Persuasion at Work

Video Transcript

Persuasion is a speech act designed to convince another person to change their mind, attitude, or behavior. This lesson focuses on the foundations of persuasion: what persuasion is, what persuasive topics look like, what artistic proofs are, and how to identify persuasion as an audience member. Attempts to persuade happen all around you, and many people use persuasion almost instinctively. It’s just a matter of being able to identify attempts and understand what you’re wanted to do.

Infomercials attempt to convince us that we have an unmanageable problem when we can’t use scissors correctly and tell us the only way to fix that problem is to buy their “super scissors.” This is a persuasive act. When colleges try to convince you to attend their school, or when the military recruiter tries to get you to sign on in order to get tuition assistance, they are both engaging in persuasive acts.

Artistic proofs are persuasive arguments designed to get you to change your mind based on a speaker’s credibility, appeals to emotion, and appeals to logic. Let’s imagine you want to convince your roommate to let you bring home a baby goat. How might you go about doing this? Maybe you would explain that you pay more in rent, so you should have a larger say in the matter. This kind of argument uses credibility, or ethos. Perhaps you say that the goat will eventually give milk and that it can “mow” the lawn. So, the goat will save money in the long run. This would be a logical appeal, or logos. Then, you go for the finisher and explain that the goat is an orphan with nowhere else to go. This argument is intended to make your roommate feel bad for the goat — an appeal to pathos. While this example might sound silly, these kinds of arguments happen daily, and with a little practice, you can make use of them effectively, too!
About this transcript:

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