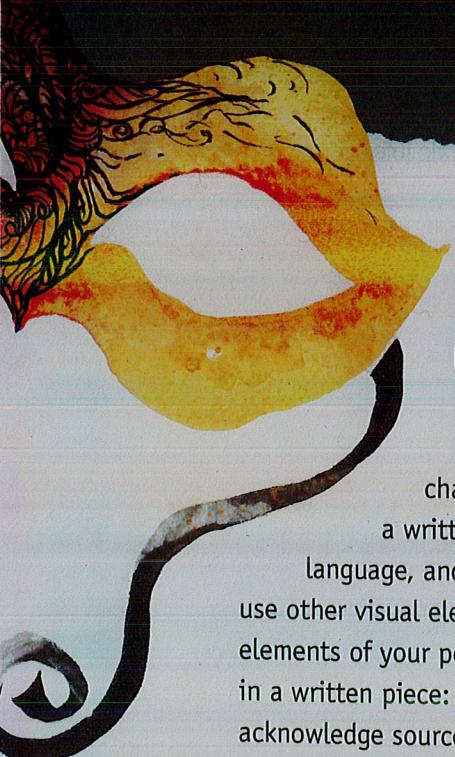


14

Presenting a point of view

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Throughout your life, whether you're working or studying, you will be expected to make speeches and presentations. Most people are daunted by the idea of doing an oral presentation. Learning to present well can save you (and your audiences) a lot of discomfort.

When structured and delivered well, oral presentations can have an immediate effect on the audience. They give you, the speaker, the chance to use a variety of persuasive techniques that are not possible in a written piece – such as hand gestures, facial expressions and other body language, and the tone, volume and pitch of your voice. You may also be able to use other visual elements, such as videos, diagrams and graphs. However, the main elements of your point-of-view response will remain the same in an oral presentation as in a written piece: it must be sustained and reasoned, use supporting evidence, and acknowledge sources correctly and accurately.

Task requirements

Your SAC task for Unit 4, Outcome 2 is to deliver an oral presentation of your point of view on an issue. There are several ways in which you can do this, including:

- a speech (with or without elements such as slides or video)
- a debate
- a video blog.

Whichever form you use, your point of view must be sustained and reasoned, and the issue must have been debated in the media since 1 September of the previous year.

In addition, you will write a statement of intention, explaining the reasons for the choices you make as you plan, write and edit your presentation. This statement will refer to particular choices of language and persuasive techniques, and will relate these to your purpose, audience and context.

There are 40 marks (out of 100 marks for Unit 4) available for this SAC:

- 30 marks for the presentation of a point of view
- 10 marks for the statement of intention.

See the Assessment Sheet on page 226 for sample criteria for this SAC task.

Essential elements checklist

You can adopt any opinion you choose on the given issue, but there are some things you should always do in your point-of-view response. These ensure that your writing or oral presentation is effective and persuasive, and also that it is sustained and reasoned.

- Show that you understand the issue, why it matters and what the main arguments are.
- Develop your argument logically and coherently with a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Substantiate your argument with current and relevant evidence, acknowledging your sources where relevant.
- Anticipate counterarguments to your position and articulate the flaws in these alternative views.
- Speak clearly and fluently, using the conventions of oral presentations such as appropriate body language, eye contact with your audience, and control of the tone, pace and pitch of your voice.

Keys to success

In addition to the essential elements listed above, use the following points to maximise the persuasive impact of your oral presentation.

- Open with lively and engaging remarks – perhaps an anecdote to highlight a personal connection to the issue or to emphasise its relevance to your audience.
- Use a mixture of persuasive techniques – rhetorical questions and inclusive language are two that work well in speeches, but avoid overdoing them.
- Be aware of your audience and involve your listeners if possible, e.g. by asking for a show of hands in response to a question.
- Include some quotations but clearly identify whose words they are and what their point of view is on the issue. Using the terms ‘quote’ and ‘unquote’ at the beginning and ending of the quotation will clearly identify it.
- Present your own point of view. Allow your personality to come through in the language and posture you use in your delivery.

The following sections show you how to prepare, plan, write and deliver a successful oral presentation in the form of a speech.

Sample issue: banning plastic water bottles

The issue considered throughout this chapter to illustrate the elements of a successful oral presentation, and for a sample SAC response, is the question of banning disposable plastic water bottles. This issue recently made global headlines in the United States where, in 2015, the US House of Representatives determined that states could not ban the sale of bottled water in certain areas.



The issue ignited debate about the influence large corporations have on the political process and the wisdom of allowing the sale of water in plastic bottles in other countries, such as Australia. The consumption of water from plastic bottles is particularly topical in light of growing evidence that plastics are harmful to people's health and the environment.

How to research and prepare

Preparing and writing a persuasive speech is easier if you select an issue you care about, particularly as your initial enthusiasm will probably wane once you start looking into the topic more deeply and perhaps find that it is more complicated than it first appeared. Before getting bogged down in facts and figures from your research, have a clear sense of what you think about the issue. What do *you* want to say about it?

Main contention

Your main contention is what *you* think about the issue, expressed in a single sentence. This sentence will form the basis of your argument. It will remind you that this is *your* speech, not someone else's, and help to keep your point of view on track as you research and write.

ACTIVITY

IDENTIFY YOUR MAIN CONTENTION

Write down your main contention or central argument in one sentence:

I think X because Y.

Example: I think disposable plastic water bottles should be banned in Australia because they cause more harm than good.

Purpose and outcome

Now that you have a clearer – if still general – idea about your topic and your position, you can begin researching the issue more thoroughly. As you research, you may even change your mind about your original position.

The research phase can feel messy and overwhelming, leaving you with the impression that everything about 'your' issue has already been said by someone else who said it better than you ever could. Don't be discouraged: uncertainty is part of the process.

There are ways of navigating this galaxy of information. Ask yourself: what is the purpose of my speech? To persuade, yes, but what outcome, more specifically, are you aiming to achieve for your audience? What do you want them to think, feel and/or do by the time your presentation is over? What might a measurable audience response to your presentation look like? Will people join a campaign? Will they sign a petition? Or will they simply be left with something to ponder? Answering these questions can help you to decide which information and persuasive strategies are relevant to your speech.

DECIDE ON YOUR PURPOSE

Set an expected outcome for your speech by completing the sentence:

When I finish speaking, my audience will ...

For example: When I finish speaking, my audience will understand why disposable plastic water bottles are harmful and why they should be banned. My audience will also feel empowered to seek alternatives to buying bottled water.

ACTIVITY

To be effective, your expected outcome should be reasonable. In the example above, it would be unreasonable to set the outcome that plastic water bottles are banned as a result of the speech. Refine the scale of your desired outcome to what you can reasonably expect from the specific audience you are addressing. Adjust your desired outcome to fit a given audience.

Stakeholders and counterarguments

Many writers begin researching their persuasive speech topic confident that their argument is unassailable. One of the reasons that the research phase can seem overwhelming (if you're doing it properly) is that you discover the existence of points of view that contradict the 'obvious' or 'common-sense' position you were so sure of before you became better informed about the issue. Don't despair. Understanding these counterarguments, knowing who holds them and why they defend them will deepen your understanding of the issue and enable you to create a more sophisticated argument.

Most issues will have a variety of **stakeholders**: people who are directly affected by the issue under discussion and have particular views on it. You could begin your research by making a list of all the different stakeholders involved in your issue. As you research, summarise the main stakeholders' positions, identify any evidence that supports their assertions and make notes on any outstanding questions you have. You could also identify counterarguments to these positions. Such a list or table can help you to organise the information you gather in your research. It will also help you to identify who has the most to gain and/or lose from your proposals. Understanding why and the degree to which a stakeholder is affected by the issue will help you to determine which arguments and counterarguments will be most effective for your particular audience.

For example, from our research into banning disposable plastic water bottles, we have summarised some of the stakeholders' positions and identified the evidence used to defend their various assertions. We have articulated some notes or questions we have as the speechwriter, as well as some potential counterarguments. These are summarised in the table on the next page.

Stakeholder	Position	Evidence	Possible counterarguments
Environmental lobby	Plastic particles break up, contaminate the environment and enter the food chain.	Scientific studies published in independent peer-reviewed academic journals.	Plastic manufacturers may contend that this data relates to plastic material already in the environment, which is distinct from current industry practices.
Health lobby	Chemicals from plastics, such as BPA, contaminate food and can lead to health problems in humans.	Scientific studies published in independent peer-reviewed academic journals.	Plastic manufacturers might accuse the health lobby of being alarmist.
Beverage producers	The convenience of bottled water boosts consumption of this vital fluid, improving health. Bottled water also makes clean drinking water available in places where the water is unsafe to drink.	Surveys on average water consumption. Health studies on the benefits of drinking water. Statistics on health risks of consuming unclean water.	Bottled water is not exclusively sold in places where drinking water is unsafe. Stainless steel bottles and drinking fountains offer the same convenience with less harm.
Plastic manufacturers	Plastic is safe for human consumption. The material can be recycled to avoid it entering the environment, so it's also sustainable.	Scientific studies produced and funded by the plastics manufacturing industry.	Only a small percentage of plastic waste gets recycled.

As you research, you will discover a number of stakeholders whose points of view may be in agreement or in conflict with each other. Ask yourself why these stakeholders hold these positions. What is their stake? Is it financial? Political? Ideological? All of the above? Avoid disregarding points of view. You might not respect or agree with a differing opinion, but understanding it will ensure you are better informed and improve your argument.

Having a repository of information and viewpoints on an issue, such as the table above, will enable you to gather and organise your research. It will also help you to make sense of the material when it comes time to write your speech.

ACTIVITY

SUMMARISE STAKEHOLDER VIEWPOINTS

Create a table like the one above, summarising the main stakeholders and their position on the issue you are researching. This gives you an excellent summary of the key facts and arguments you will use in your presentation. Use the fourth column to raise questions and state possible counterarguments.

As you add information to this table, ask yourself these questions:

- Which stakeholders hold similar positions and views?
- Which ones are opposed to each other?
- Which positions are most consistent with your own views?

How to plan and write

Now that you have a sense of which information may work to persuade your audience and the outcome you want to achieve with your speech, it's time to look at structure. A well-structured speech needs to be logically developed. The speech should inform the audience about the broader context of an issue, answering the question: why does this matter? You should clearly articulate your position within this broader context (what are you arguing for?). Your position should then be defended using a combination of arguments based on evidence, just like a written presentation of a viewpoint. Finally, the audience should be given something to do or think about as part of the desired outcome you have in mind.

Using Monroe's Motivated Sequence

There are many ways to structure a speech. Alan Monroe at Purdue University (Indiana, USA) developed one of the most influential techniques in the mid-1930s. Monroe's 'Motivated Sequence' is a way of organising persuasive speeches that inspire people to take action.

According to Monroe, most people respond to a speech by seeking to:

1. be convinced of a speaker's authority
2. understand the issue or problem
3. sympathise with the issue or problem
4. be convinced the speaker's approach to the issue or problem is feasible and beneficial
5. know what they can do to help bring about a resolution to the issue or problem.

Monroe calls these five steps:

1. Attention
2. Need
3. Satisfaction
4. Visualisation
5. Action.

Importantly, the process Monroe describes is internal. He suggests that most people's cognitive processes lead them to respond to information in predictable ways: his five steps. As writers, then, we can use Monroe's steps to anticipate the phases our audience will go through in responding to our speech, helping us to structure our presentation to satisfy the emotional and intellectual needs of our audience.

Here is a chart using Monroe's Motivated Sequence to inform the structure of a speech:

Step	Function	Ideal audience response	Writer options
Attention	To make the audience listen.	'I want to hear what you have to say.'	Tell a story, present a compelling statistic or example that illustrates the issue.
Need	To get the audience to feel a need or want.	'I agree. I have that need/want.'	Identify the context. Why does the issue matter to people?
Satisfaction	To tell the audience how to fill this need or want.	'I see your solution will work.'	Present evidence of past successes; use facts, figures or expert testimony.
Visualisation	To show the audience the benefits of a solution.	'This is a great idea.'	Reintroduce the context. What would the world look like if the audience took your side. Or if they didn't?
Action	To prompt the audience to take action.	'I want it. I'll do it.'	Involve the audience by introducing a challenge or an appeal.

Selecting your information

Understanding the audience you are speaking to and the objectives of your speech will help you to identify the strongest arguments in support of your point of view. Logical, reasonable arguments are not always your most powerful advocates. Consider that most people who smoke cigarettes are well informed about the documented health risks associated with smoking. Emotional appeals might be more effective in persuading an audience of smokers to give up the habit. This could explain why the Australian Government requires graphic images to be placed on the packaging of tobacco products.

So, in deciding on the information that best suits your persuasive needs, consider who exactly you will be talking to. Asking questions about your audience can help you to identify the most relevant and persuasive information and evidence to use in your presentation.

Use language and draw from examples that are appropriate to your issue, audience and purpose.

For example, if you were delivering a speech about banning plastic bottles to an audience of health practitioners, you might emphasise the human health risks associated with the consumption of chemicals from plastics. Your speech might also make a plea to the medical community to help underline these health risks to the broader community. Tailor the information and the call to action to a specific audience for maximum effect.

THINK ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

1. Who will be the audience for your oral presentation?
2. How is your issue relevant to your audience?
3. What does your audience care about?
4. What does your audience *not* care about?
5. Does your audience have any other relevant characteristics that you should take into account (e.g. age, culture, race, gender, religion)?
6. What points of view do you think your audience members will hold on your issue? What might be some of the reasons for audience members holding a point of view opposed to your own?
7. Identify one piece of information that will be especially relevant to and have an impact on your audience, and explain why.

How to present

The delivery of a speech is an important aspect of how an audience will respond to it. Language that sounds conversational and is appropriate for the given audience can make the delivery sound more natural and helps the speaker to build a rapport with the audience. It's acceptable to use contractions such as *can't* instead of *cannot* and *don't* instead of *do not* if doing so sounds more natural for the tone of your presentation.

Use the tone of your voice to help convey your feelings and attitudes towards the issue and the various points of view you will consider. Vary your tone throughout to make your delivery more interesting for the audience, and to signal which opinions you are rejecting and which ones you support. Avoid becoming abusive towards individuals or ideas you don't agree with; remember you are presenting a *reasoned argument*.

Should you use visuals?

Using visual aids such as photographs, charts, diagrams or videos can be effective. However, they can also break the connection you are aiming to establish with the audience. A PowerPoint presentation literally moves you to the sidelines. Before deciding to use visual aids, ask yourself: what is the benefit of showing my audience this material? How do these visuals contribute to the purpose of my speech? Do the visuals clarify the information? Or am I using them just because I can?

Visuals should communicate something more effectively than words alone can.

Adding visuals is often motivated by the needs of a particular audience. A group of five-year-old children, for example, might benefit from a visual aid, whereas in a presentation to an adult audience on the same topic the visuals might seem patronising.

Key tips for successful delivery

► Always number your pages

If all the pages scatter on the floor at the podium, there's still hope.

► Stay on message

You have a point of view to deliver, an argument to defend. Avoid the temptation to meander off topic or show off how much research you've done. Stay focused on the task at hand. If what you're saying does not support your argument or the audience's understanding of the topic, cut it. Remember the purpose you envisioned for your speech. Stick to it.

► Write for the ear

Remember that you're writing a speech, not an essay. People are listening, not reading, so your language and pace need to convey your message immediately. The audience doesn't have the luxury of re-reading something they didn't absorb the first time. Breathe. It sounds simple, but just remembering to take deep breaths between the transitions you present in your speech will help to slow your pace and make you appear more comfortable in front of an audience.

► Practise reading your speech aloud

There's no better way of finding out how long it takes to deliver your speech. Also, it will help you to identify potential issues with your delivery. Are some sentences too long – can you read them without having to take a breath? Do you stumble on certain words? It's much better to identify and deal with these issues in the practice phase than for them to occur when you are being assessed.

How to write a statement of intention

An important part of your SAC task is to write a statement of intention to accompany your speech. This statement is a clear, coherent explanation of the choices you make as you write and edit your speech. It needs to be around 300–500 words.

You can write in the first person or the third person, though first person (e.g. 'I decided to use an informal tone and familiar, everyday examples') is probably easiest. You also need to decide whether to write in the future tense ('I will use an emotional appeal') or the past tense ('I decided to use an emotional appeal'). The future tense is more consistent with the idea of explaining your intentions, and is used in the example below.

For each element you discuss, explain *how* you see the element as working to position and/or persuade the audience to agree.

The elements you could discuss include:

- how you will use form (e.g. in your speech you will engage the audience by asking questions, or in your video blog you will use a wide range of visual material)
- the ways in which you structure your argument, including how you will begin and/or end your presentation
- the persuasive strategies you will use (e.g. anecdote, analogy, expert or authority figures, evidence, attacks, emotional appeals, rebuttal)
- your use of style and tone, and particular choices of words and images.

Sample SAC response

The following speech presents a point of view on the issue of banning plastic water bottles. The intended audience is secondary students attending a school function. The aim of the speech is to encourage students to consider alternatives to buying water in plastic bottles.

- ① Use descriptive language to set the tone and develop the context of your speech.
- ② Direct address ('you') can help your audience relate to what you have to say, helping to satisfy the Attention step of Monroe's Motivated Sequence.
- ③ Ensure that your hook relates to your topic. It should be interesting, funny, profound *and* relevant. An irrelevant hook will leave your audience feeling your opening is just a distraction that's been tacked on; they may begin questioning how well you understand the topic.
- ④ Demonstrate an understanding of the issue through the careful selection and synthesis of information to establish and support a particular position.
- ⑤ Use relevant and authoritative sources to present information and build your arguments. Referring to your sources within the speech will demonstrate your research, bolster your credibility and demonstrate the Need step of Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

Imagine you're thirsty. So you drink a cool, refreshing liquid that's vital to your survival.

Now imagine that you've paid for the drink even though you could easily have got it for free.

And imagine that the container you've drunk the water from is made of dangerous chemicals that can seriously affect your health.①

Now imagine that, when you throw the container away, it will kill animals and contaminate the environment for hundreds or even thousands of years, long after your thirst is quenched and you and I are gone.②

Well you don't have to imagine it. Because that's what happens when you buy, consume and discard a bottle of water.③

Disposable plastic water bottles contribute to the slurry of plastic waste that contaminates our planet, kills our animals and harms ourselves. They should be banned.④

According to research published in the respected journal PLOS ONE in 2014, more than five trillion pieces of plastic, collectively weighing nearly 269,000 tonnes, are floating in the world's oceans. That plastic causes damage throughout the food chain as animals ingest the plastic and then ingest each other.

According to the website of environmental organisation One World One Ocean, once plastic ends up in the environment it never goes away.⑤

Disposable plastic water bottles should be banned.

Not convinced?

Let's talk about BPA. Bisphenol A is a synthetic oestrogen used in plastic that is found in the lining of tins, bottles and so on. It's nasty. BPA migrates into food and drink and has been linked to a number of health problems such as cancer, neurological issues, diabetes and reproductive difficulties.

Australian and New Zealand food safety standards will tell you the overwhelming weight of scientific opinion is that there is no health or safety issue at the levels we're exposed to.

Now, those studies are often conducted by the companies that make and sell plastics. So I'll let you decide where you get your information.

I'm not a zealot. I understand that plastic is useful. I understand that plastic is cheap to produce and that many of the products we use and rely on are made of the stuff. But there's too much plastic in the world. And we can do something to reduce the amount that's out there.

We can ban the sale of plastic water bottles. It would be good for our health, good for the environment and good for our wallets.

'Why not just recycle the bottles?' you may ask. It seems like a good solution. But while recycling is important, it alone is not the answer. According to Terrie-Ann Johnson, CEO of Clean Up Australia, less than 30 per cent of plastic bottles are recycled in most states.^⑥

So what can we do?

We can cry. We can get mad. We can write pithy slogans on bits of cardboard and march down the street feeling righteous.

Or we can do something constructive. We can use alternatives to plastic where possible, to reduce the amount of this noxious material in the environment. We can ban the sale of drinking water in plastic bottles tomorrow but we can stop buying them today.

But maybe I haven't convinced you yet. Maybe you think I'm an alarmist. Maybe you don't believe that plastic is bad for your health. Maybe you believe the environment doesn't need our help?

Well then, you may still care about your wallet.

Bottled water is expensive.

According to the not-for-profit educational site Cool Australia, Australians spend over 500 million dollars on bottled water every year. 500 million dollars.^⑦

The average cost of a litre of tap water in Australia is 0.001 cents. What else can you buy that's so good and so vital, for so little?^⑧

So instead of buying bottled water, get a stainless steel or a glass bottle that you can refill and take with you.

If you're at a public event, like a music festival, visit the mobile water station instead of buying water.^⑨

Australian tap water is clean, healthy and (nearly) free. You can find a source of fresh drinking water in most parks and schools. By world standards our drinking water alone is enough to qualify us as the lucky country.

Not buying water in a plastic bottle can help you save money, save the environment and save your health.^⑩

Don't buy plastic. You can start that today.^⑪

Banning the sale of plastic bottles may take a little longer. But we should do it. Future generations will thank us.

Thank you.

^⑥ Anticipate and respond to potential counterarguments. Doing so will demonstrate a deep understanding of the topic. It will also help disarm your opponents.

^⑦ Repeat short statements of key facts to deepen their impact and make them more memorable for the audience.

^⑧ Spell out symbols and abbreviations (cents, kilos etc.) so they sound conversational and so you don't need to remember what they mean.

^⑨ Offer practical solutions to the issue so the audience can agree on a way forward – the Satisfaction step in Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

^⑩ The Visualisation step of Monroe's Motivated Sequence is about offering the audience a glimpse of what the future might be, if your advice is followed.

^⑪ Give the audience something to do or think about. Empowering the audience is the essence of the Action step in Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

Citations

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Bottled Water, Cool Australia, coolaustralia.org

[OneWorldOneOcean.com](http://oneworldoneocean.com)

Sample statement of intention

My oral presentation aims to support banning the sale of water in plastic bottles in Australia. Recent studies have added weight to mounting concerns about the damage that plastics do to the environment and to human health. Recent attempts to ban plastic bottles in the United States have failed, which has reinvigorated the debate among health and environmental advocates. The recent climate summit in Paris has also ensured that environmental issues remain at the forefront of the media.

One of the persuasive strategies that I will employ in my oral presentation is the use of key data taken from reliable sources on the physical and environment toll of plastics. I will also use a range of evidence, including statistics, research and facts that support the banning of plastic bottles.

I will include a variety of appeals to help persuade my audience to support a ban on plastic water bottles. Since my audience is secondary students, I will use informal language and draw on examples familiar to that audience to help them relate to the topic. I will begin by making an emotional appeal to my audience by using direct address ('imagine you are...'). This technique will engage the audience and identify them as part of the problem and solution. I will incorporate inclusive language throughout, such as 'we' and 'us', to ensure the presentation speaks directly to the audience. Appeals to common sense will show how the bottling and selling of water in Australia is largely unnecessary as Australian tap water is generally safe and readily accessible. I will appeal to reason by demonstrating that purchasing bottled water is an unnecessary expense and that adopting alternatives to purchasing bottled water can result in significant financial savings.

Throughout my presentation, I will employ a range of public speaking techniques to enhance my performance. I will use pauses to add emphasis to the key points of my argument, and I aim to speak steadily and clearly, so that the audience is able to hear each of my supporting arguments. I have a tendency to rush through presentations when I am nervous, so I would like focus on my pitch and pace. As a result, I hope to convince my audience to support a ban and encourage them to adopt alternatives to buying bottled water.