PERSUASIVE WRITING

DEVICES

From Chapter 2
“Becoming a Persuasive Writer”
Everyone likes a good story

Think human interest and personalizing by featuring individuals who are being impacted/helped by a decision, change or development

The news media also like to personalize stories from the point of view of those affected
While numbers can come across as cold and impersonal, they also can convey objectivity, scale and importance in a credible way.

While numbers can be impressive, a news release crammed with statistics can overwhelm the reader.

Try to dramatize statistics in a way that paints a more vivid picture for readers and viewers (examples p. 49).
SURVEYS AND POLLS

- Related to the “bandwagon” persuasion technique
- The idea is to show overwhelming support for a particular idea or product by showing a high level of support (“four out of five doctors recommend…” or “65 percent of voters support…”)
- Polls and surveys can help an organization attract media coverage and attention
EXAMPLES

- A general statement can become more persuasive when a specific example can clarify and reinforce the core information.
- A school district, fighting for funds, could bolster its case by giving examples of overcrowded classrooms, high teacher/student ratios, and poor student achievement compared to other area districts.
TESTIMONIALS

- This is when someone speaks out who has directly benefitted from using a product, program or service
- A university might use favorable quotes from outstanding alumni about the value and benefits of their education
- A celebrity on a TV talk show might say that a particular drug helped her cope with severe migraine headaches
ENDORSEMENTS

- Different than a testimonial in that there may be no direct connection (such as our school graduate testimonial)
- This is often called a third-party endorsement
- Such an endorsement can give credibility because of its objectivity and expertise of the endorser
- The media can be such an endorser too when giving favorable editorials, product reviews, surveys and news coverage/stories
EMOTIONAL APPEAL

- Persuasive messages often play on our emotions
- Fundraising letters and videos from nonprofit groups often using emotional appeals as a writing device
- Think children in Africa and animal cruelty appeals
- Psychologists say the most effective emotional appeal is one coupled with facts and figures