

Chapter 6: "Using Supporting Materials in Your Speech"

I. The major forms of **supporting material** used in building speeches have several functions.

- A. To arouse and sustain interest.
- B. To explain the meaning of your ideas.
- C. To make your interpretations credible.
- D. To point out the importance of your interpretation to listeners.
- E. To verify controversial or surprising statements.

II. **Facts** and **statistics** are the most objective forms of supporting materials.

- A. Facts are verifiable and ground a speech.
 1. Speakers often interpret facts for listeners.
 2. Factual statements can be turned into claims by adding a few value terms.
 3. Opinions are personal preferences that cannot be verified.
- B. Statistics are numerical facts. (Be careful: statistical predictions are based on probability, not certainty, and they are subject to abuse and misuse—they may be used to *create* a reality desired by a particular person or group!)
 1. Statistics are powerful evidence.
 2. Statistics can be overwhelming when presented orally.
- C. Evaluating facts and statistics will help you decide which material from your research to use.
 1. Information must be **relevant**.
 2. Information must be **recent**.
 3. Information must be from credible sources.
 4. Information must be **reliable**.
 5. **Disinformation** offers what appears to be information but actually deceives the listener and impedes understanding.
- D. There are three techniques for framing facts and statistics into powerful material.
 1. A **definition** translates technical or abstract terms into words listeners will understand.
 2. **Explanations** clarify a topic with detail and demonstrate how a topic works.
 3. **Description** offers listeners "word pictures" to help them visualize information.

III. **Testimony** is a major form of supporting material.

- A. **Expert testimony** comes from people who are qualified by training or experience to serve as authorities.
- B. **Lay testimony** represents the wisdom of ordinary people.
 - 1. Public opinion polls are greatly respected in the US.
 - 2. Lay testimony offers real-life consequences of issues.
 - 3. Lay testimony cannot be used to establish objective validity.
- C. **Prestige testimony** associates your message with respected public figures.
 - 1. Prestige testimony adds distinction to your speech.
 - 2. Prestige testimony allows your message to be associated with the ethos of the person.
 - 3. Offers a source of inspiration in ceremonial speaking.
 - 4. Prestige testimony is a form of **mythos**.
- D. Evaluate testimony before using it.
 - 1. Testimony must meet the same criteria as facts and statistics.
 - a. Relevance.
 - b. Recency.
 - i. For expert or lay testimony, latest is best.
 - ii. For prestige testimony, the older the better.
 - c. Freedom from **bias** is a major consideration, particularly in assessing expert testimony.
 - d. Accuracy.
 - 2. Consider which form of testimony is appropriate for your purpose.
 - a. Lay testimony humanizes and promotes identification.
 - b. Prestige testimony enhances the attractiveness of the speech and speaker.
 - c. Expert testimony can demonstrate that a statement is factually true.

IV. **Examples** are a major form of supporting material that makes the difference in a boring or successful speech.

- A. Different kinds of examples do different things.
 - 1. A **brief example** mentions a specific instance to demonstrate a more general statement.
 - 2. An **extended example** contains more detail and allows you to dwell more fully on an illustration.

3. A **factual example** is based on an actual event or a real person.
 4. A **hypothetical example** is a composite of actual people, situations, or events.
- B. Evaluate and choose examples based on relevance, **representativeness**, and believability.
1. Examples must be tasteful and proper.
 2. Examples should fit the mood and spirit of the occasion.

V. **Narrative** is a major form of supporting material that relates a sequence of events beyond an extended example.

- A. Narrative is a familiar and comfortable form of evidence for listeners.
- B. **Personal narrative** increases identification.
- C. Narrative serves several functions.
1. It clarifies abstract or technical ideas.
 2. It emphasizes and illustrates important points.
 3. It creates immediacy.
- D. Depending on where narrative is in a speech, it creates different effects.
1. It draws listeners into a speech in an introduction.
 2. It engages the audience and leaves them with something to remember in a conclusion.
- E. When using narrative, dialogue is usually preferable to paraphrase.
- F. Narrative should only be used to make a point, should never be tedious, and should never be at the expense of others.

VI. Much of the art of building speeches relies on three major techniques.

- A. **Comparison** emphasizes similarities between things.
1. It makes unfamiliar or controversial things seem clear or acceptable.
 2. It helps the audience see the significance of supporting material.
 3. Questions to ask when considering the use of comparison:
 - a. Are there enough similarities?
 - b. Are the similarities significant to the ideas you wish to support?
 - c. Are there important differences that might invalidate the comparison?
- B. **Contrast** emphasizes the differences between things.

1. It makes evidence stand out.
 2. Questions to ask when considering the use of contrast:
 - a. Is the sense of contrast dramatic enough to help your case?
 - b. Is the difference relevant to the point you wish to make?
 - c. Are there other points of difference that might invalidate your point?
- C. **Analogy** combines the principles of comparison and contrast to make remote or abstract ideas seem more immediate and comprehensible.
1. **Literal analogy** ties together things from the same realm of experience to reinforce a point.
 2. **Figurative analogy** combines subjects from different realms of experience.
 3. Questions to ask when considering the use of an analogy.
 - a. Will the analogy help make a fundamental point?
 - b. Will the analogy distract listeners?
 - c. Does the analogy establish a beneficial association for the subject?

VII. Following general guidelines can help you decide what supporting material to use from your research.

- A. Controversial ideas rely primarily on facts, statistics, factual examples, and expert testimony from respected sources.
- B. Abstract ideas require examples and narratives for illustration as well as comparison, contrast, and analogy.
- C. Highly technical ideas require definitions, explanations, and descriptions to aid understanding; expert testimony to supplement facts and stats; and examples, comparison, contrast, and analogy to help listeners integrate ideas.
- D. To arouse emotion, use lay and expert testimony, example, or narrative as well as contrast and analogy.
- E. To defuse emotion, emphasize facts, statistics, and expert testimony with focus on definitions and explanations.
- F. To draw a topic closer to listeners use examples, descriptive narratives, comparisons, and analogies.

VIII. Summary

IX. Terms

- A. Supporting materials
- B. Facts
- C. Statistics
- D. Disinformation
- E. Relevance
- F. Recency
- G. Reliability
- H. Definition
- I. Explanation
- J. Description
- K. Testimony
- L. Expert testimony
- M. Lay testimony
- N. Prestige testimony
- O. Mythos
- P. Bias
- Q. Example
- R. Brief example
- S. Extended example
- T. Factual example
- U. Hypothetical example
- V. Representativeness
- W. Narrative
- X. Personal narrative
- Y. Comparison
- Z. Contrast
- AA. Analogy
- BB. Literal analogy
- CC. Figurative analogy

X. Notes