

## **Persuasive Oratory- Writing For A Cause**

Choosing a topic for Original Oratory is often a challenge. Many competitors write about subjects that they think will get under their audience's skin. But the most important element of O.O. is to choose a topic that has affected you personally. If you give a persuasive oratory focused on a cause, its main purpose is to persuade the audience to side with a particular opinion or become interested in supporting a particular cause, and having a personal connection with your O.O. subject is the best way to reach your audience. Here are some basic tips for how to write a persuasive original oratory:

1. Start off with a brilliant introduction. One of the best ways to begin your speech is with an anecdote – a brief, but detailed account of a personal experience you've had or a personal experience someone close to you has had. Don't just make something up that you think sounds good, or it will come across as phony. Think of memorable moments in your life that share themes others will be able to connect with. Tell the story and then lead into a more thorough discussion of your topic. This shows your audience that you care about your cause and you are invested in your topic.
2. Narrow it down. In a cause oratory, you can't simply talk about one huge issue, such as world hunger. You have to narrow it down to something your audience can identify with on a local level. For example, you might begin an oratory with a personal recollection of how harrowing and humbling it is to see a homeless person on the side of the street begging for food, and then transition into talking about

what homelessness as a whole is, how it affects people, and what others can do to help.

3. Decide on a few core points you want to get across. You should, of course, have one main idea you want to convey in your speech, such as “homelessness is bad and we can fix it,” but you could break this down into smaller sections to make it easier for your audience to digest: “homelessness affects everyone (current unemployment rates and foreclosures, women and children affected), homelessness is not harmless (it can lead to a life of crime, etc), people all over the world are making strides to end homelessness (charity organizations, etc).” Try to come up with three main reasons that support your main argument, and stress those points throughout your speech, backing them up with examples.

4. Use research to support your cause. A good oratory has a balance of stories and statistics – you need numbers and facts your audience can rely on instead of just your personal anecdotes, no matter how compelling they may be. Use at least three statistics or pieces of evidence from three different sources to help explain your reasoning for why you think your cause is worth further scrutiny. Don’t forget to use reputable sources (sorry, Wikipedia).

5. Discuss opposition, if any. If you’re arguing for a cause other people care about, chances are that some people will disagree with your opinion. You need to address the opposition or counterargument and then develop a brief rebuttal to that (this goes back to basic debate training). Don’t trash-talk. Simply address the opposing argument and use your research to refute it. You should be

well-versed in your topic, so it shouldn't be difficult to find some hard evidence that defeats the counterargument.

6. End by reaffirming your position and reminding your audience of the anecdote. Once again, state the core thoughts you want to get across in your oratory. Then, bring your audience full-circle and remind them of the anecdote you used to start off the speech. This is the most effective way to ensure they get your point and that your performance is memorable.

Most importantly, you should choose a topic you relate to personally. Going after a particular topic simply because you think others will be interested in it right now isn't going to get you anywhere unless you have a connection to it – don't give a speech on swine flu because it's a hot topic in the news lately. Give the speech because you knew someone with swine flu and you got sick of other people making jokes about it when he was in the hospital. Also, think hard about whether you'll still want to give this speech in five months. If you write a great original oratory, it should be able to shine year-round.