**Chapter Outline**

**Presenting and Relationships**
- Getting Ready to Present
- How Do You Analyze Audiences?
  - A Speaker’s Relationship With the Audience
  - Relationship With the Issue and Position
  - Audience View of the Occasion
  - Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values
- Selecting Your Topic
  - Consider Yourself
  - Consider Your Audience
  - Searching for a Topic

**Determining the Purpose and Thesis of Your Presentation**
- General Purpose
- Specific Purpose
- Thesis Statement

**Evidence and Support Material**
- Definitions
- Facts and Opinions
- Comparisons and Contrasts
- Testimony
- Examples
- Statistics

**Selecting and Using Evidence and Support Material**
- The Quantity of Evidence and Support Material
- The Quality of Evidence and Support Material
- Comparing the Effectiveness of Evidence and Support Material

**Selecting and Searching for Sources (Inventio)**

**Focus Questions Revisited**

**Key Concepts**

**Questions to Ask Your Friends**

**Media Connections**

---

Copyright ©2017 by SAGE Publications, Inc.
This work may not be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means without express written permission of the publisher.
Preparing for a Presentation

Why would you need to give a presentation? Surely the only way you ever do a presentation with a microphone or a podium shoved in front of you is when your class or your colleagues are sitting there, smiling with encouraging anticipation. To put this another way, many students do not see the relevance of speaking classes because they don’t expect to run for mayor or to become political agitators or to address large anonymous crowds. For most students, “presentations” are merely a very testing occasion that they undertake with fortitude to earn a grade. However, you can observe the skillful—but very rare—performances of such masters as Steve Jobs or speakers in TED Talks and you can wonder if you will ever be as good as them. The next few chapters will give you lots of tips about the ways to make good presentations that will help reduce any nerves and will aim you at competence.

The TED Edition of this book costs a bit more and you probably do not need it for the life that you can reasonably expect to lead. You might like to consider, instead, that you could be asked to attend a wedding and propose a toast, to be asked to say some positive words about a retiring employee, to sing karaoke, to speak in a business meeting, to pitch a good idea to a city council, or to speak up in a parent–teacher meeting about an improvement that would benefit your children’s education.

Presenting and Relationships

Presentation is a term that tends to give a misleading impression that the speaker is addressing an unknown and possibly hostile audience. In fact, the occasions when you are likely to have to speak to a large group are much more probably going to involve situations where you personally know the audience. You know some if not all of your classmates, your family members, your fellow Greeks if it comes to that, and by definition your friends who might be at the same wedding. They are not strangers; so why is it that everyone is so afraid of giving “a presentation” when these are essentially just a louder and larger version of a chat with friends but where you have a bigger audience and a podium to shelter behind?

Instead of seeing this as a terrifying situation, why not just use the wind of your relationships beneath your wings to soar in this enlarged scenario? All that is needed is a mental shift to see the term as referring essentially to a relational opportunity. Relationships serve as a foundation for all communication,
and formal presentations are no exception. A relational connection between speakers and audiences is essential to effective presentations and must be considered in their preparation, development, and delivery.

At first glance, presentations—in which both the speaker and the audience play active roles based on and guided through socially established norms and expectations—may appear as merely the enactment of the social roles of speaker and audience. This appearance is true only if we emphasize the word *public* and talk about “public speaking” but if, however, we emphasize presentations then these more closely resemble the unique personal relationships that you share with your friends, family, and romantic partners in which the people are irreplaceable. Audience members’ characteristics, perceptions, and needs will govern what they expect from a speaker, and presenters must adapt to each audience accordingly.

Recognition of the relationship between speakers and an audience begins with acknowledging the similarities between presentations and personal relationships in your everyday life. In personal relationships, people seek to inform, understand, persuade, respect, trust, support, connect, satisfy, and evoke particular responses from one another, and such objectives exist in presentations. In personal relationships, people must adjust to one another just as speakers must adjust to each unique audience to satisfy the goals of any presentation. People transact their personal relationships through communication and create meanings and understandings that go beyond the simple exchange of symbols; the same transactions occur during presentations. Therefore, everything you already know about personal relationships and everyday communication can guide your understanding of presentations.

**Getting Ready to Present**

This chapter is dedicated to the preparation of presentations. We examine the groundwork that must be conducted before their development and delivery. The success of any presentation depends largely on what takes place during this phase of the process. We spend a great deal of time discussing how you can analyze the occasion and your audience. Both of these elements help you determine how to construct a presentation and is what speech texts normally cover, but we go further and teach you how to build on or develop your relational connection with the audience.

Such great presenters as the TED talk speakers work the hardest on the preparation of a talk. The delivery of what they have prepared becomes polished through a lot that happens beforehand. These factors include research, creativity, analysis of audience’s expectations, structuring and layout of a talk, and practicing the craft of the delivery separately. For these reasons, we divide our chapters along similar lines. As we will point out, this is almost identical with the ancient Greek and Roman classical rhetorical canons of speech preparation into *inventio* (research, creativity), *dispositio* (layout), *elocutio* (style), *memoria* (memory or practice), and *pronunciatio* (delivery). That is a free fact for later use!

In this chapter, we discuss the selection of topics and the development of a purpose and a thesis for your presentation. We consider the major matter of research to collect evidence and support material that you can use to develop your thesis, to support the claims made in your presentation, and to stimulate your audience. Finally, we explore the process of collecting and using quality sources, often vital to the success of presentations by making you more confident in talking to your audience. Of course,
the one constant throughout our entire exploration of public presentations is the audience members and their relationship with the speaker, and here we begin.

By the way . . .

Dealing With Nerves

It is quite possible that you are feeling very nervous about delivering a “presentation.” Even talking about its preparation may be somewhat upsetting. You are not alone! These feelings are extremely common. We talk about “communication apprehension” —the technical term for the anxiety you may experience when about to speak to groups —in Chapter 16. Skip ahead and read that part of the book first if you are particularly worried at the moment, before you read how to overcome those nerves. The fact is that you can make nerves into a strength of your presentation and we’ll explain how.

For one thing, most speakers worry about the unknown. If you do not know your audience, or do not know all of them, then you might be worried about the way you will be perceived by the folks you do not know. Your friends in the audience will be supporting you though, so you can build on that fact. Also, for novice presenters especially, the unknown involves not knowing how to prepare for, develop, and deliver a presentation.

After reading the next few chapters, you will know these unknown elements! In particular, if you follow our suggestions for preparing your talk, then you will go in to it walking tall and knowing that you know so much more about your topic than the audience does that they will be overawed and not you.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
1. If you are nervous about speaking to groups, what concerns you the most? (See Chapter 16)
2. If you are not overly concerned about speaking to groups or if you know someone else who is good at it, why do you think that is the case? (See Chapter 16)

How Do You Analyze Audiences?

Analyzing audiences and adapting your delivery accordingly are fundamental to effective presentations. As a speaker, you must determine the best way to build on the positive relationship between yourself and audiences and between audiences
and the material. In what follows, we discuss various factors that will direct your approaches to the audience. We provide suggestions and guidelines for developing effective presentations.

**A Speaker’s Relationship With the Audience**

Many presentations that you may be called on to deliver will involve entertaining the audience, though some will be more serious. Although the general principles in every case are very similar, for the rest of the chapter we will focus on presentations that involve informing or persuading an audience. The principle of building on a relationship with the audience remains the same. An audience, for example, may consist of colleagues, supervisors, family, classmates, group members, or community members, and their preexisting relationships with you will influence how they view you personally and what they expect from your presentation.

An audience’s views of you personally have an effect on audience members’ attention to and acceptance of your presentations. A speaker’s credibility is crucial to the success of a presentation, but in many cases (friends and family, especially) that credibility already exists. In other contexts, the most successful individuals tend to be those who are (a) considered knowledgeable about the topic, (b) trusted, and (c) concerned about the audience. Note the first one of these; it is particularly important.

These characteristics touch on the three primary dimensions of credibility: knowledge, trustworthiness, and goodwill (Gass & Seiter, 2015). Notice that these components are usually assumed by those with whom you share a personal relationship. Actually, perceptions of credibility are often based largely on the type of relationship shared with someone (i.e., you trust a person because he or she is your friend, or you distrust someone because he or she is your enemy).

**Relationship With the Issue and Position**

If your presentation involves informing or persuading your audience about a particular issue (for example, “Why diesels are better than gas-powered engines”), then you must determine an audience’s knowledge about the issue before you jump right in. Are they all mechanical engineers or are most of them majoring in French? If they are engineers, how much can you reasonably assume that they know about combustion processes? If they are French majors, then what is it about the compression ratio that may grab their attention? Can you teach them the French word for crankshaft (vilebrequin, in case you do not already know 😊)?

An audience may have a positive, a negative, or an impartial view of a topic before a speaker even begins to speak. You must consider existing interest or evaluation when preparing a presentation.

Of course, when you are talking with friends, a lot of what you say will be based on values that they agree with anyway (see Chapter 8 on relationships and similarity). Recognizing that an audience may immediately agree with your position, however, will assist you in determining the best ways to build on the existing relational connection with the audience as you develop your presentation.

An audience’s assumed level of knowledge about an issue will influence a good speaker’s presentation. The audience may be very knowledgeable or have little knowledge about the issue; for example, your classmates may or may not know about your topic in depth but they may have some background. Work colleagues hearing you present on a work-related matter can be presumed to have an array of understanding of the background to the topic—and you can build on that knowledge to
sharpen your presentation without spending a lot of time on background matters that they already know about.

The level of audience understanding of an issue will dictate the depth and intricacy of a speech, evidence and support material, the language and whether terminology must be defined or explained, and how much time must be spent orienting the audience to the topic. However, if you have prepared your presentation well, then you can be sure that you know more than they do about the topic and you will be ready to knock it out of the park. Also, you needn’t be scared of trick questions if the audience is friendly in the first place and you are well prepared.

**Audience View of the Occasion**

How the audience views the occasion will also affect your speech, including the extent to which the audience desires to listen to your presentation. An “occasion” could be a funeral, a wedding, a farewell party, an election debate, a presentation to class, a pitch to business associates, a declaration of independence, a graduation, or a final farewell to your graduating class. Each of these occasions requires a different style of presentation, and the preparations for each of them will be different according to the needs of the occasion.

A **captive audience** is required to listen to your presentation. Classmates may be listening to your speech because of an attendance policy, or colleagues may be listening to your presentation because your employer has required their attendance. A captive audience does not mean a hostile audience, but you must prepare that much more carefully how to make such an audience appreciate the value of your presentation and enjoy it.

A **voluntary audience** listens to your speech because its members have personally chosen to be there. This may be because they have a particular interest in the occasion and your presentation as part of it, your topic, or a particular need, such as wanting to learn how to accomplish a task, to learn more about your topic, or to learn your particular “take” on it. Although they may already recognize their connection with the topic, you must reinforce their relationship with the material and establish why they should listen to your presentation specifically.

**Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values**

Armed with an understanding of an audience’s probable attitudes, beliefs, and values, a speaker can do a better job in working with them. Although attitudes and beliefs are typically regarded as relatively stable, they are nevertheless subject to influence and gentle massaging, but in different ways, so we will spend a little time on the technical distinction between them. An important point to bear in mind from the start is that attitudes, beliefs, and values are not facts. Someone may hold an attitude, belief, or value with great strength and force, but that does not make it a fact. One of the skills of a good speaker is to back up claims and beliefs with evidence, the point being to convince an audience that a rational decision about such
Ethical Issue

Is it ethical to draw on your relationship with someone when attempting to influence that person?

By the way . . .

Given Beliefs

Depending on an audience’s beliefs, some statements or claims of belief may need more or less support. If claiming that “the Earth is round,” you might feel fairly confident that an audience will not look for proof, and unless that statement is critical to your argument, you will not need to include a great deal of support and development. Statements such as this are considered given beliefs—that is, most people in the audience hold the same perspective.

Questions to Consider

1. What do you consider to be given beliefs? (Be careful when compiling your list. People do not always view the world in the same way—and some do not want to go near the edge in case they fall off.)
2. Has anyone ever spoken to you using what he or she considered a given belief but you did not? If so, how did that direct the argument?

attitudes: learned predispositions to evaluate something in a positive or negative way that guide people’s thinking and behavior (like/dislike)

beliefs: What a person holds to be true or false

values: deeply held and enduring judgments of significance or importance that often provide the basis for both beliefs and attitudes

demographics: characteristics of a person or an audience that can provide insight into the knowledge, experiences, interests, needs, attitudes, beliefs, and values of that person or members of an audience

Matters is to follow the speaker and adopt the belief that is proposed. As far back as Parmenides and Plato, philosophers have distinguished between something that is believed (doxa) and something that is known to be true (episteme—“epistemee”), and in modern times, we make this distinction using the terms opinion and fact. A well-known response to a claim of fact made by another speaker is, “Well, that’s just your opinion.”

Attitudes are learned predispositions to evaluate something in a positive or negative way that guide thinking and behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). For example, you may dislike the taste of a particular food, which will guide your response to decline eating it should a plateful be passed your way at dinner. Attitudes usually do not change much but instead tend to remain constant. Generally, the longer you hold an attitude and the more support you discover in its favor, the less likely you will be to change it. Audiences’ pre-existing attitudes will influence their view of you as a speaker, the topic, the occasion, and even the evidence provided to develop and support an argument. Frankly, there is not much that you can do about this, especially in a brief presentation, though we all try by dressing professionally, smiling a lot, and complimenting the audience. (Listen for the stand-up comics who say such things as “Wow! What a great audience you are!”)

Beliefs, or what people hold to be true or false, are formed like attitudes through your direct experience, as well as through media, personal relationships, and cultural views of the world. Knowing the beliefs of an audience can assist in determining whether certain statements or views will be accepted without the need for support or whether the audience will need to be convinced by compelling evidence. Such social issues as abortion, climate change, gun control, health care, and illegal immigration, for example, encompass many opposing and strongly held beliefs, and no speaker is likely to sway convinced believers on one side to switch immediately to the other. The message, then, is that you should not try to switch people from one side to the other, but you might be able to move them away from their held positions or at least to loosen up their confidence in the strength of their beliefs. Often those small victories are enough to make a presentation feel successful, whereas you probably will not ever convince God to become an atheist.

Values are deeply held and enduring judgments of significance or importance that often provide the basis for both beliefs and attitudes. The values you hold are what you consider most important. When listing values, people in our culture often include such things as life, liberty, family, truth, knowledge, education, personal growth, health, and wealth. Although all the items on this list might sound good to you, people do not agree on their importance. For instance, a person may not view wealth as all that important a goal, and not all people believe in the importance of education.

Demographics are characteristics of a person or audience that can help you gain insight into the experiences, interests, needs, attitudes, beliefs, and values of that person or audience members. Demographic characteristics of an audience include such things as age, gender, ethnicity, education, occupation, political membership, religion, and place of residence. Demographic characteristics provide
generalized information, but that does not necessarily give an accurate picture of any specific person in the audience. Just because someone is the same age as you, for instance, does not mean that person possesses the same knowledge, experiences, and so forth that you do. However, it may be more likely that people of the same age share some similarities that set them apart from people of a different age.

Skills You Can Use: Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values in Everyday Communication

Most of what is included in this chapter can be used to improve your skills as a communicator. However, you can expand your skills beyond what is offered here. When discussing attitudes, beliefs, and values, we are focused on their use in analyzing audiences for presentations. However, the same ideas can be used when attempting to influence a single person.

Selecting Your Topic

We have discussed the audience in ways that should help your research and preparation for the development and the eventual delivery of your presentation. On many occasions, you will already know the purpose of your presentation and whether it is to entertain, inform, or persuade. In cases of preparation for a speech class, however, you must first determine the topic of your presentation. For some speaking occasions, a topic or an area will already be established for you, whether it is a wedding toast or presentation to a city council to pitch that bridge you just designed. In some classes, though we are not fans of this approach, topics are assigned to you. We think it makes more sense to give novice speakers the advantage of confidence through expertise by letting them pick their own topics, at least for the first assignment. Some topics chosen by our own students are extremely varied and based on their own knowledge of their somewhat strange interests, but we have no reason to suppose that students elsewhere are less intrigued by the world or less expert in their own particular interests (look at Table 13.1).

We have been astonished, entertained, and educated through the topics about which our students are already experts and that they enjoy presenting with confidence already. After their first speeches, we can focus our instruction on the composition of arguments. Once performance anxiety is partially dealt with or put in perspective, speakers can work out how to approach their preparation for other topics systematically.

Other occasions may require you to select the topic yourself. If you have that choice, then always pick something that interests you and about which you are expert or at least more knowledgeable than the average bear. This will immediately give you expertise that translates into confidence in delivery: You know what you are talking about, and you know that you know more than the audience members will know. That gives you a head start. Even when a topic has already been

If an audience listening to this speaker had been required to attend, what type of audience would it be?
established for you, you probably have some flexibility about the way you present it to your audience, so you can prepare for it in a way that suits your personal style. Coming up with a topic is sometimes challenging, so in what follows, we discuss how to select your topic and factors you should consider in that selection. (If the topic was assigned to you, then these tips still work, but you will need to do more research to find out a lot more about the new topic.)

Consider Yourself
The best place to begin is by considering your knowledge, your experiences, and what you find important.

Knowledge
Consider areas about which you are knowledgeable. You do not need an advanced degree to claim knowledge about a subject. You may not be a certified chef, but you may know how to make an excellent omelet; you may not possess a degree in computer programming, but you may know how to develop a website. Many people possess knowledge of particular areas they do not believe others would consider worthy of acknowledgment. For instance, you may have every episode of Game of Thrones practically memorized, you may know the story of how your favorite video game was developed, or you may have experience working in the food services industry. The simple trick is to turn such experience into benefit by using it when preparing a talk.

Experiences
You may have derived much of your knowledge about a topic from your experiences. Just as people sometimes underappreciate their knowledge base, so they underestimate the value of their experiences. Consider where you grew up. Contemplate your numerous life experiences during your search for a topic. Reflect on the jobs you have had. Ponder the activities and organizations in which you have been involved at your school and in your community. Think about your experiences with

---

**Table 13.1** Show What You Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attending and Assisting a Swine Birth</td>
<td>Four Things I Learned About Being a Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic CPR</td>
<td>How to Stay Safe on Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Maximize Suitcase Space</td>
<td>I Threw Away My iPhone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse</td>
<td>Make a Perfect Sandwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Training Tips</td>
<td>Making Fire With Ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Make Money Using Cards</td>
<td>Migraine Headaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Make Wenzhou Sweet Rice</td>
<td>Multiracial Romance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Wash a Dish</td>
<td>Problems with the US Highway Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu Weddings</td>
<td>Select and Care for a Plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knitting Without Needles</td>
<td>Selling Shoes on the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staining Wood</td>
<td>The Assassination of Julius Caesar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Throw a Boomerang</td>
<td>Things My Uncle Told Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the Moonwalk</td>
<td>Two Great Conjuring Tricks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing a Buddhist Mandala</td>
<td>Advice for a New Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

family and friends. You may consider many topic areas by simply looking at your own life. Selecting a topic from your experiences will also provide benefits similar to those gained by selecting a topic about which you have specific knowledge.

**Importance**

Search for a topic that you consider important or on which you have special and detailed knowledge that your audience does not. If it is important that you feel comfortable in giving a presentation, then it is also important that you talk about something on which you are an expert. You may consider some topics important because they have direct impact on your life; do not underestimate the importance of things that are meaningful to you. Selecting a topic that you consider important will effortlessly enhance the overall quality of your presentation, especially when it comes to establishing credibility and connecting relationally with your audience. If you do not think your topic is important, then why would the audience? Conversely, if you care about the topic, then your audience will soon pick up on your enthusiasm because it is genuine and unforced.

**Consider Your Audience**

Just as you should consider yourself when selecting a topic, you must also establish a relationship between the audience and your topic so that they are drawn into it. During the introduction of your speech, you must tell the audience members how the topic affects them and why they should listen to you. This will assist you in maintaining audience attention, connecting with audience members, and enhancing your credibility. You do not have to select a life-altering topic and introduce it with gongs and drums. A presentation about a new smartphone may not save the lives of your audience members but could influence them in a useful way. Also do not think that you must select a topic they already know is important or meaningful in their lives. Some of the most powerful speeches introduce audiences to a topic about which they previously knew nothing or enable them to view an issue in an entirely new way, thanks to the expertise of the presenter.

**Searching for a Topic**

People sometimes struggle to find an appropriate topic for a presentation. If you find yourself doing this, the following methods can help make the search easier.

**Brainstorming** is a method of gathering and generating ideas without immediate evaluation. Essentially, you just write down everything that comes to mind for a specific (generally brief) period. You do not evaluate these ideas as they come; you simply gather a list of ideas. You also generate ideas because one idea may trigger another, which in turn may trigger another . . . and another, and so on. So, sit down at a computer or with a pen and paper; select a brief time limit, such as 5 minutes; and then start writing. Before you know it, you will have a list of topics to consider. Once this list is compiled, you can critically examine these topics, singling out some ideas as possible speech topics and eliminating others. Note how we phrased this: The point is to keep going for the full period allotted. Do not just stop once you just think of a topic. Brainstorming is to see where you end up after you have used the whole time!

You can use two types of brainstorming when searching for a topic. When **open brainstorming**, you generate a list of ideas with no topic boundary. When **topic-specific brainstorming**, you generate a list of ideas encompassing a specific topic (e.g., U.S. civil rights movement, flying a glider, going shopping, surviving in the wild).

---

**brainstorming**: a method of gathering and generating ideas without immediate evaluation

**open brainstorming**: generating a list of ideas with no topic boundary

**topic-specific brainstorming**: generating a list of ideas encompassing a specific topic
When searching for a topic, look at current events. Examining a news site, reading a newspaper, watching a news channel, or listening to a radio program will provide a ready-made list of topics for you to consider. Even if you do not select a current issue, these topics may trigger ideas about one you can talk about.

Another way to derive such a topic is by compiling an individual inventory, a listing of your preferences, likes, dislikes, and experiences. You are a person with distinct experiences, knowledge, and perspectives, so compiling an inventory will help you pinpoint your distinguishing characteristics. Create your inventory by providing items for the categories listed in Table 13.2 or any other categories. This exercise may also provide you with a topic for your speech or trigger another topic to examine.

Getting suggestions from other people can also help you establish a topic for your presentation. An especially helpful method when speaking to an organization or at an event, asking the person who provided the invitation about past speakers and topics, as well as what sort of topics the audience might enjoy, often provides an invaluable perspective on topic selection and the audience.

### Determining the Purpose and Thesis of Your Presentation

Effective presentations have a clear goal and an explicit purpose. Typically, they articulate this in a thesis. In this section, we discuss the general purpose, the specific purpose, and the development of a thesis.

---

**Table 13.2 Individual Inventory Categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favorite television programs</td>
<td>What I learned in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite movies</td>
<td>The best place I ever went</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite music</td>
<td>The most interesting person I ever met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite Internet sites</td>
<td>My experience as a driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite magazines</td>
<td>Sports I love to play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last book I read for fun</td>
<td>Selling [shoes] on the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most valuable possession</td>
<td>My most embarrassing moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroes or people I admire</td>
<td>Two great conjuring tricks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things that annoy me</td>
<td>This I believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite food</td>
<td>My most influential teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>I was a teenage mutant …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fears</td>
<td>My favorite toy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Living my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hometown</td>
<td>Growing up: some hints for the next generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things I do for fun</td>
<td>Migraine headaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite classes in school</td>
<td>My roommate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting or memorable experiences</td>
<td>Basic survival techniques in college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualities that make me unique</td>
<td>Don’t do this at home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*individual inventory*: a listing of a person’s preferences, likes, dislikes, and experiences used when searching for a possible speech topic.
General Purpose
The general purpose is the basic objective you want to achieve through your presentation. Most presentations achieve one of the following three basic objectives: (1) inform, (2) persuade, or (3) “evoke” (a term we will explain later). When your general purpose is to inform, you want to develop audience understanding of a topic through definition, clarification, demonstration, or explanation of a process. When your general purpose is to persuade, you desire either to influence audience beliefs, values, or attitudes or to influence audience behaviors. The types of presentations you will encounter most often and be asked to develop most likely in class are informative and persuasive presentations. Chapter 15 is dedicated to these types of presentations, so we will not spend a great deal of time discussing them here.

Some presentations seek to generate an emotion from the audience. Jo Sprague, Douglas Stuart, and David Bodary (2016) use the term evoke to describe presentations designed to “entertain, inspire, celebrate, commemorate, or bond or to help listeners to relive a significant event” (p. 74) from the audience. Textbooks, such as this one, often use the term entertain to describe these presentations, but we agree with Sprague and colleagues that this term detracts from the emotional depth that these presentations can achieve and limits them to “fun” only. They can elicit happiness, sadness, joy, fear, excitement, reverence, or a combination of emotions from the audience (e.g., at a graduation, wedding, a funeral, or an anniversary).

Although one general purpose usually dominates, it is fair to say that most presentations contain elements from all three types of speeches. As you explain how to accomplish something, you can use your relationship with audience members to convince them that they must enact certain steps to achieve the desired outcome. You may also entertain or inspire the audience members as you teach them how to conduct each step. As you convince the audience members that something is true, you also inform them of reasons they should believe you. Emotional responses often provide a way of persuading the audience to do something or enact a particular behavior.

Specific Purpose
The specific purpose of your presentation, or exactly what you want to achieve through your presentation, differs from the general purpose in that it is not a broad objective. Rather, the specific purpose of your speech encompasses the narrow, explicit goal of your presentation and entails the precise impact you want to
have on your audience. For example, you may wish to encourage them specifically to stand up more often during the day (rather than have the general purpose of making them think more about health issues more deeply). Developing a specific purpose statement helps ensure that you personally stay focused on achieving an explicit goal through your presentation.

The specific purpose statement should include the goal of your speech, and this goal should correspond with the general purpose of the speech. The goal of a speech might be to inform or explain (speech to inform), to persuade or convince (speech to persuade), or to reminisce or excite (speech to evoke).

The purpose of this presentation is to inform . . .

The purpose of this presentation is to convince . . .

The purpose of this presentation is to reminisce . . .

The specific purpose statement should also refer to the audience to underscore its importance in the development of the presentation.

The purpose of this presentation is to inform the audience . . .

The purpose of this presentation is to convince the audience. . .

The purpose of this presentation is to reminisce with the audience. . .

Finally, the specific purpose statement should include the explicit focus of the presentation.

The purpose of this presentation is to inform the audience about the importance of standing up, rather than sitting down, on improving health.

The purpose of this presentation is to convince the audience to volunteer with the city’s literacy program.

The purpose of this presentation is to reminisce with the audience about Jan Richard’s contributions to the revitalization of the downtown business district here in Xbox City.

Thesis Statement

A thesis statement, or what you will argue or develop throughout the entire presentation, encapsulates your entire speech. A statement rather than a question and written in a single sentence, the thesis of your presentation should focus on a single idea. Be as explicit as possible and let the thesis guide your entire presentation. This will help the audience feel connected to the presentation as they heard you outline it at the start.

Standing up occasionally during the day will improve your circulation.

Volunteering with the city’s literacy program provides benefits for volunteers and for the city.

Jan Richard’s tireless efforts on behalf of the downtown business district have resulted in its revitalization.
Evidence and Support Material

First, find your evidence! Giving a presentation requires knowledge; knowledge requires discovery; discovery requires research. As you may recall from an earlier comment, this is the stage of preparation for a speech that classical rhetoricians called *inventio*. Your first task after you have picked (or been assigned) your topic is to do research to find out a lot more about it and to “invent” uses for the evidence. This is a key and fundamental step. Research is unavoidable and highly desirable if you want your presentation to be any good and if you want to progress from *doxa* (mere opinion and belief) to *episteme* (factually based information). Presentations are not just about what you think, but also about what you know. What you know is based at least partly on what other people have discovered. Don’t use a presentation as a chance to spout your own unsupported opinions; find evidence to support them and back them up. Then you are entitled to your opinions because they are researched; you are not entitled to your opinions just because they are yours.

You will use evidence and support material to develop your thesis and back the claims made throughout your presentation. In the next chapter, we discuss the creation of an argument, which essentially consists of a thesis and support for that thesis. Your thesis will be supported by main points, which will in turn be supported by subpoints. These main points and (especially) subpoints will consist of evidence or support material, such as definition, facts and opinions, comparisons and contrasts, testimony, examples, and statistics. In what follows, we discuss the various sorts of evidence and support material you can use for your presentation and then discuss guidelines for their selection, making them especially relevant to your audience.

Definitions

**Definitions** provide the meaning of a word, phrase, or topic. Definitions assist audience understanding and help clarify your topic of discussion. The abstract and ambiguous nature of language often requires you to define terms for your audience. Contextual factors can enable an audience to determine the meaning of a word, and the different meanings may be obvious to you, but not always to the audience. You must be sure that they know what you are talking about before you go on to develop points about the topic. One of your authors just went to a presentation by an upper administrator on “F&A Returns” and after 5 minutes of the talk had to ask the speaker what he was talking about because he had never explained it. The speaker was so familiar with the term himself that he assumed everyone in the audience knew what it meant. This is a *rookie mistake*, even though the speaker is a senior university administrator. (See Chapter 14 on preparing your purpose and thesis statement)

**Operational definitions** are concrete explanations of meaning that are more original or personal than what a dictionary might provide. This type of definition is often necessary to clarify what you mean by a word or phrase and to focus audience perspective on a particular aspect of that word or phrase. For example, if you discuss *Internet activity*, do you mean all activities taking place online? Or do you want to distinguish between exploratory use of Internet sites and person-to-person correspondence through e-mail? This distinction will make a big difference in your talk.

Facts and Opinions

As you gather material to develop your presentation, you will discover both facts (*episteme*) and opinions (*doxa*) concerning your topic. In many instances, you will...
find both within the same article, Internet site, or news feed. **Facts** are provable or documented truths that you can use as evidence to support your claims. “The first broadcast of *The Big Bang Theory* occurred on September 24, 2007,” “Richard Nixon was the only American president to resign from office,” and “Largemouth bass spawn each spring when water temperatures average around 65°C” are facts because they can be proved or demonstrated through credible documentation.

Facts and opinions are not the same but are often used interchangeably, and people often confuse them, especially when they treat their own beliefs as facts. **Opinions** are personal beliefs or speculations that have not been proved or verified. “Using topwater baits is the most exciting way to catch largemouth bass” and “*The Big Bang Theory* is the funniest television program ever produced” are opinions because they cannot be proved even though many people may find the use of topwater baits exciting and appreciate the humor of *The Big Bang Theory*. Indeed, the use of superlatives (“most,” “funniest,” “best”) is usually questionable and unverifiable, but it is such a common claim because advertisers use it all the time (“X is the best movie since celluloid was invented,” “Duck & McMahan WonderClean get your dishes the cleanest,” “The best way to get an A in a class is to study all night and drink lots of caffeine”).

You can use both facts and opinions in support of your presentation, but you should manage them in different ways. As with all types of evidence and support, the facts and opinions used in your presentation must come from cited, credible sources. Opinions have not been proved or verified, so it is especially important that the audience perceive and recognize the source as credible. Further, facts are more likely than opinions to be able to stand alone without any additional support. Above all, a speaker’s perceived credibility and relationship with the audience members will influence reaction to these types of evidence and support.

**Comparisons and Contrasts**

Comparisons and contrasts are often used to assist audience understanding. **Comparisons** demonstrate how things are similar, and **contrasts** demonstrate how things are different. Sometimes used to show trends among concepts, ideas, or objects, comparisons can also establish connections between two items to associate their favorable or unfavorable characteristics. You may, for example, compare profitable yet unstable investment programs with the dot-com industry of the late 1990s in attempts to warn investors of possible risks. Contrasting is frequently used to distinguish something supported by the speaker from something considered negative by the audience. For example, you could contrast a new recycling program for the city with an existing, unpopular recycling program. In all cases of comparisons and contrasts, the audience must be familiar with at least one of the items being compared before the contrast/comparison has any value.

**Testimony**

**Testimony** consists of declarations or statements of a person’s findings, opinions, conclusions, or experience. Three types of testimony are (1) personal testimony, (2) expert testimony, and (3) lay testimony.
Personal testimony comes from oneself and is enhanced by one’s connection with the audience. Discussing your own experience with a topic, a powerful method of enhancing audience members’ perceptions of your credibility and their relationship with you as a speaker, often conveys to the audience that the topic has special significance for you and that you possess exceptional insight that can enhance understanding of the topic. Though important, your personal testimony is not normally enough to support an entire presentation unless the audience sees the presentation as one where you “bear witness” to some event that may be of interest to them.

Expert testimony comes from someone with special training, instruction, or knowledge in a particular topic. If you give a speech about dental hygiene, for example, you may include testimony from a dentist. Of course, you must observe certain ethical considerations when using expert testimony. First, make absolutely clear that this testimony is not your own by accurately referencing the source. This action prevents you from plagiarizing the material and enhances the believability of the statements you make. Second, critically evaluate the testimony because your audience may not. People often readily believe testimony from experts because they evaluate these messages less critically than those they receive from someone without expertise in an area. Therefore, as an ethical speaker, you should make certain that this testimony is as accurate and truthful as possible.

Lay testimony comes from someone without professional or qualified expertise in a particular area but who has extensive personal experience. For instance, in a speech about dental hygiene, you might use the testimony from someone who has not followed a proper dental hygiene regimen and has only one tooth or wears entirely false teeth. Lay testimony can be just as meaningful and powerful as personal or expert testimony, but make sure this testimony is worthwhile and comes from a legitimate source. If your lay testimony comes from an interview, make sure the person you interview is a legitimate source rather than just a convenient one, such as your roommate or Crazy Auntie Lil, your uncle’s special friend. Lay testimony from your roommate or your uncle’s friend may be legitimate, but the personal connection will require you to provide additional justification for its inclusion.

Examples

Examples, or specific cases used to represent a larger whole to clarify or explain something, can involve the concrete or tangible (a schnauzer is an example of a dog) or the abstract or intangible (the ability to vote is one example of the many freedoms we enjoy).

Examples can serve two very important functions in your presentation. First, they can help an audience better understand your discussion and relate to the material. The audience members may not know what a particular term means but providing an example will help them comprehend it. When using examples, it is important that you select those most familiar to your audience. Second, examples may also help your audience better grasp the importance or significance of an issue. Providing examples of injuries suffered by someone abused by a spouse may help the audience grasp the reality of domestic violence and appreciate its horrible results.

Illustrations, or examples offered in an extended narrative form, can enhance audience understanding and help you maintain their attention. The most effective illustrations use vivid imagery, engaging audience senses virtually through your description of the example. For example, you might illustrate possible difficulties encountered when visiting the financial aid office on campus and your student colleagues in the audience will feel a familiar memory coming into their heads. Furthermore, audience members
often remember vivid illustrations long after they have forgotten other support material and evidence that you provided during your presentation.

**Hypothetical illustrations** are fabricated illustrations using typical characteristics to describe particular situations, objects, or people, as well as illustrations describing what could happen in the future. It is very important to disclose to your audience that your illustration is hypothetical; otherwise, you are being dishonest and risk the audience feeling deceived and so losing all faith in everything you have said or will say.

**Statistics**

*Statistics* are numbers that demonstrate or establish size, trends, and associations. Consider the examples in Table 13.3.

**Recognizing and Overcoming Problems With Statistics**

Statistics can accomplish a great deal during your presentation, but you must use them appropriately and cautiously. Although many are accurate and valid representations, statistics are open to interpretation, and interpretations can be deceptive. You can very easily mislead the audience with statistics, so do all you can to ensure the relevance and accuracy of the statistics you use during your presentation.

Statistics may be fabricated. Sometimes people are dishonest about data they provide. Although most statistics you come across will be authentic, some may be absolutely bogus. Some fabricated statistics have been used so often that they have almost become given beliefs. For a number of years, news reports claimed higher spousal abuse on Super Bowl Sunday than on any other day of the year. Supposedly, watching football makes a person more violent and because record numbers of people watch football on that day, this results in more visits to hospital emergency rooms by abused spouses. In reality, none of this is true. Someone simply made up these statistics.

---

**Table 13.3 Statistics in Use: Sizes, Trends, and Associations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size (frequency)</th>
<th>According to the Surgeon General, two out of three Americans experience problems with acid reflux.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size (scope)</td>
<td>According to the <em>Mayberry Gazette</em>, 25% of Camden County residents overpaid an average of $570 in local taxes last year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend</td>
<td>According to noted economist Jake N. Elwood, the amount of credit card debt accrued by the average American has tripled in the past 5 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>The amount of money a person earns each year is related to his or her level of education. An article from <em>Money Quarterly</em> revealed that individuals who have earned a bachelor’s degree can expect to earn an average of $15,000 more each year than those with only a high school diploma. Individuals who have earned their master’s degree earn an additional $10,000.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Make your case**

**Best Evidence**

Research indicates little difference in the influence of the various types of evidence and support material. Accordingly, statistics may be more influential in some situations, and testimony may be more influential in others. Further, the influence of evidence and support material will vary among different people.

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. Having learned all of this and considering only statistics and testimony, which do you generally find most influential and convincing?
2. How might your choice change with changes in context?
Statistics and Time. Time is often an issue in the misuse of statistics. Compared with other types of evidence and support material, the shelf life of many statistics is especially short. What is statistically true today may be untrue next month. For instance, using the number of pumpkins sold during the month of October in anticipation of Halloween to represent year-round sales would be misleading. Likewise, using dated statistics to describe current situations misleads your audience. Use the most recent statistics available, and if you use somewhat-dated statistics, disclose this to the audience and explain why you included these particular statistics in your presentation.

Statistical averages: mean, median, and mode. Statistical averages may not always provide an accurate description. When you selected a college or a major, you may have looked at the average class size or the average number of students enrolled in each class. An academic department may offer five courses with a maximum enrollment of 12 students, two courses with a maximum enrollment of 14 students, four courses with a maximum enrollment of 15 students, and one course with a maximum enrollment of 600 students. If all of these classes were full, there would be 748 students enrolled in that department’s 12 classes. This total would result in an average class size of 62.3 students, which, although statistically correct, does not provide an accurate description of the class size of most of that department’s courses.

- **Mean** refers to the average number, which may or may not provide an accurate description or representation. The average of 62.3 students in the previous example would be the mean number of students.
- **Median** is the number that rests in the middle of all the other numbers; half of the numbers are less than this number, and the other half are more than this number. In the previous example, the median number would be 14 students, with half the numbers below this number and half above this number (12 12 12 12 14 14 15 15 15 15 600).
- **Mode** is the number that occurs most often. Once again using the number from the previous example, the mode would be 12 students because that number occurs most often (12 12 12 12 14 14 15 15 15 15 600).

Population and Base. Statistics can also be misleading when the population and base are not disclosed. **Population** refers to whom or what a study includes. Such populations as “registered voters” are often provided with survey results. Changes in the population will generally lead to changes in the results of a study. Asking more Republicans than Democrats about their voting intentions to gauge a candidate’s

### Made-Up Statistics

Did you know that 25% of all statistics have been made up? OK, we just made up that statistic, but see how easy it is? While we are at it, 99.5% of all people who read this textbook think its authors are handsome. Pity the tastes of the remaining 0.5%! It has also been discovered that reading this textbook in public will make you appear five times more attractive to others and increase your chances of being asked out on a date by 55%. We can do this all day long!

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What does the ease with which statistics can be made up and manipulated tell you about their use?
2. What percentage of people do you think find us handsome? Wait, don’t answer that one. Doing so might hurt our feelings!

median: the number that rests in the middle of all the other numbers; half of the numbers are less than this number, and the other half are more than this number
mode: the number that occurs most often
population: who or what is included in a study
popularity with voters as a whole will provide a misleading characterization of that candidate’s approval or disapproval rating among all voters.

The statistical base refers to the number of people, objects, or things included in a study. Problems with the statistical base frequently surround the use of a small sample size rather than not including a representative population. The finding that 75% of students favor a tuition increase may sound like a convincing mandate for raising tuition rates. However, such a finding would not be nearly as convincing if it were based on a poll conducted in a single class with 25 students, all of whom had a minimum monthly bank balance of $200k and no debt.

Asking the Questions. How a question is posed and how an issue is defined can also influence statistical results. Imagine the outcome of a political survey that asked likely voters, “Would you be more likely to vote for the incumbent, who has lowered taxes each year while in office and visits with the elderly each weekend, or the challenger, who wants to abolish Social Security and is rumored to drown fluffy kittens in the river?” Regardless of a person’s attitude toward felines or the elderly, how the question is phrased would certainly benefit the incumbent. Not all surveys are this blatant, but many are quite biased in the ways they present questions.

Now then. Should you be at college? Take a look at the Figure 13.1 graph. Then read the comments.

Using Statistics Effectively
Having discussed some of the problems related to statistics, you should now be aware of some of the pitfalls and consequences associated with their use. Table 13.4 provides guidelines and suggestions for incorporating statistics in your presentations.

Selecting and Using Evidence and Support Material
After learning about the types of evidence and support material, students often wonder how much evidence and support material they should use, whether the quality of evidence and support matters, and whether some types of evidence and support material are better than other types. Let’s take a look.

The Quantity of Evidence and Support Material
You should develop your presentation with enough good evidence to take advantage of its positive influence on audience members’ perceptions of the message and of your credibility and relationship with the audience. No magic number exists as to the amount of evidence and support material that must be included; the impact of evidence will differ according to audience connection with the topic. Those individuals not involved with the topic will be more influenced by the quantity than by
Figure 13.1  The Diminishing Financial Return of Higher Education

Costs of four-year degree versus earnings of four-year degree

Comments from http://www.statisticshowto.com/misleading-graphs/:
The scale on this chart is fine. What Business Insider deduced from the chart is not. Have we “… lost the ubiquitous positive financial return on education”? No. David Blake read the chart without taking into account a key fact that wasn’t on the chart: the cost of not going to college has diminished even more. That means, your prospects as a high school graduate are a lot worse than your prospects as a college graduate.

Another key piece of information is on the chart itself. Note the average yearly income a college grad can expect is about $45,000 in 2010. That’s per year. Over an average working lifetime (say, 43 years assuming retirement at age 65), that gives you an income of $45,000 * 43 = $1,935,000. Subtract that expensive college education ($95,000) and your net earnings are $1,840,000. Compare that to your average high school grad. They can expect to earn $1,300,000 over their lifetime (Source: The U.S. Department of Education [http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED524300.pdf]). That’s quite a difference!

Table 13.4  Increasing the Effectiveness of Statistics

| Statistics Should Come from a Trustworthy Source | Statistics from trustworthy sources can be included in your presentation with confidence. |
| Use Statistics Sparingly | Do not overwhelm your audience with statistics. If you use multiple statistics in your presentation, the audience will find it difficult to understand each statistic and how it supports your presentation. Keep things simple. |
| Use Statistics that Personally Affect the Audience | Statistics that personally affect your audience will have the greatest impact. |
| Simplify the Statistics | Statistics should be memorable and easy to process, and a good way is by making them as simple as possible: Round them to a whole number (“more than 3 million” is more memorable than “3,065,432”); present them as fractions and percentages. |
| Explain the Statistics | Make statistics accessible. Translate them into terms that the audience will understand (“Last year, wildfires destroyed 8 million acres of land. That is 4,000 times the size of this campus and nearly 90 times the size of this state”). |
the quality of evidence when compared with highly involved individuals (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). You should not include large amounts of poor evidence just to convince audience members. Instead, include strong evidence to satisfy all the audience members.

The Quality of Evidence and Support Material

Careful research that discovers good quality evidence and support material will enhance the effectiveness of your presentation. This impact is further enhanced when you use oral citations (O’Keefe, 1998), or references to the source of the evidence and support material used during your presentation. The use of quality evidence will also enhance audience members’ perceptions of your credibility. Audiences will view as more credible a speaker who uses highly credible sources and as less credible a speaker who uses sources of lower credibility. The more they see you as credible, the more they will also connect and follow you.

Comparing the Effectiveness of Evidence and Support Material

None of the types of evidence and support material discussed in this chapter have consistently proved more persuasive or effective than other types. An analysis of studies examining this area found that statistical evidence may be “slightly more effective” than other types of evidence (Allen & Preiss, 1997, p. 128). This finding especially holds true when the vividness of evidence is held constant (Hoeken, 2001). The effectiveness of each type of evidence and support material depends on such factors as audience members’ attitudes toward the topic (Beebe, Beebe, & Ivy, 2016), their involvement with the issue (Baesler, 1997), and cultural differences among audience members (Hornikx & Hoeken, 2005). You will have better luck in satisfying more of your audience members if you use several different types of evidence.

As you do research and select sources for your presentation, should you limit the types of sources that you use, such as only gathering evidence and support material from the Internet or from books?
Selecting and Searching for Sources (Inventio)

In classical times, good speakers used to stress the importance of finding a big range of possible ways to persuade an audience. Their term for this was Inventio (inventio = is Latin for “finding”), which we might today translate as “creativity” in this context. Classical rhetoric regarded this as the essential basis for all good presentations—the discovery of all relevant materials that would help a speaker to inform or persuade the audience. Inventio still matters and is a mixture of creativity, research, and looking for facts or evidence. It also involves thinking up your own original ways of presenting what you discover or taking a new approach to a familiar item. Today,

By the way . . .

Types of Sources

Types of sources include books; dictionaries and encyclopedias; magazines; newspapers; scholarly journals; pamphlets; television, video, and radio; Internet sites; blogs; and interviews.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
1. Which of these types of sources do you find most trustworthy, and why?
2. Which of these types of sources do you find least trustworthy, and why?

Table 13.5 Selecting Quality Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unbiased</th>
<th>You should select unbiased sources—those that provide a balanced view of an issue—in the development of your speech. Most sources slant one way or another when it comes to issues, but some sources may be very obvious and open about their points of view, such as material from pro-life or pro-choice organizations, gun manufacturers or gun control organizations, and environmental groups or chemical fertilizer companies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial Review</td>
<td>You can usually trust sources that have undergone a review process—in which more than one person has determined their accuracy—more than those that have not. Many of the books, journals, magazines, and newspaper articles you discover when conducting research will have undergone a review process. Although you can generally be more confident in the accuracy of a source that has undergone editorial review, you should still evaluate this source critically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>The sources you use should have expertise in the area examined. Consider the background or qualifications of an author when evaluating the quality of a book or an article to determine whether the author has expertise that is relevant to the topic. For instance, although perhaps an expert in journalism, a newspaper or magazine reporter should not be considered an expert in fitness even if he or she is authoring an article about the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recency</td>
<td>The sources used in the development of your presentation should be as recent as possible, depending on the topic. Use your knowledge of the topic to determine whether the source has become outdated. Have significant changes occurred in the area that would alter the information available from the source? Does the topic area undergo rapid change and development? Also, consider the evaluation of your sources by the audience. Would your audience view the source as outdated and question its legitimacy and accuracy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility of a Source’s Sources</td>
<td>The sources and evidence that a source uses in its development can also determine its quality. Carefully consider whether the source you are evaluating includes recent, unbiased material. Determine if the source’s sources have undergone editorial review and can be considered experts in the area. If you determine that the sources supporting the source you are evaluating are not legitimate, you should not use that particular source for your presentation. If a source makes claims without any form of support, you should question the legitimacy of that source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility for Your Audience</td>
<td>Keep in mind that your audience will evaluate and use the types of sources you use in a presentation to determine the accuracy of the evidence supplied, the value of your presentation, and your credibility as a speaker. Your audience may judge certain types of sources as more worthwhile and accurate than others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13.6  Guidelines for Conducting Research and Gathering Material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Early</th>
<th>One of the biggest mistakes you can make when conducting research is waiting until the last minute. Delaying research and collection of support material will impede the development of a good presentation—as well as cut into your practice time.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use Multiple Types of Sources</td>
<td>It is best to use multiple types of sources when doing your research. This will enable you to satisfy the various preferences of the audience and to ensure the thoroughness of your research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the Library</td>
<td>You will need to go to the library to conduct adequate research for your presentation. A great deal of material is available online, but still more material is available in the library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Multiple Search Engines and Databases</td>
<td>If you do search online, however, do use multiple search engines and databases. There are some very powerful search engines and databases, but none are complete. Many focus on particular topics or areas, which can make your search thorough and efficient but it will not be comprehensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Not Read Everything</td>
<td>As you review sources, do not feel as if you have to read all of these pieces in their entirety. A quick but conscientious review of the material will help you determine whether you should examine it in more detail. Reviewing a book’s index to pinpoint particular information will help establish its usefulness, as will reading abstracts or key sections of journal articles, magazines, or other periodicals. However, you will have to read the material in more detail once you determine it will be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Notes as You Proceed</td>
<td>You should take notes as you conduct your search for information. This will ensure that you can find the information later and is that it is accurately cited. When you have examined multiple sources, it is easy to forget where support material originated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Attention to the Citations of Others</td>
<td>However thorough your search or your search engine, you will not discover every available source related to your topic. The reference sections of the material will provide ready-made lists of sources that can be used for your presentation. However, you must locate and read these other sources on your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in Multiple Searches and Trips to the Library</td>
<td>Conducting research is not something that should be done all at one time. It would be unwise to think that a single trip to the library will enable you to conduct a thorough search for sources and provide all the material you need. Conducting adequate research requires multiple searches and trips to the library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eventually You Must Develop Your Presentation</td>
<td>Even a thorough search of the material will leave some stones unturned before it becomes time to start developing and then practicing your presentation. Keep this in mind if you are nervous about your presentation. Pace yourself and allocate your time wisely. Do not spend too much of your time conducting research and too little developing the speech and practicing the presentation (Sprague et al., 2016).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

we can apply the same thinking to modern-day research and apply the concept of creativity to “smart lawyer” ways to present information and to “good researcher” ways to locate details and support material.

The quality of the sources used during your presentation will partly determine audience members’ perceptions of your credibility, as well as the overall effectiveness of your presentation. Indeed, your presentation is only as good as what you make of the sources used in its development. As you research material to support your speech, your goal should be finding the most accurate and credible sources available. Table 13.5 provides guidelines for critically evaluating and determining the quality of potential sources for your speech.

Searching for material to support and to develop your speech can sometimes be challenging, especially when someone is relatively new to the process. Table 13.6 provides some guidelines and suggestions to follow when conducting research and gathering material.
FOCUS QUESTIONS REVISITED

1. **What factors should you consider when analyzing and relating to an audience?**

   Consider audience members’ relationship with you, their relationship with the topic, and their view of the occasion. You may also consider their attitudes, beliefs, and values as well as demographic characteristics.

2. **What factors should you consider when determining the topic of a presentation?**

   Some occasions may warrant a particular topic (a wedding or a funeral speech), or a topic may already be selected for you. On occasions when you must select your own topic, consider yourself and the audience.

3. **What strategies can you use when searching for the topic of a presentation?**

   You can brainstorm, examine current issues and events, create an individual inventory, and gather input from others.

4. **What are the general purpose, specific purpose statement, and thesis of a presentation?**

   The general purpose is the basic objective you want to achieve through your presentation. Most presentations are developed to (a) inform, (b) persuade, and (c) evoke. The specific purpose of your presentation is exactly what you want to achieve through your presentation. A thesis statement, or what you will argue or develop throughout the entire presentation, encapsulates your entire speech.

5. **What types of evidence and support material can you use to develop a presentation?**

   You can use definitions, facts and opinions, comparisons and contrasts, testimony, examples, and statistics as evidence and support material.

6. **What factors should you consider when selecting sources for a presentation?**

   Critically evaluate your sources, determine whether they are unbiased and whether they have undergone editorial review. You should ensure that sources have the proper expertise and experience, determine the recency of a source and the credibility of its own sources in turn, and, above all, determine audience evaluation of the source.

7. **What factors should you consider when conducting research and gathering material?**

   Start early, use multiple types of sources, go to the library, use multiple search engines and databases, do not read everything, take notes, pay attention to citations, engage in multiple searches and trips to the library, and eventually start writing and practicing your delivery.

KEY CONCEPTS

- attitudes 282
- base 294
- beliefs 282
- brainstorming 285
- captive audience 281
- comparisons 290
- contrasts 290
- definition 289
- demographics 282
- evoke 287
- examples 291
- expert testimony 291
- facts 290
- general purpose 287
- hypothetical illustrations 292
- illustrations 291
- individual inventory 286
- inform 287
- lay testimony 291
- mean 293
- median 293
- mode 293
- open brainstorming 285
- operational definition 289
- opinions 290
- oral citations 296

Copyright ©2017 by SAGE Publications, Inc.
This work may not be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means without express written permission of the publisher.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR FRIENDS</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What types of support material do your friends find most convincing? Which of this material do they find least convincing? Do their evaluations change depending on circumstances or what is discussed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What types of sources do your friends find most convincing? Which sources do they find least convincing? Do their evaluations change depending on circumstances or what is discussed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask your friends to think about two people whom they consider to be very different. If they wanted to try to convince each person of the same idea, how would they have to adjust their strategies with each one? What does this tell you about the need to adapt your presentations to particular audiences?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MEDIA CONNECTIONS</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Scan a newspaper for articles that include examples of evidence and support material. What types of this material are most common? Do you find these articles convincing? To what extent do you believe your evaluation is based on the evidence and support material provided?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gather examples of sources used in media that you consider credible. Now gather examples of sources used in media that you do not consider credible. Explain why you evaluated these sources in the manner that you did. If a credible source indicates that its own sources were social media, then what?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gather examples of sources used in media that you consider biased. Now gather examples of sources used in media that you do not consider biased. Explain why you evaluated these sources in the manner that you did.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STUDENT STUDY SITE</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <a href="http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e">http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAGE edge for students</strong> provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>