



## Speaking and Listening Skills Activity

# Delivering Persuasive Presentations

## Learning the Skill

Have you ever tried to convince your friends to see a particular movie? If so, you were making a persuasive speech. A persuasive speech attempts to convince listeners to adopt a particular belief or take a certain action. If you are called on to deliver a persuasive presentation, use the following techniques:

- State your position clearly, and support your position with plenty of evidence.
- Connect your points by using words or phrases such as *however*, *although*, *if so*, *and so*, *clearly*, *in contrast*, *therefore*, *furthermore*, and *on the contrary*.
- Anticipate and address objections to your arguments. Bring up points that seem to be against your views, and then show why those points are wrong.
- Conclude by forcefully restating your position.



## Practicing the Skill

**Directions:** Read the passage below about global warming, and then answer the questions that follow.

Earth is about 4.6 billion years old. Its climate, called the global climate, has always been changing, warming and cooling for long and short periods of time. These changes have produced conditions such as droughts and glaciers. Today, the climate on Earth is changing again—warming at a faster rate than in the past. Many scientists are concerned that life on the planet may not have time to adapt to these changing conditions.

These scientists also agree that human beings are to blame for making the climate warmer. Burning fossil fuels like coal and oil to run our cars and factories creates excess greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide. These gases are released into the atmosphere, causing Earth to warm more quickly than it would naturally. Many scientists are especially concerned because in the last 100 years, the average global temperature has risen 1.0°F.

Scientists who are concerned about global warming point to melting glaciers and rising sea levels (4 to 8 inches during the 1900s) as evidence of the trend, and cite the danger this poses to people living in coastal areas. These scientists also note that one-fourth of the world's coral reefs have died due to rising temperatures on sea surfaces. Global warming also threatens species such as polar bears and penguins, which need cool habitats. It also increases drought and dry conditions, limiting the amount of available farmland.

Other scientists take a different position on the subject of climate change and global warming. Some note that Earth's climate has always varied. They believe that ice ages and droughts come and go, and that the warming trend Earth is experiencing now is simply part of a natural variation in temperature. They maintain that Earth's "natural" greenhouse

## Speaking and Listening Skills Activity

continued

effect keeps the planet livable, much like gravity.

These same scientists think that whether or not humans can cause global climate change is an important question—that has not been answered. They claim that data shows Earth's

climate has gone through at least one cooling period—from 1940 to 1975—after people began burning more coal and oil. They say this proves that global climate will always vary, no matter what humans do.

1. In your own words, restate the arguments *favoring* the view that global warming is harming the planet. Use at least three details from the passage to support your answer.

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2. In your own words, restate the argument *against* the view that global warming is harming the planet. Use at least three details from the passage to support your answer.

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### Applying the Skill

**Directions:** You are going to deliver a one- to two-minute persuasive speech on one of the following topics:

- Alternative energy sources (non-fossil fuels)
- Urban and suburban sprawl
- Use of fertilizers and pesticides

Select one of the topics, and research the subject area. Use the outline below to organize your presentation. Begin your speech by stating your position—whether for or against. Provide specific supporting points for your views.

**Position Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Speaking and Listening Skills Activity

continued

**Point:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Point:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Point:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary:**

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### Assessment Checklist

Assess your presentation using the checklist below:

- Engaged listeners with a strong opening statement
- Stated my position clearly
- Included supporting arguments for my opinion
- Provided arguments against other positions
- Used facts from my research in my arguments
- Summarized my position in a clear and logical conclusion
- Spoke loudly, clearly, and slowly
- Stood up straight and looked at the audience