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A Guide for Teachers Who Direct Prose
Reading, Poetry Interpretation and
Persuasive Speaking Contests

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FOREWORD

This bulletin was designed to provide students and teachers with a discussion of the principles of prose reading, poetry interpretation and persuasive speaking. It may also serve as a stimulus toward further study of interpretation and persuasion.

The student activities conferences sponsored by the League are another source of training for these activities.

The authors wish to express their gratitude to Jesse J. Villarreal, chairman, department of speech, The University of Texas, and to R. J. Kidd, League Director, for their help and encouragement. We also thank Prof. Ernest R. Hardin, who teaches the interpretation courses in the Department of Speech at The University of Texas, for reading the manuscript and offering helpful suggestions.

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INTRODUCTION

Russian achievements in space exploration set off a great debate on the methods and goals of American education. That debate continues, and there is little hope for agreement between the factions.

One goal, however, meets with general accord. That is that the graduate of the public school should be proficient in the use of language. This includes efficiency in reading, writing and speaking.

The underlying assumption of this bulletin is that formal speech training is desirable for the student if he is to master his own language, and that such mastery is a goal of the public education system.

One method of achieving effective speech is by use of contests as an adjunct to thorough training in the fundamentals of speech organization, content, style and delivery. The contest as a supplement to training has always been the goal of the League.

The League has changed the speech contests to keep them abreast of trends in speech education. The new contests, prose reading, poetry interpretation and persuasive speaking, can be adapted to classroom training more easily than the old events.

The purpose of the persuasive speaking contest is to train students to think, organize their thoughts and express them clearly and convincingly to an audience. This encourages students to read widely in American government, history and in current events. Achievement of the purposes of the persuasive speaking contest should be a joint responsibility of teachers of speech and social studies.

The purposes of prose reading and poetry interpretation are similar. For the former the goal is to stimulate the student toward mastering the thought and content of worthwhile literature and in conveying the essence of such information to an audience. For the latter the purpose is to provide incentive for mastering the thought of worthwhile poetry and in conveying that thought effectively to an audience. The mastery of such literature is not the simple matter of reading a poem or prose selection and deciding what one thinks it means, and then telling that to an audience. Oral interpretation of literature is one means of achieving better understanding and appreciation of the literary arts. It involves collateral study in literary criticism and other areas. It is in this collateral study that full cooperation between speech, English and other teachers is needed if the goals are to be realized.

*Interpretation is the art of communicating
to an audience, from the printed page, a
work of literary art in its intellectual,
emotional, and aesthetic entirety.*

— Charlotte I. Lee

*The poet keeps his secret for those who have
earned the right to receive it.*

— J. Isaacs

PROSE READING AND POETRY INTERPRETATION CONTESTS

By MARTIN T. TODARO

The speech contest is not an end in itself. It is just one method of enriching classroom training. People who participate in forensics and those who conduct the programs sometimes seem caught up in the spring fever of winning trophies. They strive mightily to shine up the class “stars.” They pore over contest rules as if they were statutory law and they were lawyers.

The contest should be valued for its own virtues. Winning should not be the sole goal of the contestant nor teacher.

This booklet is to give information on the speech contests, but its broader purposes are:

1. To discuss values of oral interpretation;
2. To present some basic principles of interpretation within the framework of the fundamentals of effective oral communication;
3. To provide a selected bibliography.

Some Values of Oral Interpretation

When students and teachers combine their intellectual and emotional resources to prepare for oral interpretation of literature they become involved in one of the most thrilling mysteries of education.

The pursuit and re-creation of meaning are as exciting an adventure as can be found in education. Any student who has read “Richard Cory” knows something of this excitement; knows of the painstaking

care which must be exercised in observing with the author, Edward Arlington Robinson, the facts about Cory, including his dress, trips to town, physical characteristics, bank account, friends and acquaintances and their living conditions and finally, the fact of his suicide.

Robinson provides the facts and leaves the reader to guess at the reason or reasons for Cory's death. The author refuses to make specific inferences from the facts he presented. Until a reader can develop a reasonable explanation for the tragedy, a hypothesis to explain the facts, he is incapable of communicating the mystery to an audience.

Anyone who sets out to interpret orally such a work of art must first learn to exercise all of the skills involved in the search for meaning. The search is one of the great values of oral interpretation.

There are many mysteries not connected with murder or suicide. Journalists and national leaders in their public addresses present the awful enigmas of contemporary history.

In part these mysteries grow out of what Henry James once called the "inexhaustible sensibility" of the artist. Those less responsive to the infinite variety surrounding them must search the men of literature for their observations and the meanings they infer from them.

The oral interpretation of literature and the new League contests in prose reading and poetry interpretation involve the search for, and the communication of, these mysteries.

Oral interpretation also involves the vocal and physical techniques used in communicating discoveries, information, inferences, insights, judgments, sympathies and values to an audience.

Communication skill is needed, not only by the professional actor, but by all educated persons. It is vital to the lucid propagation of all ideas. Oral communication is one important form.

Problems in Oral Communication

One of the more common models for demonstrating the problems of oral communication includes as the system's major components source, transmitter, channel, receiver and destination. It will be helpful to begin by viewing interpretation contests as specific forms of this communications model or system.

There are two reasons for using this approach.

First, it will reveal the most basic of relationships in speech education—the relationship between a specific speech form and the general fundamentals upon which all of these forms are built.

Second, it will provide a simple method for suggesting the nature and location of problems of speech communication.

For instance, suppose that a student, particularly interested in studying oral interpretation of poetry and, hoping to become skillful enough to represent his school in the League contest, is asked by his teacher to select a poem and read it in class the next day.

The student selected "Lines Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802." The class did not react at all as expected. They were not impressed with the recitation of sights from the bridge. They seemed to miss all the beauty and meaning of the poem.

What happened as he stood before the class? The student was the "source" of the "signal" or message. The student's presentation was affected by his native talents, inferences from observations, attitudes, way of talking, judgments, learned behavior and skills—everything that has gone before to shape him as a person.

This should give an idea of the complex nature of the human being as a source of messages in a communications system.

The second component of the system is the "transmitter" and this involves the student. The transmitter is his vocal mechanism from the beginning of the process by which it converted his understanding of and feelings about Wordsworth's poem into some sort of nervous impulses to his speech organs which in turn converted them into noises, sound energy, language. This was the code or "signal" which passed through the "channel" of air to the class or audience, some of whom received some of the "signals" sent out.

The ear of any member of the audience was the "receiver." It can take the "signals" being carried through the air, convert them into mechanical energy in the middle ear, and then further convert them until they pass along a nerve, reach the "decoding" equipment of the listener.

But each listener has his own special native talents, observations, attitudes, way of talking, judgments, learned behavior and skills, all of which act upon the signal to give it special meaning for him.

The communication model shows that the imparting of meaning is not simple, but an exciting and challenging educational experience calling for the finest resources of student and teacher.

"Noise" presents another problem. By "noise" is meant all sources of error which may act to interfere in any way with the system and the reception of the message.

"Noise" may be present at the source and transmitter, in the channel,

or at the receiver and destination of the system. Some potential sources of error are:

- A. At the source
 - 1. Negative attitude of the speaker about himself, his audience, reading aloud, the message itself
 - 2. Inadequate information about the selection, its author, and the circumstances that produced it
 - 3. Vocal mechanism inadequate for the task
- B. In the channel
 - 1. Outside noises
 - 2. Size of the room
 - 3. Distortion caused by public address system
- C. At the receiver
 - 1. Inadequate span of attention of audience
 - 2. Problems of hearing loss
- D. At the destination
 - 1. Personal problems of listener compete with message for attention
 - 2. Inadequate orientation of listener to the activity
 - 3. Inadequate preparation of listener
 - 4. Conflict between listener's and speaker's interpretation

All of the above could be causes of the failure of the speaker to communicate effectively.

The student should apply the problem and try to eliminate as many sources of noise or error as possible.

Preparation by the Participant

1. Oral interpretation involves an effort both to communicate meanings, your own and those of others, and development of physical and vocal techniques needed to convey those meanings to an audience. This effect is subject to the same problems as any communication system. The student should strive to remove as much "noise" from the system as possible.

2. Read widely in the works of the five authors or poets designated each year by the League. A hurried scanning is not sufficient. It isn't necessary to study each article or poem for its last vestige of meaning, but the student should read until "struck" by the essential meaning. Copy it. Continue reading and adding to a collection of favorites.

The student should not permit anyone to select poems or prose

passages for him. He is part of the communication system and unless the message in the selection arises from his own delight and respect for it, chance of "noise" interfering with oral interpretation is great. Advice can be valuable, but the final selections should be made by the participant.

3. Read as widely as possible about the authors selected by the League. The League will send a bibliography of books about them to aid in the study. This research should assist the student in solving the mysteries of meaning of the various works. A poet's life may be reflected in his works.

4. With the assistance of the teacher, select eight or ten poems or passages from each of the five authors. Don't narrow your choice to one before early in the spring. Selections should be made to afford a wide range of experience in interpretation.

5. Edit each poem or selection until it takes no longer than five to six minutes to read. The teacher should be asked to advise, but not to do, this final editing.

The one or two minutes not used in giving the selection will be of value to give the audience an introduction to the author and selection. Success or failure in oral interpretation depends upon re-creation of the work of art itself, but an audience with little or no understanding of that work is a "destination" in which the "noise" is deafening.

The eight or ten preliminary selections should be studied and prepared as carefully as if they were all to be used in the contest. This will give the participant a much richer educational experience and a better background for oral interpretation of the final selection.

6. As the participant goes through the steps of preparation he becomes aware of meanings and possible techniques for communicating them. The editing of each selection impresses upon the participant central and peripheral meanings.

Now the student should intensify his study of the selections. Speech and English teachers can assist in this intense effort to unravel the mysteries of the selection. They should suggest techniques from related fields including semantics, psychology, sociology, and literary criticism. Reading in related fields should be done under the guidance of a teacher.

7. Once the participant has understood the meanings of his selections he has the problem of developing physical and vocal techniques for communication. This does not mean acting, but simply the pleasantness of voice quality, distinctness or clarity of expression, variety or

vividness of expression and appropriate physical bearing and responsiveness to the ideas in the selection.

However, too many students of oral interpretation put too much emphasis on vocal and physical techniques, to the detriment of their study of the literature itself. The result can be a method of delivery as artificial and foreign to the principles of effective communication as is the manner of some debaters.

Marks of this artificiality are obvious in too carefully planned physical activities such as a "sweet" smile and ostentatious movements to achieve transition. Further evidences of this overemphasis are too sudden an application of force, pitch, or rate variation; articulation which is too precise; exaggerated intonation and stress patterns.

Preparation by the Teacher

The teacher plays a vital role in the preparation of the student. This assistance should be abundant, but as nonprescriptive as possible. Contests in interpretation have certain purposes, and each purpose relates to the student's growth.

The teacher should prepare as thoroughly as possible so as to be able to provide answers and guidance when needed. Just as important, the teacher should be ready to ask the student questions that will arouse curiosity and motivate him to satisfy it.

Speech teachers are primarily concerned with vocal and physical techniques of imparting meaning to an audience, but it is important that they study in those fields collateral to oral interpretation. Teachers in other fields can be helpful, and the speech teacher should be prepared to understand them when they offer assistance.

Psychology is a field which contributes to an understanding of communication. Reading in this field will aid greatly in the teacher's understanding of oral interpretation and give a fresh viewpoint for viewing this art.

Other fields can contribute equally to a deeper understanding.

Contest Rules

Rules for the interpretation contests appear in the *Constitution and Contest Rules*. Questions on interpretation of rules should be sent to the State Office.

If an ambiguity in rules is discovered during a tournament or

district or regional meet and no one from the League is available to resolve it, the sponsors should be called together for a discussion and decision by vote on the way the rule is to be applied at that meet. The League State Office must be notified of such rulings.

Collateral and Related Fields

This bibliography is primarily for the teachers' use. The level of difficulty of the materials varies widely, and reading by the student should be done under the guidance of a teacher of speech, drama, or English.

A. Oral Interpretation

1. Baird, A. Craig and Franklin H. Knower. *General Speech: An Introduction*. Second Edition. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1957. (For the student or teacher who needs an elementary introduction to oral reading, Chapter 19 of this text is recommended.)
2. Black, John W. and Wilbur E. Moore. *Speech: Code, Meaning, and Communication*. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1955. (Chapters 12–13 will provide the teacher with a more advanced discussion of oral interpretation.)
3. Lee, Charlotte I. *Oral Interpretation*. 2nd Edition. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959. (This book is generally regarded as one of the best in its field.)
4. Parrish, Wayland Maxfield. *Reading Aloud*. Third Edition. The Ronald Press Company, 1953. (This is another leading text for university courses in oral interpretation.)
5. Smith, Joseph F. and James R. Linn. *Skill in Reading Aloud*. Harper & Brothers, 1960. (An excellent, up-to-date university text. It is especially recommended for high school speech teachers.)

B. Collateral Fields

6. Anderson, Virgil A. *Training the Speaking Voice*. Oxford University Press, 1942. (This book will assist the teacher in training the voices of students.)
7. Brooks, Cleanth Jr. and Robert Penn Warren. *Understanding Poetry*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960. (This book discusses the standard methods of analysis of form and meaning in poetry.)

8. Hayakawa, S. I. *Language in Thought and Action*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949. (Recommended for teachers. This book contains an elementary discussion of general semantics and literature.)
9. Lucas, F. L. *Literature and Psychology*. The University of Michigan Press, 1957. (Recommended for teachers. The analysis of literature from the viewpoint of a psychologist.)

This bibliography is not meant to substitute for a teacher or student browsing through the many books which could have been included. For every book included, several other excellent ones could have been. Teacher and student should study as much of the literature on oral interpretation and its related fields as possible.

Persuasion is a free people's substitute for tyranny.

— Paul L. Soper¹

*Persuasion is not just for the statesmen, the public speaker,
the editorial writer, and the pamphleteer—it is for everyone.*

— Wayne C. Minnick²

THE PERSUASIVE SPEAKING CONTEST

By J. REX WIER

Each individual is constantly the target of a multitude of attempts to persuade him to purchase something, to vote for someone, or to accept a particular viewpoint. The persuasive speaking contest is a new contest for the Interscholastic League, but it is a type of speech that has been recognized for more than 2,400 years.

Speeches are classified according to purpose and method of delivery. The main purposes of speeches generally recognized today are those to inform, to persuade, and to entertain.

Methods of delivery include memorization, delivery from manuscript, extemporaneous delivery and impromptu delivery. Extemporaneous delivery implies careful preparation and planning in all phases of the speech except the actual wording of the sentences which is evolved as the speaker speaks. Impromptu delivery suggests speaking without previous preparation.

The extemporaneous speaking contest has been a part of the League speech contests for a number of years. This contest and the persuasive speaking contest are closely related. The student and teacher should understand the aims and purposes of each of these contests and be able to discriminate between them. In order to make these two contests clear, the following introductions to both are taken from the *Constitution and Contest Rules*.

Extemporaneous Speaking

(Informative Speaking)

The purpose of this contest is to stimulate an active interest in current affairs at the state, national and international levels, and to learn to

¹ Soper, Paul L. *Basic Public Speaking*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956, p. 242.

² Minnick, Wayne C. *The Art of Persuasion*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., p. 14.

present *extemporaneously* the facts about a subject as they appear in the best available sources of information in a clear and impartial manner. This contest is an exercise in clear thinking and informing the public on the issues and concerns of the American people. The objective is *information*, interestingly told, and should not include an attempt to change the listener's mind except as the information itself may do so.

Persuasive Speaking

The purpose of this contest is to train the student to analyze a current issue, determine a point of view for himself, and then to organize and deliver *extemporaneously* a speech that seeks to persuade his listeners to agree with his viewpoint. The objective is to reinforce the views of listeners who already believe as the speaker does, but even more so, to bring those of neutral or opposite views around to the speaker's beliefs or proposed course of action.

. . . this contest should appeal to those who have a strong argumentative urge and who wish to advocate reforms or outline solutions for current problems.

Whether the student is interested in informing or persuading his audience, the major purpose of these contests is to provide an educational experience which will enable him to express his ideas more clearly. The contestant should concentrate on preparing the best possible speech that comprehensive research, composition and delivery will produce.

The major purposes of this section on persuasive speaking are:

1. To discuss the values of persuasive speaking
2. To present some basic principles of public speaking within the framework of the fundamentals of effective communication
3. To provide a selected bibliography.

Some Values of Persuasive Speaking

An executive of a large corporation recently stated in a public speech that he knew of many competent employees who could not advance in rank because they were incapable of expressing their ideas to others. Some of the employees who were perhaps less gifted were able to advance because they could express themselves clearly and quickly. Both the extemporaneous speaking contest and the persuasive speaking contest should assist the student to communicate his ideas to an audience of one or one thousand.

One is engaged in the persuasive processes either as a speaker or as

a listener during most of his waking hours. The discussion as to whether the "gang" should go to a movie or go bowling is usually decided by persuasion. One is amazed when a record is kept of the number of attempts used to persuade someone else or to persuade oneself.

Can an individual fulfill the role of a responsible citizen if he is unaware that democracy centers around this conflict of persuaders? Everyone, not just speech students and contestants, should study this vital element of a free society.

Wayne C. Minnick, whose quotation headed this section, points out the practical values that come from the study of persuasion:

- (1) an invaluable preparation for exercising good citizenship in a democracy;
- (2) a providing of the individual with effective criteria for evaluating the persuasion that is intended to influence his conduct;
- (3) a providing of skills to assist a person to achieve his personal ambitions and goals; and
- (4) providing a catalyst in personal relationships.

Problems in Persuasive Speaking

Sanborn³ defines persuasion as a process, carried on through speech, in which the *communicator* wishes his listeners or readers to respond in a predetermined manner toward a proposition. Berlo⁴ relates persuasion and communication, "as an intent to secure belief or gain acceptance on the part of the receiver, by the communicator or source."

The same basic elements of communication in persuasive speaking are those found in oral interpretation. The major difference lies in the source. In persuasive speaking the speaker is the source, whereas in oral interpretation the work of the author is more directly related in the source. The speaker will fail to persuade, just as the interpreter will fail to communicate the author's intent, if all phases of the communication process do not function well.

The communication model involves the source or signal or message, the transmitter or vocal mechanism, the channel or space, the receiver and the evaluation by the receiver.

Noise includes all sources of error which may interfere in any way in

³ Sanborn, George A. "The Unity of Persuasion," *Western Speech*, XIX, #3, May, 1955, p. 7.

⁴ Berlo, David K. *The Process of Communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960, p. 228.

the communication process. Some potential sources of “noise” or error are:

- A. At the source
 - 1. Inadequate information about the general topic or the specific topic
 - 2. Inability to set a goal or specific purpose
 - 3. Attitudes about the occasion, the audience, the judge or the speaker himself
 - 4. Poor structure or organization of the speech
 - 5. Faulty reasoning-relationships
 - 6. Poor language (coding) choice
- B. At the transmitter
 - 1. Vocal problems, such as hoarseness or harshness or poor quality
 - 2. Problems in diction and dialect that interfere with intelligibility, etc.
- C. In the channel
 - 1. Outside noises such as automobiles and airplanes
 - 2. The location of the speaker in relation to his audience and the size of that audience
 - 3. The lighting which may interfere with the ability of the speaker to see the reactions of the audience or the audience.
- D. At the receiver
 - 1. The physical condition of the receiver, such as the judge who has judged for four consecutive hours
 - 2. The physical condition of the room may produce factors which interfere with attention
- E. At the destination
 - 1. Inability of the audience to follow the structure or organization of the speaker’s ideas
 - 2. Inadequate knowledge of the speaker’s topic
 - 3. Conflicting opinions about the judgments or evaluations of the speaker
 - 4. Personal problems of the listener.

This list of a few “noises” is presented to assist the contestant to think about these problems in a more objective way. The student should attempt to analyze his speech in terms of the communication model instead of complaining that “all judges are crazy.” Where did the student fail in this process? The student did fail if he did not persuade the audience.

Preparation by the Participant

1. The purpose of the persuasive speaking contest is to persuade an audience to agree with the speaker's viewpoint. Persuasive speaking is essentially good public speaking or good oral communication. The contestant should be aware of the noise-factor or error possibilities in each speaking situation.

2. The student should read as widely as possible in current news periodicals and newspapers and listen to radio news programs and watch television newscasts. He should learn about all of the sources available in the community. The city or school library will provide resources for the contestant.

3. The Leaguer will carry sample topics from time to time. See if persuasive topics can be phrased from the information that has been collected. Try to relate the materials to some general, then specific topics.

4. Practice organizing the materials into speeches using the sample topics collected. See how many topics are related to the materials available. Learn to adapt materials to different topics, provided they are related.

Brown has stated that "the human mind cries for patterns," in his book *Introduction to Speech*. Listeners tend to relate words and ideas into patterns or structures. Categories and other artificial devices are needed to clarify and relate these elements to previous experiences. There are many patterns that may be used to organize ideas. Select the one that best fits the materials available.

5. The best friend of good organization is a comprehensive outline. The outline should act as a "blueprint" or map for guiding the speaker. Remember that the outline is the speaker's servant, not the master. Follow some standard format, but do not permit the outline to rule. Do not hesitate to deviate from the outline to clarify or add additional information to an idea.

The speech-outline usually is divided into three basic parts; the introduction, the body and the conclusion. This process may be found in detail in any of the suggested texts on public speaking in the bibliography.

6. The selection of the main ideas or main points is usually the greatest problem of a beginning speaker. There is no one way to decide what the main ideas are. One method is to write down a list of all the possible points or ideas that may have any possible use in the speech.

This survey or list may grow as large as fifty statements. They should be reduced to as few main ideas as possible. See if from one to three main ideas can be selected to become the basis of the speech or signal. It may be necessary to combine some of the ideas to form a more basic idea. Practice this process so that it can be done within the time limits of preparation.

Keep the receiver uppermost in mind when selecting the main points or ideas. The pattern may follow a time sequence, a space sequence or a topical sequence. It may be formulated on a problem-solution or cause-and-effect pattern. Good patterns help prevent noise.

7. The next step is the transmission or delivery of the ideas. Good oral presentation assists in preventing "noise" in the signal. Does the voice serve as a medium to communicate ideas, rather than call attention to specific vocal techniques, or the lack thereof? The voice should never be like a neon sign, "How pretty is my diction!" or "Do you hear this beautiful voice?"

Do not neglect another channel of communication, the eyes. Directness and conversational style are stressed today in speech. Look at the audience, not over them, not under them, not around them. Listeners tend to mistrust those persons who will not "look them in the eye." Public speaking is considered an extension of informal conversation, the discussion of ideas with a receiver as a non-vocal partner.

If the speaker concentrates on ideas, gesturing should not be a problem. Do not attempt to work out a series of gestures before giving the speech. "Do what comes naturally," as long as it fits the ideas and presentation of the speech.

8. Practice each of the previous steps as often as possible. Learn the process, the method of quickly developing a persuasive speech from personal knowledge and resource materials. Do not attempt to memorize any specific speeches. Each speaker should find out those methods of practice that are best for him. The persuasive speaking contest requires extemporaneous delivery, which is prepared, but not memorized word-for-word. This has been described as delivery coming from *oral thought*.

The greatest satisfaction that should be achieved by the speaker is the knowledge that the best possible job was done. Naturally everyone likes to win, but if winning is the only goal, the purpose of the contest will be defeated.

The speaker's job is to persuade the judge-audience-receiver that his speech was the best presented. If the speaker does not win, he did not

do the best job of persuasion. Do not alibi. Remember that you are gaining skills in the most important oral process in a democracy. Resolve to do a better job next time. No one can take from the speaker that which is learned.

Preparation by the Teacher

The role of the teacher in preparing students for speech contests is primarily one of guidance. There are a few teachers who write speeches for their students, but fortunately they are few. The greatest value of the teacher lies in the ability to act as a catalytic agent, spurring the student to put forth that extra effort which will make a better speech. Teachers are frequently tempted to tell the student exactly "how it should be done." The student will derive greater benefit from the work he does himself. The teacher should be the resource person, available to help and to guide, but not to write the speech for the student.

There is some confusion concerning the definition of a persuasive speech. As many teachers know, today speeches are generally classified according to the major goal or emphasis of the speech. In general, three basic purposes are recognized, although these are subdivided by some authors. The most common classification includes the speech to inform, the speech to persuade, and the speech to entertain. These definitions are not mutually exclusive. Some informative speeches may be persuasive, whereas some persuasive speeches may be most informative. One of the best illustrations lies in the current controversy centering around the relationship between smoking tobacco and the incidence of lung cancer. An informative speech dealing with the ratio of lung cancer to the number of cigarettes smoked may persuade some listeners that smoking is bad. On the other hand, a persuasive speech, on either side of the topic, may be very informative to the listener. A humorous speech may also be informative or persuasive.

At times, persuasive speaking almost becomes "persuasive" speaking, in the haggling over definition. Some authors divide persuasion into two or three areas consisting of the speech to stimulate, the speech to convince and the speech to actuate. The general term "persuasive speaking" covers all of the above divisions. The latter two types are more appropriate for the persuasive speaking contest.

Another confusion lies in the concept of whether a persuasive speech should consist primarily of psychological (emotional) or logical (reasoned) appeals. This constitutes a verbal division of a process that is

much easier to divide verbally than in reality. A good persuasive speech contains both types of appeals. It must be remembered that these appeals are divided for the convenience of teaching these principles to students. Too often logical appeals are discussed as if logic were something that existed in a vacuum. George A. Sanborn pointed out that neither ordinary listeners nor critics are capable of identifying distinct "emotional" or "rational" (logical) content, and that the emotion-reason dichotomy does not exist in persuasion-in-process.⁵

The persuasive speech has also been called the argumentative speech, the speech of advocacy, and even a propaganda speech. Sanborn has shown that persuasion can cover all these areas.

A single term, having one definition, can cover the process of influencing thought and action through oral discourse, and persuasion appears to be such a term.⁶

The greatest assistance that a teacher can give a student is to guide him in developing the ability to organize materials into a logical structure-sequence, prepare an effective outline, and deliver the speech extemporaneously.

Extemporaneous delivery has been referred to several times in this section and is found in the introductions to both the extemporaneous speaking and the persuasive speaking contests. The Eastern States Speech Association Code expresses the great advantages of extemporaneous delivery most aptly:

Hence, this Association recommends that the so-called extemporaneous method of preparing and delivering contest speeches. This method should not be confused with the impromptu method, in which no specific preparation occurs. With the extempore method a great deal of preparation precedes delivery: much thinking, investigating, careful planning, incorporating that planning into a competent outline, adapting content to the needs of listeners, practicing the speech aloud with or without outline or notes. All is prepared save the actual wording of the sentences expressing the ideas, which is spontaneously evolved as the speaker speaks—in his preliminary practice and in the contest itself. This method forces the speaker to think his way through the development of his ideas as he speaks, thus to afford to his listeners the impression of a desire to communicate genuinely with them, with a becoming naturalness instead of a corrupting artificiality. The contest speaker should evidence an attempt to understand and to implement the paramount concept of modern

⁵ George A. Sanborn, "The Unity of Persuasion," *Western Speech*, Vol. XIX, #3, May, 1955, p. 180.

⁶ *Ibid.*

oral communication: that the place where a speech really occurs is not on a platform, not even in the functioning intelligence of the speaker, but always in the minds of those who listen. A contest speech is not an exhibition of skill, not a performance *before* people; it must communicate ideas *to* and *with* people.⁷

The teacher may find excellent sources of the definition and principles of persuasive and informative speaking in the annotated bibliography. The texts listed under the heading Public Speaking should prove especially valuable as resource materials.

Many of the questions and problems of the teacher and the student may be resolved at one of the student activities conferences of the Inter-scholastic League. These conferences are for the benefit of the student and the teacher.

Sample topics suitable for providing the student with practice in the persuasive and extemporaneous speaking contests are available from the League office.

Contest Rules

Rules for both the persuasive speaking and the extemporaneous speaking contests appear in the *Constitution and Contest Rules*. Questions on interpretation of rules should be sent to the State Office. Rules for both contests should be examined carefully, so that the contestant will either inform or persuade depending upon his choice of contest.

Bibliography

One of the main objectives of this bulletin is to provide the teacher with a list of sources that can be used in obtaining better understanding of the nature of persuasive and informative speaking. This list is prepared especially for the teacher. Each source should be checked by the teacher before it is given to the student. Most of the books listed are college texts in speech.

The first part deals with persuasive speaking, and is divided into two areas: (1) General Speech and Public Speaking Books (2) Persuasive Speaking Books.

I. Persuasion. Nearly all books that deal with public speaking

⁷Speech Association of the Eastern States. "Code for Contests in Public Speaking," *Today's Speech*, Volume IV, #4, November, 1956, pp. 29-30.

have sections in persuasive speaking. The teacher should check the library to see if any public speaking texts are available.

A. General Speech and Public Speaking

Persuasive speaking is one type of public speech. Although books listed in this section deal primarily with general speech or public speaking, they contain sections on general preparation of speeches and with persuasive speech. Chapters relating to preparation and persuasive speaking are listed.

1. Andersh, Elizabeth G., and Staats, Lorin C. *Speech for Everyday Use*. New York: Rinehart and Co. Revised 1960. (The authors treat speech in terms of the general communication model, similar to the approach used in this bulletin. The student should easily grasp the principles presented. Caricatures of the process add visual reinforcement.)
2. Brigance, William Norwood. *Speech: Its Techniques and Disciplines in a Free Society*. Second edition. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. 1961. (The late Professor Brigance presented a step-by-step process for creating speeches. The materials for general speech preparation are very good, with two chapters especially valuable for persuasive speaking: 19 and 24.)
3. Bryant, Donald C., and Wallace, Karl R. *Fundamentals of Public Speaking*. Third edition. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1960. (Part I, Introduction to Public Speaking, Part II, Sources and Materials, and Part VI, The Persuasive Speech, provide excellent materials for the student. The latter section gives an excellent treatment of the persuasive speech.)
4. Buehler, E. C. and Linkugel, Wil A. *Speech, A First Course*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962. (The authors discuss content and organization of speeches in Chapters 5-9. They provide a unique treatment of thought and content in Chapters 5-7. Chapter 6 deals with the ends or goals of the speech, including persuasive and informative speeches.)
5. Capp, Glenn R. *How to Communicate Orally*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961. (Part II, Chapters 4-9, contain an excellent treatment of speech preparation and speech composition. Chapter 11 is recommended as an aid to the more effective and accurate use of language.)

6. Gilman, Wilbur E., and Aly, Bower, and Reid, Loren D. *The Fundamentals of Speech*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951. (Part II deals with speech preparation. Chapter 16 sets forth a good presentation of the process of persuasion. Part V deals with the subject, setting forth a philosophy of knowledge necessary for preparation.)
7. Monroe, Alan H. *Principles and Types of Speech*. Fifth edition. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1962. (This popular text contains Monroe's well-known motivated sequence for speech composition. Part 3 contains an exposition of basic principles of speech composition. Chapters 21 and 22 provide valuable suggestions for making the three types of persuasive speeches which Monroe designates the speech to stimulate, the speech to convince, and the speech to actuate.)
8. Mudd, Charles S. and Sillars, Malcolm. *Speech, Content and Communication*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co. (The authors provide an excellent guide for preparing a speech in chapters 4–12. Chapters 12 and 13 deal with the informative and the persuasive speech.)
9. White, Eugene E., and Henderlider, Clair R. *Practical Public Speaking, A Guide to Effective Communication*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1954. (Section II, "Preparing the Speech," is an excellent treatment of the preparation of a public speaking assignment. The step-by-step suggestions are easy to follow for both the student and the teacher. Chapter 14, pages 293–300 deal specifically with the speech to persuade.)

B. Persuasion texts.

There are few texts that deal exclusively with persuasion as an area of speech. Those texts that are currently available are listed in the following list.

10. Abernathy, Elton. *The Advocate, A Manual of Persuasion*. San Marcos, Texas: Elton Abernathy, Southwest Texas State College, 1961. (This is a new work that is comprehensive yet easy to understand. It contains a number of useful illustrations. The book centers about the man who is the advocate or persuader.)
11. Brembeck, Winston L. and Howell, William S. *Persuasion*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952. (The authors bring a comprehensive treatment of the bases of persuasion, relating the basic human drives to propaganda techniques. Part V applies

specifically to persuasive speaking, with chapters 18–20 dealing with the composition of the persuasive speech.)

12. Minnick, Wayne C. *The Art of Persuasion*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957. (This book brings together much of the recent research in human behavior and approaches persuasion from the viewpoint of the social scientist. Although advanced in content, it is relatively easy to understand and use. Suggestions for speech composition are integrated in the textual presentation.)

Other References of Value

- (1) Brown, Charles T. *Introduction to Speech*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955. (This text combines traditional speech principles with new insights from psychology, semantics, and communications theory. The use of caricatures to illustrate basic concepts is effective for students. Part II, Chapters 6–9, deals with speech composition. Chapter 9 treats persuasion.)
- (2) Gray, Giles Wilkeson, and Braden, Waldo W. *Public Speaking: Principles and Practice*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951. (Basic principles of speech are found in Chapters 1–7. Chapter 6 deals with speech goals or types of speeches. Chapter 9 deals with persuasion, although it is designated as argumentative speeches.)
- (3) McBurney, James H., and Wrage, Ernest J. *The Art of Good Speech*. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1953. (Part II, Chapters 5–12 deal with basic public speaking principles. Chapter 15, although titled advocacy, relates specifically to the persuasive speech.)
- (4) Soper, Paul L. *Basic Public Speaking*. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956. (Chapters 4–6 describe methods of general preparation. Chapter 3, pp. 37–43, and Chapters 4–6, define persuasion and offer excellent suggestions for planning and preparing the persuasive speech.)
- (5) White, Eugene. *Practical Speech Fundamentals*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960. (Part IV, “Public Speaking,” deals with basic speech composition. Chapters 10–15 are included in this section. Persuasive speaking is also treated in the materials.)

- (6) Oliver, Robert T. *Psychology of the Persuasive Speech*. New York: Longman's, Green and Company, 1957. (This book represents the combining of a widely used textbook in courses in persuasion, *The Psychology of Persuasive Speech* (1942) and *Persuasive Speaking: Principles and Methods* (1950). The book is highly readable and should be of value to students.)

