

**Lesson Plan: Unit 3**  
**The Story of Stuff – Persuasive Presentation**  
**Academic Listening and Speaking**

## **Context**

This lesson covering 6 class hours of instruction composes the 3<sup>rd</sup> unit of a listening and speaking ESL class for students who are bridging into university programs in the health sciences. See the class [syllabus](#) for more information on the class.

## **Lesson Overview**

This lesson – which I organized around the controversial documentary, *The Story of Stuff* - supports students in organizing and delivering a persuasive presentation. After reviewing a handout on strategies for organizing a persuasive presentation, students view and evaluate 3 persuasive presentations available online. The first and focal presentation is [The Story of Stuff](#), a 20 minute polemic delivered by Anne Leonard that argues that American consumerism is damaging our environment and society. After watching the video, students analyze the content, organization and delivery strategies employed by Leonard via a handout I created. Because Leonard is very effective in using word stress for emphasis, I also created a couple materials that support students in analyzing her use of word stress as well as providing them practice in using word stress to communicate additional meaning and added emphasis. The students then evaluate and critique 2 presentations with opposing views on nuclear power that is available on [Ted Talks](#). The purpose of evaluating these presentations is to support the students in organizing and planning their own presentations, which the students begin planning from Day 1. The unit culminates with the students delivering their persuasive presentations on the third and final day of the unit. They are also quizzed on the vocabulary that they learned from analyzing *The Story of Stuff*.

## **Materials**

Description of the persuasive presentation assignment

[http://jeffmc.info/sites/default/files/persuasive-speech-description-environment\\_0.pdf#overlay-context=university-students/health-sciences](http://jeffmc.info/sites/default/files/persuasive-speech-description-environment_0.pdf#overlay-context=university-students/health-sciences)

Rubric for the persuasive presentation assignment

<http://jeffmc.info/sites/default/files/persuasive-presentation-rubric-environment.pdf#overlay-context=university-students/health-sciences>

Handout for analyzing the Story of Stuff

<http://jeffmc.info/sites/default/files/analyzing-story-stuff.pdf#overlay-context=university-students/health-sciences>

Handout for identifying and practicing word stress for emphasis in the Story of Stuff

<http://jeffmc.info/sites/default/files/stress-story-stuff.pdf#overlay-context=university-students/health-sciences>

Handout for using stress to communicate meaning

[http://jeffmc.info/sites/default/files/Stress-meaning\\_0.pdf#overlay-context=university-students/health-sciences](http://jeffmc.info/sites/default/files/Stress-meaning_0.pdf#overlay-context=university-students/health-sciences)

The Story of Stuff video

<http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-stuff/>

Stewart Brand + Mark Z. Jacobson: Debate: Does the world need nuclear energy?

[http://www.ted.com/talks/debate\\_does\\_the\\_world\\_need\\_nuclear\\_energy.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/debate_does_the_world_need_nuclear_energy.html)

**Class Length: 2 hours**

## Objectives

- Students will be able to organize and deliver a persuasive speech.
- Students will be able to use word stress to communicate meaning and emphasis.

## Lesson sequence

### Day 1

#### **Introducing the assigned presentation**

Students review the assignment and rubric for the persuasive presentation (see materials).

#### **Strategies for making a persuasive presentation**

Students review tips for writing and organizing a persuasive presentation (handout not included).

#### **Brainstorming topic ideas for persuasive speech**

Students brainstorm different ideas or topics for the assigned persuasive presentation that they will deliver.

- Review the basics of a persuasive issue
- Generate a list of topics on the board
- Elicit components of a thesis
  1. States an opinion that can be argued 2 ways
  2. States opinion with a complete and concise sentence

#### **Introducing pros and cons (see materials)**

Students are given a handout in which they will identify pros and cons of their position.

#### **Evaluating The Story of Stuff (see materials)**

1. Students review important vocabulary and slang expressions from the video.

<i>appeal</i>	<i>third world</i>
<i>refute</i>	<i>toxins</i>
<i>consumer</i>	<i>trash the planet</i>
<i>extraction</i>	<i>wipe out the animals</i>
<i>distribution</i>	<i>duh!</i>
<i>disposal</i>	<i>missing from the picture</i>
<i>linear system</i>	<i>chuck</i>
<i>finite planet</i>	
2. Students watch at least first 10 minutes of 20 minute video.
3. In pairs students write down a sentence that sums up the position (thesis) that the presenter advocates.
4. Students analyze the content, organization and delivery strategies. (see handout)

### **HW**

- Come to class with a one sentence thesis for your persuasive presentation
- Identify pros and cons of your presentation
- Choose a podcast that relates to your issue
- Watch [The Story of Stuff](#) again and write answers to the questions under *Analyzing the presentation*.

## Day 2

### **Report back on homework**

1. The teacher (and class) review and evaluate student thesis statements and pros/cons for their persuasive speeches
2. Students review Story of Stuff analysis questions

### **Using stress to convey meaning**

1. Students review and practice using stress for communicating meaning (see materials for handout adapted from [http://bogglesworldesl.com/askthomas\\_intonation.htm](http://bogglesworldesl.com/askthomas_intonation.htm))
2. Students predict word stress on The story of stuff stress handout (see materials)

### **Analyzing 2 opposing presentations on nuclear energy (see materials)**

1. Preview the 2 presentations, the format and their positions
2. Elicit from the class their own personal position on the issue
3. Students take notes in order to outline the main points of each presentation
4. In pairs, students identify the key points after each presentation
5. Review with students the key points of each presentation

### **Critiquing the 2 opposing presentations on nuclear energy**

1. Using the rubrics for their own presentations, students evaluate each presentation.
  - *How effective is the introduction?*
  - *What support does he use in his body?*
  - *How effective is the conclusion?*
2. To conclude, ask students if they changed their opinions on the issue and show the students the last 2 minutes of the podcast to see who the audience identified as the winner.

### **HW**

- Incorporate evidence or examples from your chosen podcast into your presentation
- Create an outline of your persuasive speech
- Prepare and practice your persuasive presentation
- Study for the vocabulary quiz
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## Day 3

### **Students deliver persuasive presentations**

### **Vocabulary quiz (Handout not included)**