Questions of Fact, Value, and Policy

Barry 2010
Questions of Fact

• **Questions of fact** are questions about the truth or falsity of an assertion.

• Differs from informative:
  • nonpartisan vs. partisan

• **Example:**
  • Assassination of John F. Kennedy

From *The Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen E. Lucas
Questions of Fact

• Example:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that an earthquake of 9.0 or above on the Richter scale will hit California in the next ten years.

Central Idea: There are three good reasons to believe that an earthquake of 9.0 or above on the Richter scale will hit California in the next ten years.

Main Points:

I. California is long overdue for a large earthquake.

II. Many geological signs indicate that a major earthquake will happen soon.

III. Experts agree that an earthquake of 9.0 or above could strike California any day.

From The Art of Public Speaking by Stephen E. Lucas
Questions of Value

• **Questions of value** are questions about the worth, rightness, morality, and so forth of an idea or action.

• When speaking on a question of value, you must **justify** your claims.

From *The Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen E. Lucas
Questions of Value

- **Specific Purpose:** To persuade my audience that bicycle riding is the ideal form of land transportation.

- **Central Idea:** Bicycle riding is the ideal form of land transportation because it is faster than walking or running, does not exploit animals or people, is nonpolluting, and promotes the health of the rider.

From *The Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen E. Lucas
Questions of Policy

• *Questions of policy* are about whether a specific course of action should or should not be taken.

• *Examples:*

  What measures should be taken to protect the United States against terrorist attacks?
  Should the electoral college be abolished?
  What steps should be taken to ensure that all people in the United States receive adequate health care?

From *The Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen E. Lucas
Questions of Policy

• Two types:
  
  • 1. Speeches to gain passive agreement
  
  • 2. Speeches to gain immediate action

From *The Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen E. Lucas
Questions of Policy

• **speech to gain passive agreement**: the speaker’s goal is to convince the audience that a given policy is desirable without encouraging the audience to take action in support of the policy.

• **Examples:**

To persuade my audience that there should be stricter safety standards on amusement-park rides.

To persuade my audience that the age for full driving privileges should be raised to 18.

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Questions of Policy

- **speech to gain immediate action**: the speaker’s goal is to convince the audience to take action in support of a given policy

- **Examples:**

To persuade my audience to give blood through the Red Cross.

To persuade my audience to volunteer with Big Brothers, Big Sisters.

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Questions of Policy

• **Need.** Is there a serious problem or need that requires a change from current policy?
• **Burden of proof.** The obligation facing a persuasive speaker to prove that a change from current policy is necessary.
• **Plan.** If there is a problem with current policy, does the speaker have a plan to solve the problem?
• **Practicality.** Will the speaker’s plan solve the problem? Will it create new and more serious problems?

From *The Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen E. Lucas
Questions of Policy

• Ways of organizing speeches on questions of policy:

• **Problem-solution order:** the first main point deals with the existence of a problem and the second main point presents a solution to the problem

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Questions of Policy

- Problem-solution example:

**Specific Purpose:** To persuade my audience that the use of antibacterial chemicals in household products is creating health and environmental problems.

**Central Idea:** The use of antibacterial chemicals in household products is a serious problem that requires action by government and consumers alike.

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Questions of Policy

Problem-solution example:

Main Points:
I. The use of antibacterial chemicals in household products is a serious problem.
   A. Contributes to long-term health problems.
   B. Also environmental problems.

II. Solving the problem: government and consumer action
   A. Food and Drug should regulate
   B. Consumers should avoid buying.

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Questions of Policy

• Ways of organizing speeches on questions of policy:

• **Problem-cause-solution order:** the first main point identifies the problem, the second main point analyzes the causes of the problem, and the third main point presents a solution to the problem

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Questions of Policy

• Example:

**Specific Purpose:** To persuade my audience that the age for full motor-vehicle driving privileges should be raised to 18.

**Main Points:**

I. The number of accidents and deaths involving teenage drivers is a serious problem.

II. There are four main causes.

III. We can help solve these problems by raising the age for full driving privileges.

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Questions of Policy

• Ways of organizing speeches on questions of policy:

• **Comparative advantages order**: each main point explains why a speaker’s solution to a problem is preferable to other proposed solutions

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Questions of Policy

• Comparative advantages example

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that automakers should put greater emphasis on developing hydrogen fuel-cell cars than gas-electric cars

Main Points:
I. Unlike hybrid cars, hydrogen cars run entirely without gasoline.
II. Unlike hybrid cars, hydrogen cars do not emit any air-polluting exhaust

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Questions of Policy

• Ways of organizing speeches on questions of policy:

• Monroe’s motivated sequence: A method of organizing persuasive speeches that seek immediate action. The five steps of the motivated sequence are attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action.

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