



Beijing Foreign Studies University|
教育部 - 出国人员培训部

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Public Speaking

Unit 8, Lesson 1 Speaker influence & Persuasive speeches

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Lesson 1

01	What is persuasion?
02	Why learn to persuade?
03	The Importance of Persuasion
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What is Persuasion?

Persuasion is the process of **influencing** another person's **values**, **beliefs**, **attitudes**, or **behaviors**. It is **not** achieved by means of power.

Power (Force)	Persuasion is co-creation . Both speaker and listener find shared values.	(Influence)
Boss says: "Work late or get fired."		"Let's study together. We can get better grades."
Uses authority or punishment.		Emotion, and respect.
You have no choice.		You are free to say "no."



Unit 8

Why Learn to Persuade?



We see and hear **persuasive messages** every day:

- Ads on Weibo, WeChat and Douyin
- Friends convincing you to try a new restaurant
- Teachers asking you to improve your study habits

Two roles you play:

Decide if a message is fair or manipulative.

Listener

Speaker

Share your ideas and try to lead.





The Importance of Persuasion

Benefits for YOU as a...



Listener

*Hear other points
of view*

*Re-evaluate your
own beliefs*

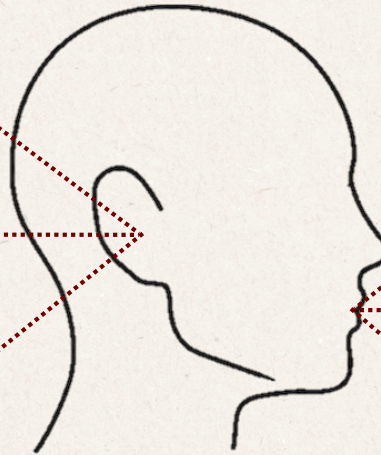
*Improve your ability to
defend your ideas*

Speaker

*Test the power of
your ideas*

*Develop critical
thinking skills*

*Become an instrument
of change*





Three Ways to Influence Your Audience



Type	Goal	Simple Explanation
Change	Dramatic movement from one side to the other	From: opposition → support OR support → opposition
Instill	Create a new belief where none existed or where other beliefs were not good enough	Your audience didn't know a problem existed. Now they do.
Intensify	Increase people willingness to cooperate when there is still more they can do.	Turn a believer into an advocate. Turn an advocate into an activist.



Three Ways to Influence Your Audience

Example: Persuading to Change

Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have a Dream" (1963)



What the speaker is trying to do: Move the audience from accepting racial segregation to demanding equality and civil rights.

"Racial segregation → Racial Equality"

Short excerpt:

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."



Three Ways to Influence Your Audience

Example: Persuading to Instill

Eric Thomas - Blueprint to Success

What the speaker is trying to do: make people aware that time is limited and you must use it well.

"Not planning your day → Having a schedule helps people succeed"

Short excerpt:

"If you only have 24 hours in a day, your success is dependent on how you use the 24... The difference between Oprah and the person who is broke is Oprah uses her 24 hours wisely"



Three Ways to Influence Your Audience

Example: Persuading to Intensify

The Power of Words

What the ad is trying to do: People already believed they should help the blind. The second sign intensified that belief by making them feel gratitude for their own sight, turning pity into action.

“little help → generosity”

Short excerpt:

“It’s a beautiful day and I can’t see it”



Types of Persuasive Speeches



Convince (Belief)

Goal: Change what you THINK.

Example Topic: Convince classmates that electric cars (like BYD or Tesla) are better for China's air quality.

Result: "I agree."

Actuate (Action)

Goal: Change what you DO.

Example Topic: Get classmates to donate funds to provide veterinary care to the stray cats that live on campus.

Result: "I will act."

Inspire (Feeling)

Goal: Change how you FEEL.

Example Topic: Honor the hard work of rural teachers in China.

Result: "I am moved."



Unit 8



Types of Persuasive Speeches

Listen to the three speeches and identify their goals.



Speech 1:



Speech 2:



Speech 3:



Convince

Actuate

Inspire



Types of Persuasive Speeches



Now complete exercise 1 in the worksheet for this unit:

Public Speaking Course, Spring 2026



Student: _____ Class: _____

Unit 8: Types and Goals of Persuasive Speeches

I. Listen to three speeches. Identify the speaker's goal and the type of persuasion used. Then fill in the blanks to complete the speech scripts.

	Topic	Goal	Type
Speech A:	Mental health on campus	a. Change a behavior b. Change a belief c. Change a feeling	a. Persuasion to inspire b. Persuasion to actuate c. Persuasion to convince

"When a student breaks their leg, we see the _____. We offer help. But when a student feels anxious or depressed, we see _____. That does not mean the pain is not _____. A study from Tsinghua University found that over _____% of Chinese college students report feeling overwhelming anxiety. Many believe they should just 'work harder' or 'think _____'. But mental illness is not a _____. It is a health condition, just like a broken _____."

	Topic	Goal	Type
Speech B:	Sleep habits	a. Change a behavior b. Change a belief c. Change a feeling	a. Persuasion to inspire b. Persuasion to actuate c. Persuasion to convince

"You feel tired in class. You know you do not sleep _____. So here is what I want you to _____. Tonight, put your _____ on your desk, not next to your bed. Set an alarm for _____ PM. When that alarm rings, close your _____. Turn off the lights. Get into bed. Do not check _____. Do not watch one more _____. Just sleep. Try this for _____ nights."

	Topic	Goal	Type
Speech C:	Village teacher	a. Change a behavior b. Change a belief c. Change a feeling	a. Persuasion to inspire b. Persuasion to actuate c. Persuasion to convince

"In a small village in _____ province, there is a teacher named Mr. Zhang. He has worked in the same mountain school for _____ years. When it rains, the roof _____. When winter comes, there is no _____. But every morning, he walks _____ hours to open the classroom door. He says, 'My students deserve a _____.' Because of him, over two hundred children have left that village to attend _____. None of them forgot his _____."



The Three Pillars of Persuasion

How to be more “believable” so that people **support** you and your ideas.

Ethos
(Character)

Your credibility

•*How to show it:* Be honest, give reasons of why you are reliable.

Logos
(Logic)

Your evidence

•*How to show it:* Use facts, statistics, and clear reasons.

Pathos
(Emotion)

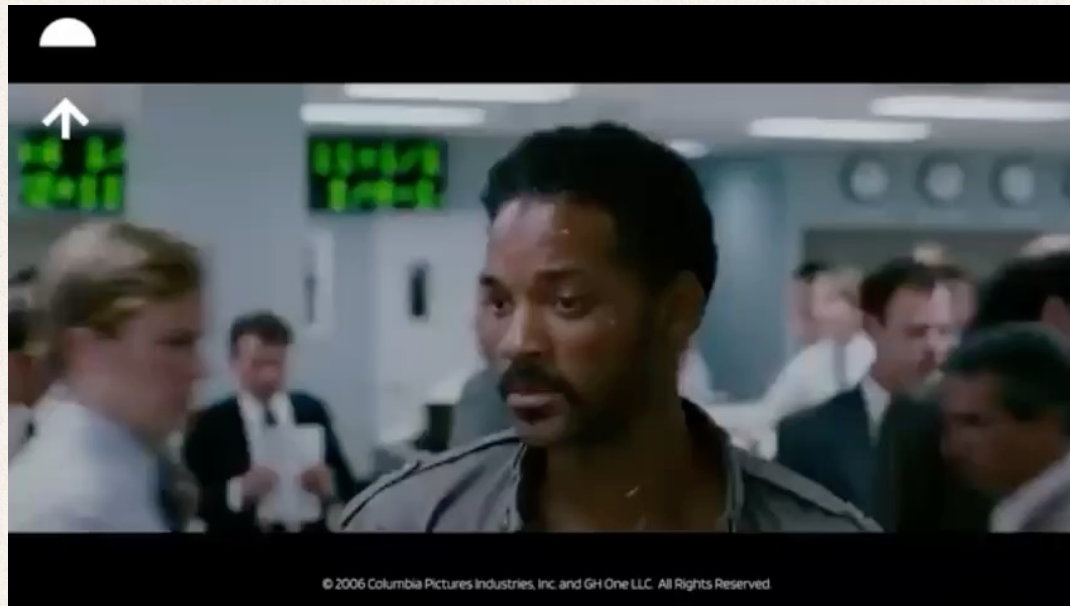
Your heart

•*How to show it:* Tell a moving story or use vivid words



The Three Pillars of Persuasion

Watch this job interview and find examples of **ethos**, **logos**, and **pathos** in the words used by the job candidate:



Fill in the
worksheet



Exercise II



The Three Pillars of Persuasion

ANSWERS: Examples of **ethos**, **logos**, and **pathos** in the words used by the job candidate:

Persuasion pillar	Example
Ethos (Character)	"I wanted to come up with a story that would demonstrate qualities like earnestness, diligence, team playing... And I couldn't think of anything. So the truth is, I was arrested."
	"I'm the type of person — if you ask me a question and I don't know the answer, I'm going to tell you that I don't know."
Logos (Logic)	"But I know how to find the answer."
	"First in your class in high school?... Yes, sir. How many? Twelve."
	"First in my radar class in the Navy... class of twenty."
Pathos (Emotion)	"I was arrested for failure to pay parking tickets."
	"He must have had on some really nice pants."



Partipulation = Participation + Manipulation

Media specialist Tony Schwartz (producer of political commercials) states...

- Voters are not simply manipulated by campaigns and ads.
- Voters can reject messages.
- **"You have to participate in your own manipulation."**

What this means for YOU as a speaker:

Your goal is to establish common ground and tap shared values—not to trick your audience.

What this means for YOU as a listener:

You have the right and the ethical responsibility to choose whether you are persuaded.



Types of Persuasive Speeches

Now complete exercise 3 and 4 in the worksheet for this unit:

II. Watch the short movie clip of Chris Gardner's job interview at the stock market. Identify whether the following speech fragments exemplify the ethos, logos, or pathos of the main character:

Speech excerpt	Ethos	Logos	Pathos
"I wanted to come up with a story that would demonstrate qualities like earnestness, diligence, team playing... And I couldn't think of anything. So the truth is, I was arrested."			
"I'm the type of person — if you ask me a question and I don't know the answer, I'm going to tell you that I don't know."			
"But I know how to find the answer."			
"First in your class in high school?... Yes, sir. How many? Twelve."			
"First in my radar class in the Navy... class of twenty."			
"I was arrested for failure to pay parking tickets."			
"He must have had on some really nice pants."			

III. Based on what we have learnt today, what is the speaker's main goal when trying to persuade an audience?

- A) To manipulate the audience using any means necessary, including lies or trick
- B) To establish common ground with the audience and tap into shared values
- C) To force the audience to agree through powerful, overwhelming arguments
- D) To ignore the audience's values and focus only on facts and data

IV. Write a brief definition of **persuasion** summarizing what we have learnt today:



Shark Tank



It's time to sell ideas that change the world. Look at this excellent example of a persuasive speech to sell an innovative product.



Now choose an innovative idea:



And get ready to sell it to the class.



Unit 8



Shark Tank

Reusable Water Bottle with Filter

Product: EcoFilter Bottle

The Problem:

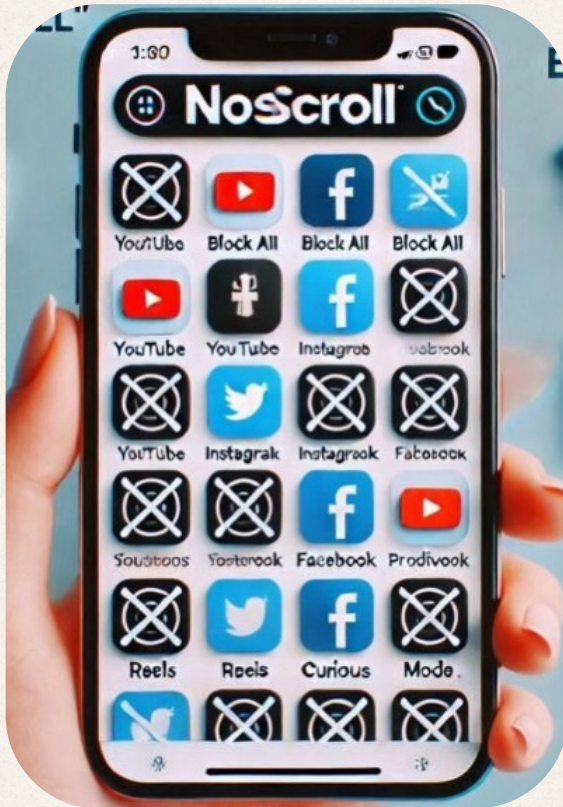
70% of students buy plastic water bottles every week. Most are not recycled. These bottles take hundreds of years to break down.

The Data:

- One plastic bottle takes 500 years to break down in nature
- This bottle filters tap water and costs 50 yuan
- One reusable bottle saves 200 plastic bottles per year



Unit 8



Shark Tank

App to Reduce Scrolling

Product: FocusLock App

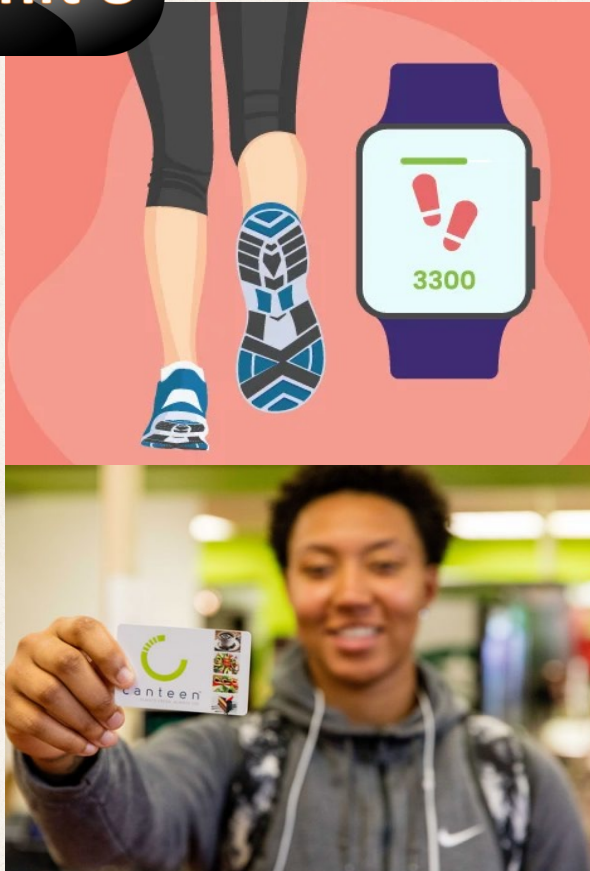
The Problem:

College students check their phones over 100 times per day. Many spend 4-6 hours scrolling on social media. This affects sleep, grades, and focus.

The Data:

- The app locks selected apps (WeChat, Douyin, Bilibili) after 2 hours of daily use
- Users report 40% more study time
- Free to download, no ads
- Optional: unlock apps between 8 PM and 10 PM only

Unit 8



Shark Tank

Step-Tracking App with Canteen Rewards

Product: StepEat App

The Problem:

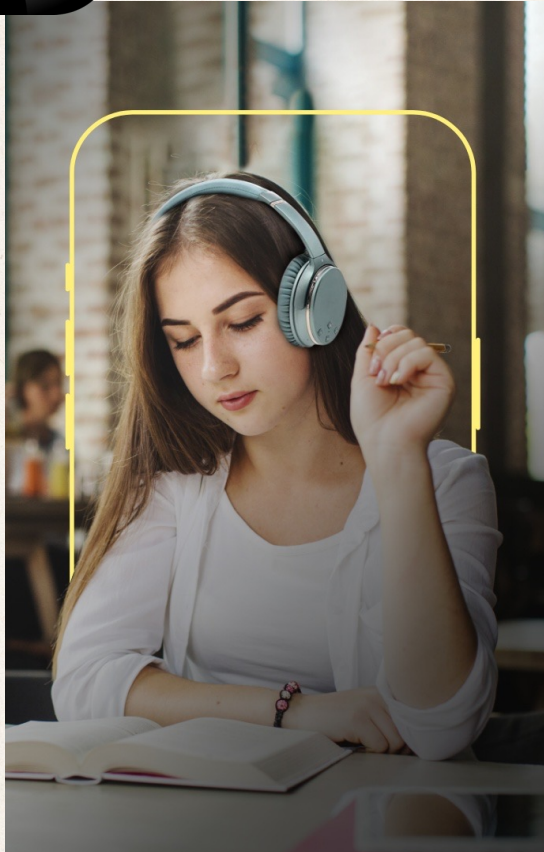
College students sit for 8+ hours per day. Many do not exercise regularly. Back pain, low energy, and poor sleep are common.

The Data:

- The app tracks your daily steps using your phone
- 10,000 steps = 5 yuan credit in the canteen
- Credits are added directly to your campus card
- In a pilot test, students walked 40% more per day



Unit 8



Shark Tank



Noise-Canceling Study Headphones

Product: QuietStudy Headphones

The Problem:

The library is noisy during exam week. People talk, phones ring, chairs move. Many students cannot focus.

The Data:

- Blocks 95% of background noise
- One charge lasts 20 hours (4 full study days)
- Normal price: 300 yuan
- Student discount price: 150 yuan
- Users report 50% faster homework completion



Shark Tank

Weekly 20-Minute Language Exchange

Product: SpeakEasy Campus Pairing

The Problem:

Many Chinese students want to practice English but have no foreign friends. International students want to practice Chinese but feel shy to ask.

The Data:

- Students are paired for 20 minutes per week (10 minutes English, 10 minutes Chinese)
- Meet in the library or canteen
- Free. No teacher. No grade.
- 90% of past participants said their speaking confidence improved



Shark Tank



App to Help Quit Smoking

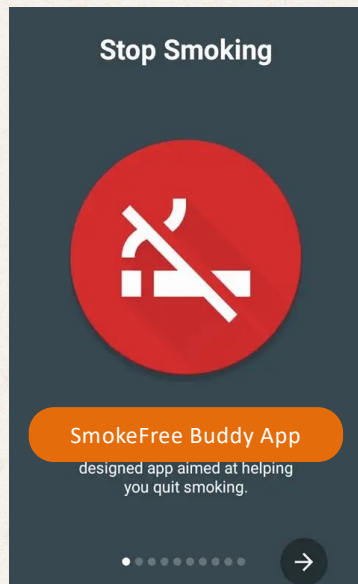
Product: SmokeFree Buddy App

The Problem:

Some college students smoke. They know it is bad for their health, but quitting is very difficult. Many have tried to stop but failed because they had no support.

The Data:

- A pack of cigarettes costs 20-40 yuan per day = 600-1,200 yuan per month
- One year of smoking = 7,000-14,000 yuan (the price of a new laptop or a vacation)
- This app tracks how many days you have not smoked
- It shows you how much money you have saved
- Users can chat with other students trying to quit
- In a study, app users were 3x more likely to quit than people who tried alone





Shark Tank



Plant-Based Monday Campaign

Product: Green Monday at the Canteen

The Problem:

Meat production creates a lot of pollution. It uses more water and land than growing vegetables. Most students do not know this.

The Data:

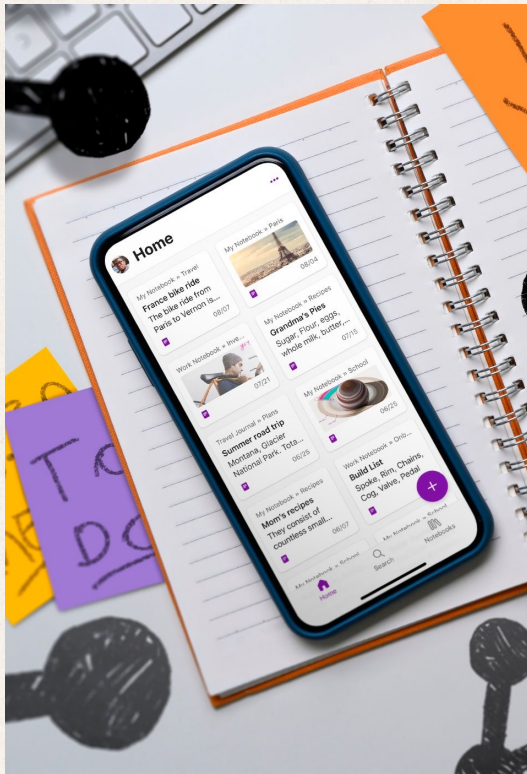
Meat production creates 2x more pollution than vegetable production
One meat-free day per week saves 1,000 liters of water per person per year

The canteen has agreed to offer a special 10-yuan vegetarian meal on Mondays

A similar campaign at another university had 60% student participation



Shark Tank



Digital Note-Sharing Platform

Product: NoteShare Campus Platform

Problem:

When students miss class due to illness, they fall behind. Asking classmates for notes can be awkward. Many students have good notes but no easy way to share them.

The Data:

The platform allows students to upload notes after each class
Students can download notes for any class they miss
Free to use. Upload 1 set of notes = get 5 free downloads
In a pilot with 200 students, 85% said it helped them catch up faster