

## Navigation

### Home

- Calendar of Scheduled Information Literacy Classes
- The 7 Steps of the Research Process
- Standard 1
- Standard 2
- Standard 3
- Standard 4
- Standard 5

### Essential & Helpful Tools

Pathfinders

### Videos

### How Tos

### Research Guides

### Information Literacy Instruction Assessment

### Plagiarism

### Reviews & Quizzes

### Your Librarians!

### Sitemap

## Recent site activity

### [ENG106/107](#)

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### [ENG122](#)

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attachment from Mark Jackson

attachment removed by Mark Jackson

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### [English Class Guides](#)

edited by Mark Jackson

### [ENG122](#)

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attachment removed by Mark Jackson

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### [English Class Guides](#)

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### [View All](#)

[Research Guides](#) > [English Class Guides](#) >

## ENG122

### ENG122 Public Speaking 2009

Instructor: Assist. Prof. Mark Jackson, Reference and Online Resources Librarian

Objectives:

- Define a topic for a persuasive speech
- Gather supporting information for a persuasive speech
- Evaluating information
- Citing sources

### Define a Topic

One of the challenges of writing a research paper or making a persuasive speech is choosing a topic. First, the topic should be of interest to not only yourself (which is very important) but also to your audience. For example, college students are usually concerned about their grades and how they can improve them. A persuasive speech that is entitled: *5 Effectives Study Habits and Improved Grades* would probably be a talk that students would have an interest in.

While your opinion is important, people have an interest in *expert* opinion. If we renamed our talk *Harvard University's 5 Effectives Study Habits: You Can Improve Your Grades Today!* Does this sound not only more interesting, but doesn't it also appeal to the *self-interest* of the audience?

One important aspect of choosing a topic is to select something that is important to you. Once you have chosen a topic, you will need to refine the topic, keeping it manageable and concise enough for a three to five minute presentation. A useful tool for developing and refining a topic is "[mind mapping](#)." [What is mind mapping or concept mapping?](#) While a simple piece of paper and a paper can help you to mind map, there is also an online tool that can be used. It is called [Text2MindMap](#).

There are also many places on the web to find topics for a persuasive presentation. One such site is [suite101.com](#). Keep in mind that there are some topics that can turn an audience off or alienate them. Suite101 has a lot of useful information. Also, see the list of HOT TOPICS below.

### Gathering Data

After you have chosen a topic, it is time to gather the data that will support your argument and begin to persuade your audience. What kind of information can persuade an audience? Authoritative, accurate, and relevant information is essential to persuasion. As a foundation for a persuasive argument, statistical data is often used. What is the dimension of the problem and how does it affect people? The best source of statistical information is a government (sometimes state, often federal) entity.

For example, statistics can illustrate the lifetime earning power between a college graduate and someone who has not completed college. These statistics are usually compiled by an agency of the Federal government.

Current examples of your topic can often be found using Google News. ([Full time students more likely to succeed – College Degree Pays Off](#)) These examples often bring home the "real life" aspects of your topic, and drive the point home in a personal way to your audience.

In addition, there are a number of resources to which the Bloomfield College Library subscribes that can be useful. Most important is the [Points of View Reference Center](#). This academic level resource will provide you with the "pros and cons" about your topic.

### Evaluating what you find

When you are gathering your information and deciding what you will use in your persuasive speech, it is important that you evaluate the quality of what you find. While you may want to persuade your audience, you want to do so by informing and not misinforming. Cornell University has published a one-page handout that will guide you in the evaluation process. [Click here for handout.](#)

### **Citing your sources**

Finally, whether you use PowerPoint slides, statistics, opinions or quotes, it is necessary and essential to quote your sources! [This handy reference, available from The University of Southern Mississippi Speaking Center, will give you some great ideas on incorporating quotes in a speech.](#)

### **Hot Paper Topics**

[Affirmative Action](#)

[Article Files and Indexes to Hot Topics](#)

[Attack on America / Terrorism/ Iraq War](#)

[Bioethical Issues](#)

[Brown v. Board of Education](#)

[Censorship](#)

[Death Penalty](#)

[Drug Issues](#)

[Drunk Driving and Alcohol Issues](#)

[Elections](#)

[Gender Issues](#)

[Global Warming](#)

[Gun Control](#)

[Hate Crimes and Racism](#)

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[Help for Term Paper Writers](#)

[Homeland Security, Open Government & the PATRIOT Act](#)

[Human Rights](#)

[Identity Theft](#)

[Influenza \(Pandemics\)](#)

[Internet Issues](#)

[Media Issues](#)

[Migration](#)

More [Miscellaneous Issues](#)

[Plagiarism](#)

[ProCon.org](#) - both sides of many issues.


[Same-sex Marriage](#)

[Social Security](#)

[Torture](#)

If you need additional assistance, please feel free to contact me via email, [mark\\_jackson@bloomfield.edu](mailto:mark_jackson@bloomfield.edu).

**Attachments (1)**

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