

RAISING ORIGINAL THINKERS:

SPEAKING WITH POWER



Developing compelling, persuasive speakers today
to become the leaders of tomorrow.



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WELCOME TO BRAIN POWER PUBLIC SPEAKING

At Brain Power, we believe every child deserves to find their voice. Public speaking is not just about standing on a stage. It is about building confidence, developing leadership, and learning how to communicate clearly and persuasively in any setting. These are life skills—and they can be taught.

For over 30 years, our Public Speaking program has helped students become bold and thoughtful communicators. Through weekly practice, expert feedback, and an encouraging community, students learn to craft messages, think on their feet, and speak with clarity and conviction.

We built this program with input from award-winning debaters, media professionals, and communication coaches. Our faculty are more than skilled speakers—they are mentors who understand how to support each student's growth, whether they start out hesitant or enthusiastic.

Brain Power students have won national competitions, led their peers, and delivered speeches that inspire. But just as importantly, they gain the confidence to express themselves, advocate for their ideas, and make a meaningful impact.

We're excited to have your family join our Public Speaking program!

To learn more about our US locations, visit brainpowerenrichment.com

For our Canadian locations, visit brainpower.ca

Inside this booklet, you will find speaking prompts and communication challenges to try as a family. These activities offer a glimpse into the kind of confident, reflective communication our students practice every week.



ARISTOTLE'S RHETORICAL TRIANGLE

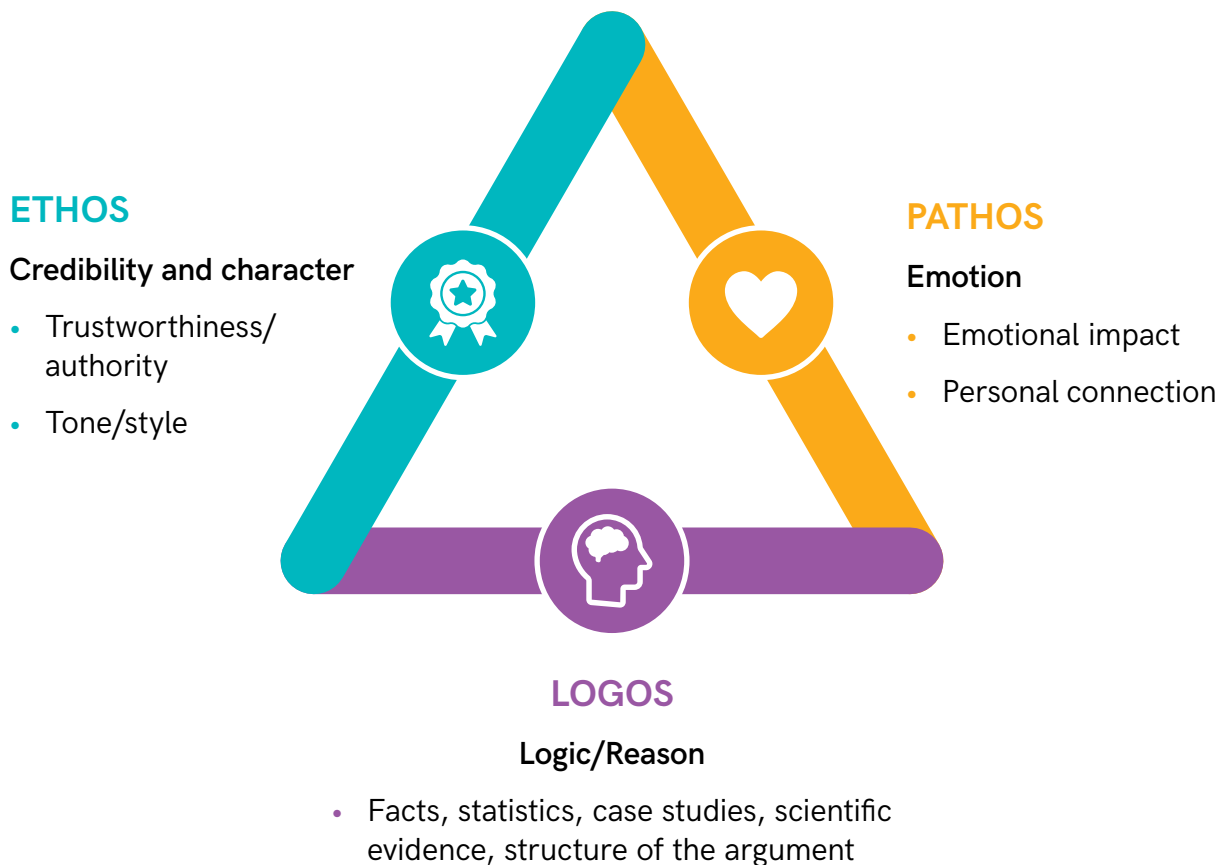
Strong speeches are rooted in a model developed by ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. These three appeals are key to mastering *rhetoric*, which is the *art of persuasion*.

ETHOS refers to the speaker's character, credibility, trustworthiness, and authority on the subject. Aristotle said that a speaker with a strong *ethos* demonstrates goodwill towards the audience, good sense, and morality.

PATHOS is the emotional appeal and the personal connection a speaker creates with the audience.

LOGOS refers to the structure of the speaker's argument, as well as the facts, data, logic, evidence, and examples used to support it.

A speech which incorporates a balance of all three pillars of persuasion will be more convincing, engaging and effective.



Fun fact!

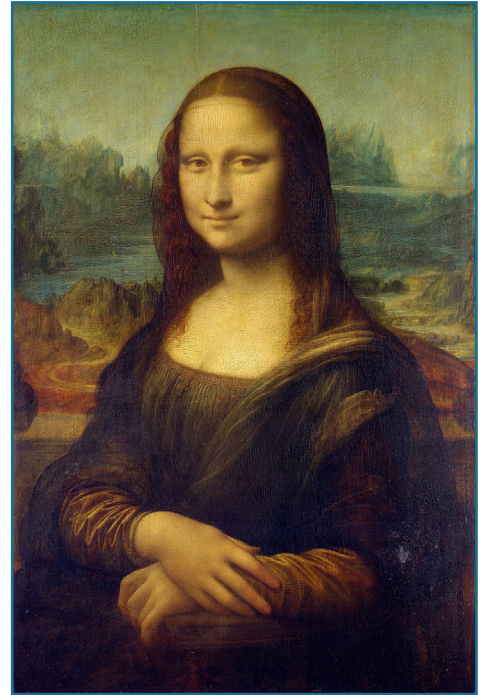
Did you know that BODY LANGUAGE communicates more than the words we say (CONTENT), or how we say them (DELIVERY)? That's why it's important for public speakers to have excellent posture and make eye contact with their audience, for example. This communicates confidence and contributes to the speaker's *ethos*!

BUY MY PAINTING!

Ready for a challenge? Try coming up with a persuasive pitch using *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. Imagine the famous paintings below went up for sale, and your family was going to buy one! Choose one, then CONVINCE them that it's the one to buy using the new persuasive techniques you just learned.



Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night* (1889)



Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*
(ca. 1500s-1510s)

Background Reading:

Here are some websites with useful information about these two masterpieces.

Starry Night



Mona Lisa



LEARNING LOGICAL FALLACIES

Even though we tend to think people can tell right from wrong and fact from opinion, sometimes you'll run into someone making claims that simply aren't true. These often result from **logical fallacies**; they violate the rules of formal logic. By learning about fallacies, we can detect them when others are speaking and avoid them in our own presentations.



Here are some common fallacies:

- **Post hoc:** wrongly assuming that one thing causes another because they correlate
 - **Example:** "Every time I hear this song on the car radio, the traffic is bad. The song must be causing the traffic!"
- **Ad hominem:** personally attacking someone instead of trying to prove them wrong
 - **Example:** "You're stupid, so I don't trust anything you say!"
- **False dichotomy:** wrongly presenting only two options when there are more
 - **Example:** "You're either the victim or the bully. There's no in between!"
- **Slippery slope:** an argument that descends quickly and invalidly into catastrophization or false inferences
 - **Example:** "If we raise the speed limit by 10 km/hour, you're gonna see a whole lot of cars in ditches."
- **Bandwagon fallacy:** arguing that something is true or good because most people think it is
 - **Example:** "Everyone I know plans to vote for him in the next election. He must be the best candidate!"
- **Appeal to fear fallacy:** arguing in favour of something by generating fear of the alternative
 - **Example:** "You had better let me pick dinner, or she'll end up making us eat that pizza with beets and Brussels sprouts again!"
- **Appeal to authority:** assuming that something is true without supporting evidence because an authority says it is true
 - **Example:** "This medical website was created by a doctor, and it says I have a horrible disease. I'm doomed!"

NAME THAT FALLACY!

Have someone read the following statements aloud and try to guess the fallacy from the list you just learned.

1. **Fallacy:** "If I give my students an extension on this assignment, they'll end up expecting an extension on every assignment!"
2. **Fallacy:** "If we don't invade that country, they'll invade us first, and then it will be too late!"
3. **Fallacy:** "You believe in either science or religion. Which is it?"
4. **Fallacy:** "My phone broke as soon as I installed that app you told me about. The app broke my phone!"
5. **Fallacy:** "You're not going to take his suggestion for a prom theme, are you? He's a nerd!"
6. **Fallacy:** "The successful businessman on tv said that SuperCar is the best car model. He's a pretty smart guy. Let's get a SuperCar!"
7. **Fallacy:** "If you don't buy it now, you might never see such a good deal again! The price could double by next week!!"
8. **Fallacy:** "Everyone I've asked says it's ok to cheat on a test. So, it must be ok."
9. **Fallacy:** "Your grades have been falling ever since you started hanging out with that new kid. She's obviously a bad influence, and you need to stop being her friend."
10. **Fallacy:** "If you don't agree with me, it's only because you're too dumb to understand the issue."

SOLUTIONS:

1. Slippery Slope

- **Explanation:** This teacher makes a logical leap from a small action to an extreme consequence. The students will not necessarily expect an extension every time just because they get an extension once. They will probably realize that there is a particular reason for the extension this time.

2. Appeal to Fear

- **Explanation:** The speaker is amplifying a fear — that their country will be invaded — to persuade people of something that they don't actually know, which is that the other country will invade them. The speaker has also been vague about why people should be afraid: it will be too late to do what?

3. False Dichotomy

- **Explanation:** It is by no means necessary (or even possible, probably) to adopt either 100% scientific views or 100% religious views. There are countless shades in between the two extremes that are not reflected by this dichotomy.

4. Post hoc

- **Explanation:** Even though installing the app preceded the phone breaking, the app is not necessarily the cause of the phone breaking. It could just as well be a coincidence.

5. Ad hominem

- **Explanation:** Whether the person who made the suggestion is a “nerd” is irrelevant to whether their suggested prom theme is good.

6. Appeal to Authority

- **Explanation:** The person on tv is successful in business, but that does not make them a reliable authority on cars. Their perceived authority has no relevance in this case.

7. Appeal to Fear

- **Explanation:** The speaker is trying to convince the other person to make a purchase based on the fear that the price will increase. They have no way of knowing whether that will happen. Who knows: the price could go down.

8. Bandwagon Fallacy

- **Explanation:** This reasoning suggests that, because other people think it’s morally acceptable to cheat on a test, we can assume that this is so. The speaker has not actually considered any criteria that would determine whether the cheating can be Justified.

9. Post hoc

- **Explanation:** Assuming this is a parent speaking, we can see that they’ve reasoned that, since the new friendship immediately preceded their child’s grades dropping, then the new friendship must have caused their child’s grades to drop. They have offered no evidence of a causal link between the two.

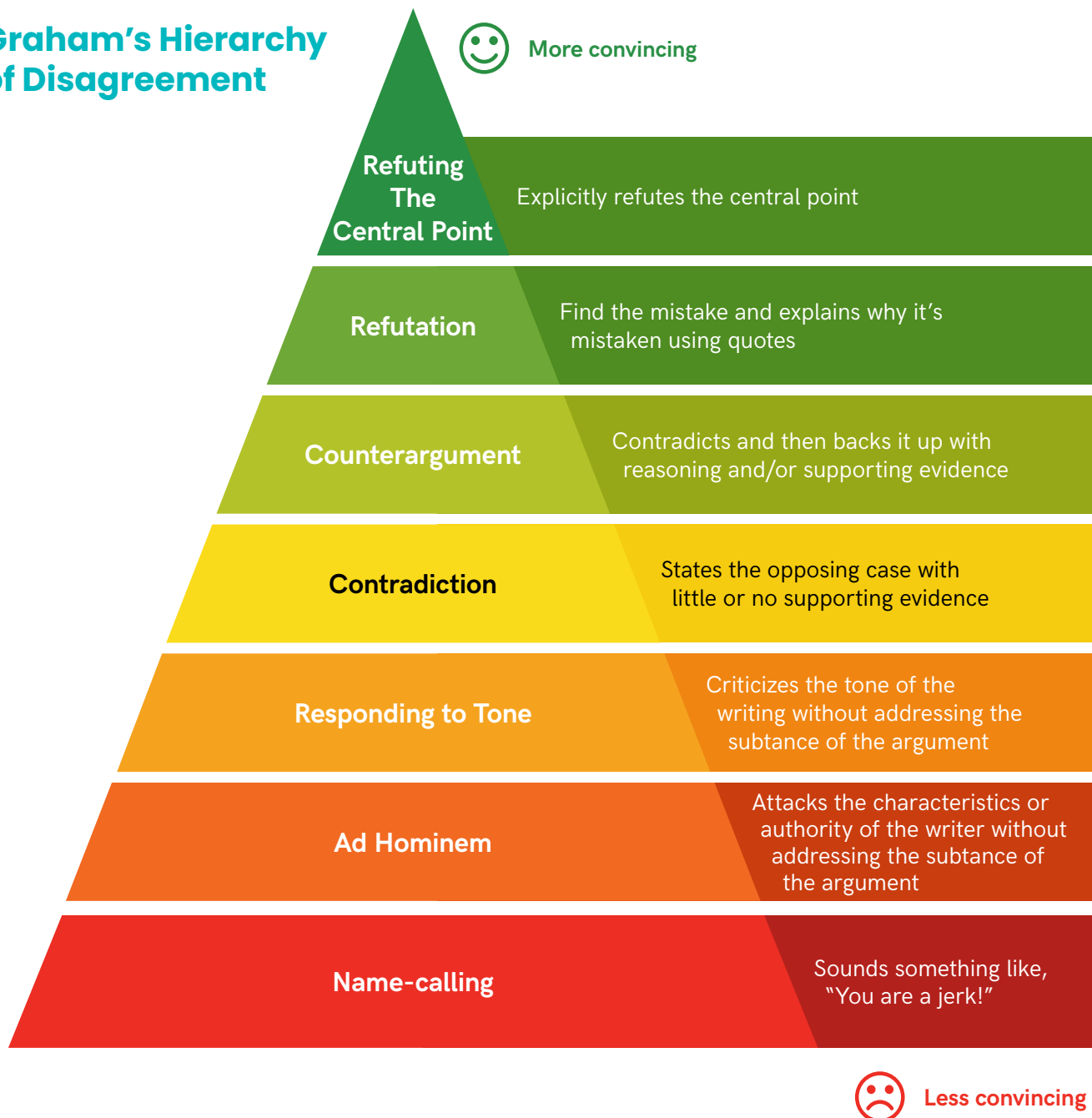
10. Ad hominem

- **Explanation:** This argument focuses on one of the person’s qualities, intelligence, rather than what they’re saying. The speaker has made no effort to deal with their opponent’s argument itself.

DEBATE AND MORAL DISAGREEMENT

One factor that prevents individuals in our society from having constructive debates is that we often shy away from debating people. There are a few reasons for this. One is that a debate is often about a moral issue or a topic that one feels personally very passionate about, we have not learned the right “toolkit” for constructively discussing different points of view. Take a look at the pyramid below that builds from the least convincing ways of disagreeing to the most convincing.

Graham's Hierarchy of Disagreement



Now that you've got the framework for more convincing (and humane!) ways of disagreeing about a topic, try discussing the moral disagreement scenarios below with friends or members of your family: (Bonus points if you disagree while remaining respectful, and take aim at the argument, not the individual!)

Scenario 1: Cheating on a Test

- **Situation:** Vijay is struggling with a math test. He knows that his friend Sarah has a cheat sheet hidden in her bag. Vijay is tempted to ask Sarah for the answers.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - Is it morally acceptable for Vijay to cheat on the test? Why or why not?
 - What are the potential consequences of cheating on a test, both for Vijay and for the concept of fairness in education?
 - How might honesty and integrity be important values in this situation?

Scenario 2: Bullying

- **Situation:** Yuki sees her classmate Michael being bullied by a group of students. They are making fun of him because of his appearance. Yuki has a choice: she can either join in and laugh along, or she can stand up for Michael and help him.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - Is it morally acceptable for Yuki to join in and bully Michael? Why or why not?
 - How might empathy and compassion play a role in this situation?
 - What are the potential consequences of bullying, both for the victim and the bullies themselves?

Scenario 3: Animal Testing

- **Situation:** A cosmetics company is conducting experiments on animals to test the safety of their products. Some people argue that this is necessary to ensure human safety, while others believe it is morally wrong to harm animals in this way.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - Is it morally acceptable for the cosmetics company to test their products on animals?
 - Why or why not?
 - How might the principles of animal rights and cruelty come into play in this situation?
 - Are there alternative methods that could be used to ensure product safety without harming animals? What might be the benefits and drawbacks of these alternatives?

DEBATE!

Time to try out your new skills! Choose a topic from the list below. Have someone take the “pro” side and someone take the “con” side of the debate. Remember to stay away from logical fallacies and to aim for the top of the disagreement hierarchy when building your argument.

Debate topics:

- It is acceptable to lie to protect someone’s feelings.
- It is ethical to use animals for scientific experiments.
- It is ethical to use social media to shame someone publicly for something they have done wrong.
- Parents should be allowed to choose the traits of their future children through genetic engineering.



Opening Argument:

Why not try building an opening statement? Pick a topic from the list above or a sillier one from the list below, and use the following chart to construct opening arguments for both sides of the debate.

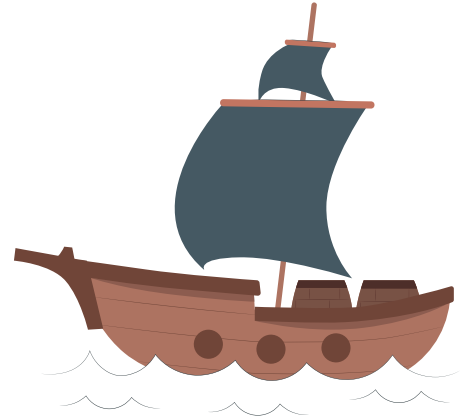
- Alien invasion vs. zombie apocalypse: Which would be easier to survive?
- Robot companions vs. unicorn sidekicks: Who would make a better partner in solving crime?
- Time travel vs. teleportation: Which superpower would be more convenient in everyday life?
- Pirates vs. ninjas: Who would throw the better surprise birthday party?
- Super speed vs. super strength: Which power would be more useful for completing household chores?
- Flying pigs vs. talking squirrels: Which would be more entertaining as pets?
- Invisibility vs. mind reading: Which superpower would be handier during exams?

Debate Element	Description	Tactics	Example
OPENING STATEMENTS	- Teams deliver an opening statement to present their case and introduce their main arguments. - This is an opportunity to capture the audience's attention and set the tone of the debate.	- Start with a compelling quotation, statistic, anecdote, or idea to grab the audience's attention. - Clearly state the team's position and main arguments. - Provide a brief outline of the arguments to be presented. - Establish credibility through confident delivery and persuasive language.	<i>"Ladies and gentlemen, imagine a world where education is accessible to all. Today, our team will argue that free education should be a fundamental right. We will present three key arguments: economic growth, social equality, and individual empowerment. Education is not a privilege but a necessity, and we must work towards a society where every child has the opportunity to learn and succeed."</i>

THE SHIP OF THESEUS

A dinner-table discussion

This is a famous thought experiment known as the Ship of Theseus Paradox. Theseus was the mythological founder of Athens who rescued Athenian children, slayed the minotaur that was going to eat them, and then fled on a ship headed for the sacred Greek island of Delos. In commemoration, so the story goes, Athenians maintained the ship for hundreds of years, replacing the rotting parts one by one. Ancient philosophers asked: If all the original parts were removed and replaced, one at a time over many years, is it still the same ship?



So what do you think?

Can we consider a ship “unchanged” if all of its original parts are replaced with different parts?

Why this is a great question to ponder:

It challenges our concept of identity and continuity. While there is no agreed-upon answer, the exercise itself prompts a layer-by-layer, question-by-question inquiry that trains and sharpens critical thinking skills while simultaneously expanding a student’s perspective. Is the identity of something to be found in its form and function? Or does it only remain unchanged if its physical parts stay the same?

Take it further: if the cells in our bodies die off and are replaced by new ones, are we the same person we were a decade ago?

We can consider the question and its implications from multiple viewpoints, open-mindedly discussing the nature of objects, the passage of time, and what makes a human a human.

OUR LOCATIONS

Available at 11 locations in Canada, 5 in the US and online, virtually from anywhere in the world!

CANADA LOCATIONS



-  **Vaughan Campus**
Schwartz/Reisman Centre
-  **Markham Campus**
YSpace
-  **Richmond Hill Campus**
Holy Trinity School
-  **Aurora Campus**
St. Anne's School
-  **North Toronto Campus**
Prosserman JCC
-  **Midtown Toronto Campus**
De La Salle College
-  **Downtown Toronto Campus**
Miles Nadal JCC
-  **Etobicoke Campus**
Kingsway College School (KCS)
-  **Mississauga Campus**
Toronto French School
-  **Oakville Campus**
Full-Year: Appleby College
Summer: Oakville Public Library
-  **Burlington Campus**
901 Guelph Line

brainpower.ca/locations



US LOCATIONS



-  **New York City**
Nord Anglia International School of New York
-  **Chicago**
British International School of Chicago
-  **Houston**
British International School of Houston
-  **Chicago**
British International School of Chicago - South Loop
-  **Houston**
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FOR OVER
30
YEARS