techniques used in this product.

As you can see, in this simple and brief ad, at least seven techniques were used to sell a product. All of the techniques were based on some grain of truth. Using a grain of truth is one of the characteristics of many ads. They take grains of truth and try to turn them into mountains.

Selling Your Product: Making the Pitch

Now that you have created a product, it is time to sell that product. Listed below are guidelines for creating a magazine ad, a script for a radio ad, and a television commercial. Select the one you think would be most effective in selling your product. Use the sales pitches you've already created on pages 502-503.

If you create a magazine ad,

- make your ad no larger than 8 ½" x 11"—most magazines are about this size.
- remember that most ads are a single frame. However, if you think a comic-like strip with multiple-frames will make an effective ad for your product, then use that form.
- make sure the images and the captions, if there are any, are sharp enough to be seen clearly.
- do not use a complicated idea. Your classmates must be able to see and understand it quickly and completely.
- create images that are catchy rather than complex. Read the section "Using Effective Visual Aids: Pictures That Speak" on pages 505-506 before creating your magazine ad.



example of a created magazine ad

If you create a script for a radio ad,

- make your sentences short and your language simple. Remember: It may be difficult for a person listening to the radio to follow a complex sentence or to clearly hear uncommon words.
- do not use a complicated idea. Your classmates must be able to see and understand it quickly and completely.
- make your ad run either 30 or 60 seconds.

If you create a script with stage directions for a television commercial,

- make your sentences short and your language simple. Remember: It may be difficult for a person watching television to follow a complex sentence or to clearly hear uncommon words.
- do not use a complicated idea. Your classmates must be able to see and understand it quickly and completely.
- make your commercial run either 30 or 60 seconds.
- use at least one **v**□ □ . Your images should be catchy rather than complex. Read the section “Using Effective Visual Aids: Pictures that Speak” below before creating your television commercial.

Using Effective Visual Aids: Pictures That Speak

A *visual aid* is any material that depends on the sense of sight and is used to enhance a presentation. Visual aids often help to highlight or explain particular pieces of information in a presentation. They also keep the audience viewing and listening.

Your visual aid may be anything from a picture of the product you are trying to advertise, to a chart showing the results of using the product. As you may already know, television is primarily a visual medium. Almost every television commercial relies more on visual images than on words.

- enhance the product, not distract from it
- hold the audience's attention
- be easy to read and understand
- be interesting.

Types of visual aids are objects (including the product), pictures, charts or other illustrations, puppets, computer-generated images, and any other props you can use to enhance the commercial.

Anyone appearing as a character in your commercial can enhance your commercial.

- Have each actor in your commercial wear a costume that fits his or her character.
- Have each actor in your commercial use a voice that fits his or her character.
- Have each actor in your commercial use gestures or other dramatic movements that fit his or her character.

Using Propaganda in Politics: The Honest and Dishonest Political Pitch

Many political speeches are given in good faith. The speaker sincerely believes in a position or in a candidate and hopes to persuade others to think similarly. The speaker may want to persuade us that not lowering taxes is a good way to help pay off the national debt. Or the speaker may want us to hear all the good reasons for electing a national or local candidate for political office. If the speaker uses solid evidence and good reasoning to move his or her listeners, then the speech is an honest and helpful one. These types of speeches help us to make informed decisions.



Many political speeches are given in good faith.

There is nothing wrong with using honest persuasion techniques in a speech (or in an ad). For example, consider the following case. A foreign country, which we'll call *ABC*, has asked for financial aid from the United States. Your research, however, has led you to believe that *ABC* has a fascist government. In a fascist government, the leader and the state have total power; the people have no power. The word *fascist* has a very negative *connotation* to Americans. Using it to describe anything often causes a *negative* association. Hearing the word will most likely help to persuade many of your listeners not to support helping *ABC*. However, in a speech on the issue you use the word because you are sure it is a fair description.

Some political speakers are not so honest. Like advertisers, they use propaganda that is half-true or dishonest. They attempt to appeal to our emotions; they attempt to disable our common sense and our reasoning ability.

A good example of this kind of dishonest speaking occurred during the 1950s. Senator Joe McCarthy began a movement to rid the United States of anyone he considered a Communist. At that time in history, Russia seemed to be a threat to this country; people felt distrust towards anything labeled as Communist. McCarthy used two forms of propaganda to destroy many people's lives.



Some political speakers are not so honest.

He used Name-Calling—using the negative terms *Communist* and *Red* to say they were not being loyal to the United States. He also used *Flag-Waving*—portraying himself as the real patriot who was only acting to protect this country.

In a more recent example, some very damaging commercials were made about a presidential candidate. The commercials told the story of a presidential candidate who had signed a law while he was governor of a state. One of the effects of this law was to shorten the prison terms of some convicted felons. One of the convicts who had been released early from prison murdered a woman who was a wife and mother. The commercial painted the presidential candidate as soft on crime. This commercial showed only one example, then offered no other statistics to back up its claim. It was a perfect example of *Card-Stacking*—leaving out important information. The commercial also played on people's fears about rising crime in this country.

S-T-R-E-T-C-H-I-N-G the Truth: An Example of a Dishonest Speech

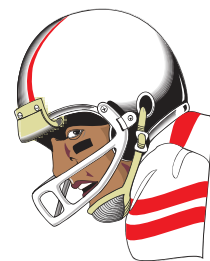
Clint, a high school student, hoped to persuade his fellow classmates to elect his friend Art Con as president of the Wannabee High School Student Council. He thought that if he stretched the truth a bit and used some scare tactics, he could swing the election in Art Con's favor. He began with the information listed below.

Who Is It?

- Art Con is a student at Wannabee High School.
- He is running for Student Council President.

His Biography

- Art Con was born in the city of Wannabee and has attended Wannabee schools all his life.
- He is captain of the Wannabee High School football team and works as a bag boy for ACME Super Markets during vacations.



Art Con is captain of the Wannabee High School football team.

His Qualifications for Student Council President

- He is a member of the Student Council and has attended all three of the Student Council meetings held thus far.
- He participated with the rest of the Student Council Representatives in rewriting the bylaws of the Student Council.

His Plans for Improving the School

- He wants to have the Student Council meet more often.
- He wants to make the school safer by putting video cameras in areas where violence has occurred.
- He wants to make the parking lot bigger so all students can park their cars on campus.



Art Con wants to make the school safer by installing video cameras.

What Art Con Knows about His Opponent

- She was not born in Wannabee.
- She is an honor roll student and hopes to be a nuclear scientist.

Clint spun the following information listed above into the speech below:

Why Wannabee High School Needs Art Con for President

Today I speak to you on behalf of Art Con. I say right now he is an awesome candidate! He knows what you want—after all he was born in Wannabee and has always attended Wannabee schools. He knows how to lead the Student Council. He is, after all, captain of the football team. What better proof do you need that he knows how to lead? In addition, his summer job has been a great teacher. In his job he has learned to organize many different kinds of things in just a small space. Being able to organize, as any successful business person will tell you, is one of the keys to success!

Art Con has also shown how dedicated he is to the Wannabee Student Council. After all, he has attended all of the Student Council meetings. In addition, his knowledge of the Student Council has enabled him to help rewrite the bylaws of the Student Council.

Art Con has great ideas for making this the best high school in the state. First, he will have the Student Council meet more often. Art says that if the Student Council meets more often it will be able to score more touchdowns and lead this high school to glory. He will help make you safe by placing video cameras in those parts of the school where violence has occurred. He will also make the parking lot bigger so each of you can have your own parking space. Why should you have to park off campus and walk the long way here? Do you know another candidate that will turn this school into paradise?

Art Con will make this high school a school that other high schools will envy. Do you want to join him in making his dreams come true, or do you want to be a drag on this school and vote for his opponent? Remember: His opponent was not born in the city of Wannabee. Can we really trust an outsider? And also: His opponent is an honor roll student who wants to be a nuclear physicist. Do you think an egghead really knows what we want? She spends her life with her head buried in a book—how can she know how to have fun and make this a place of good times for all? Vote for Art Con!

Below is this speech reprinted along with an analysis. The analysis appears in italics.

Why Wannabee High School Needs Art Con for President

Today I speak to you on behalf of Art Con. I say right now he is an awesome candidate!

*The word awesome is very general and means only that this speaker thinks Art Con is great. It is an example of a **Weasel Word**.*

He knows what you want—after all he was born in Wannabee and has always attended Wannabee schools.

*This could be a helpful experience; however, Art Con may not necessarily know what is good for Wannabee High School. This is an example of **Flag-Waving**: You are to believe that he is patriotic to Wannabee.*

He knows how to lead the Student Council. He is, after all, captain of the football team. What better proof do you need that he knows how to lead?

*This is an attempt to confuse one kind of leadership with another. Leading a sports team can involve quite different skills than leading a student council does. This is a form of **Card-Stacking**.*

In addition, his summer job has been a great teacher. In his job he has learned to organize many different kinds of things in just a small space. Being able to organize, as any successful business person will tell you, is one of the keys to success!

This example also confuses one kind of skill with another. Organizing a bag of groceries is not the same as organizing a group of people.

Art Con has also shown how dedicated he is to the Wannabee Student Council. After all, he has attended all of the Student Council meetings.

*This is a true statement, but it is **Playing with Numbers**. There have only been three meetings thus far. So Art Con's attendance doesn't show more than an average dedication.*

In addition, his knowledge of the Student Council has enabled him to help rewrite the bylaws of the Student Council.

*Art Con did participate in rewriting the bylaws of the Student Council, but so did every other Student Council Representative! This is an example of **Card-Stacking**—presenting only a piece of information and leaving out the rest.*

Art Con has great ideas for making this the best high school in the state.

*The word best is a **Weasel Word**. What criteria is the speaker using to evaluate all the high schools in the state?*

First, he will have the Student Council meet more often.

Meeting more often is not necessarily a way to improve the student council.

Art says that if the Student Council meets more often, it will be able to score more touchdowns and lead this high school to glory.

*His reasons for why more meetings would be good are filled with **Weasel Words and Phrases**. How would a student council “score more touchdowns” or “lead this high school to glory”?*

He will help make you safe by placing video cameras in those parts of the school where violence has occurred. He will also make the parking lot bigger so each of you can have your own parking space.

Where would the money to accomplish these two expensive projects come from? In addition, how does the speaker know Art Con can get permission to begin these projects?

Why should you have to park off campus and walk the long way here? Do you know another candidate that will turn this school into paradise?

*Here is another **Weasel Word**—paradise. Note also that the speaker is defining a high school paradise as one that has nothing to do with learning.*

Art Con will make this high school a school that other high schools will envy. Do you want to join him in making his dreams come true, or do you want to be a drag on this school and vote for his opponent?

*This is an example of **Loser/Winner**. Students are given a choice to join Art Con and be a winner or not vote for him and be a loser.*

Remember: His opponent was not born in the city of Wannabee. Can we really trust an outsider?

*Calling her an outsider is a form of **Name-Calling**. It is a negative term used to brand Art Con's opponent.*

And remember: His opponent is an honor roll student who wants to be a nuclear physicist. Do you think an egghead really knows what we want?

*Again, this speaker uses **Name-Calling** to cast a shadow on Art Con's opponent. The word egghead has negative connotations. He does not offer any evidence or reason why an honor roll student who wants to be a physicist would not make a good president.*

She spends her life with her head buried in a book—how can she know how to have fun and make this a place of good times for all?

Note how the speaker has shifted the purpose of high school from a place to prepare people to be knowledgeable and responsible students and citizens to a place to hang out and have fun.

Vote for Art Con!

Effective Presentation Skills: Using Your Voice and Body

Good speakers know that no matter how many good or persuasive ideas they might have, if these ideas are not communicated properly, their ideas cannot be effective. It will be your job to make your speech as persuasive as possible. To do so, you must use the same time-honored skills that good speakers have used for more than two thousand years.

Good speakers use their voices to animate their presentations or bring them to life. This begins with good voice production, which includes the qualities of **enunciation**, **pronunciation**, **volume**, **tempo**, and **pitch**. Use these guidelines to analyze your own voice production.

- **Enunciate and pronounce words clearly and distinctly.** Avoid mumbling or running words together. Separate words just enough for them to be heard. Pronounce every sound in each word that you say.
- **Speak at a suitable volume—neither too loudly nor too softly.** Control the *volume* to express the content of your speech or your feelings. (*Speak softly when reading a poem about a child and loudly when reading a poem about a baseball game.*)
- **Speak at a suitable tempo—neither too slowly nor too quickly.** Pay attention to the natural rise and fall rhythm of the language.
- **Make the pitch of your voice appropriate to what you are expressing—neither too high nor too low.** If you want to calm down the audience, keep the *pitch* or *tone* of your voice low and calm. If you want to excite an audience, use an enthusiastic tone or high pitch.



If you want to excite an audience, use an enthusiastic tone or high pitch.

Good speakers also make their speech flow evenly. In casual conversation, people commonly say words and sounds that should be avoided in formal oral presentations. Study the following list and ask a friend to help you identify which expressions you use frequently. Add your own expressions to the list if it does not cover them.

TOP 10 EXPRESSIONS

1. *Um . . .*
2. *Well, . . .*
3. *Ya' know . . .*
4. *Like, um, . . .*
5. *I mean . . .*
6. *So . . .*
7. *I guess . . .*
8. *Er . . .*
9. *Gosh, Geez*
10. *Huh! Huh? Hmph.*
11. _____
12. _____

TO

AVOID

Many people feel nervous when they speak to a group. Understanding what is meant by a “good speech” and knowing the characteristics of a “good speech” are your best tools for delivering a speech that your particular audience will enjoy.

When we are making presentations, we also need to be aware that we communicate through our postures, our gestures, and our facial expressions. What we communicate with our bodies can either add to or detract from what we are saying. Very large or exaggerated **body language** can cause our audience to watch our movements rather than listen to what we are saying. By being aware of this and learning some *body language* guidelines, we can improve our *nonverbal communication* as well as our ability to make good oral presentations.

Tips for Using Presentation Body Language

Use Good Posture

- stand straight—one foot slightly in front of the other
- relax
- breathe deeply and easily

Maintain Eye Contact

- gaze around the room; look at as many people as possible
- avoid talking to one person

Keep Face Expressive

- show emotions appropriate to your speech
- avoid a “frozen” expression

Use Gestures and Body Language

- use your hands to make expressive gestures when needed
- let your hands rest naturally at your sides when not gesturing
- shift posture to emphasize important points

Characteristics of Good Oral Presentations

The characteristics listed on the following chart will help you to deliver a good speech. This, in turn, will help you to gain confidence when you speak to an audience. Use this checklist to practice presenting your speech.

Characteristics of Good Oral Presentations		
Elements	Characteristics	Definitions
Preparation	1. Subject Knowledge	- the presentation subject is thoroughly researched and the speaker is prepared for any questions that may be asked
	2. Organization	- the presentation material is arranged or put together in an orderly way—using index cards, outlines, or visual materials to keep presentation well paced and on track
	3. Audience Awareness	- the presentation is prepared for the type of audience receiving the information—speaking or writing is appropriate for and understood by the target audience
Speaking	4. Enunciation	- words are spoken clearly, without mumbling, making each sound distinct
	5. Pronunciation	- words are spoken according to a dictionary's pronunciation guide
	6. Volume	- the sound produced by the voice is not too loud or too soft; the sound changes during the presentation to match what is being described
	7. Tempo	- the speed at which words are spoken is not too fast or too slow; the speed may change to match what is being described
	8. Pitch	- the highness or lowness of the sound of the voice matches what is being described
	9. Expressiveness	- the presentation (or words) are communicated in a vivid and persuasive manner
	10. Complete Sentences	- the presentation uses a group or groups of words that present a complete thought
Body Language	11. Eye Contact	- the speaker looks directly into the eyes of one or more persons—communicates the speaker's confidence, alertness, and empathy with the audience
	12. Natural Gestures	- the speaker uses normal movement of the hands, head, or other body parts to express the speaker's thoughts or feelings—gestures should emphasize presentation points, not distract from them
	13. Good Posture	- the speaker carries or holds his body straight while sitting, standing, or walking—conveys confidence and readiness; slouching conveys the opposite—unreadiness, indifference

Discussion Skills: Listening and Speaking in a Group

Many of you find that your teachers will, from time to time, assign group work that includes discussion of ideas. Other times, your teacher will lead a discussion of the entire class in order to hear ideas from the entire group. Either way, giving and receiving input from an entire group can be an excellent way of learning new facts and details.

However, group discussions can get out of hand. Some students abuse these occasions and turn them into an opportunity to socialize. Others want to express their own ideas without listening to the ideas of others. Either way, these students are missing the point of group discussion.

A group discussion is more than just a conversation. It's true that even in the best-planned group discussions, people do talk and listen to each other. However, these participants have a purpose for their interactions. They must make a decision or solve a problem. Everyone must be allowed to participate and to voice an opinion. Obviously, this cannot be done at the same time or the discussion becomes confusing. A group discussion must be planned according to certain guidelines. Some helpful guidelines are as follows:

Listening and Speaking in a Group



Listen completely to others. Do not interrupt others. Wait until you are sure they are through before you speak.

Empty your mind when others speak. Often, our minds are filled with what we want to say. As a result, we don't hear what the speaker says. To fully listen to another, we must "unclutter" our minds. Write down what you want to say ahead of time. That way, you can listen to others. You aren't in danger of forgetting your own ideas.

Be strong enough to be moved by others. Don't hold on to your ideas too tightly. If someone makes a good point, it's okay to change your mind. A strong person has self-confidence. He or she is not afraid to admit that someone else is right.

Make a contribution. Don't just sit and let others do all the work. Do your part. Come to class prepared. You should add to and improve the discussion.

Stay calm. Speaking louder than others will not change their minds. Let your good ideas do that.