

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC ABOUT EVOLUTION

From writing op-eds calling for improved science education to meeting with your school board to oppose teaching intelligent design, there are many opportunities to communicate with the public about the importance of teaching evolution and the nature of science. However, even the best arguments can be losing arguments if they are poorly communicated. Here are some general tips for communicating about evolution.

KNOW YOUR STUFF

Effective advocacy starts with informed advocates. Scientific and educational organizations have gathered a wealth of resources to help you make the case for teaching evolution and to respond to anti-evolution proponents. Take advantage of these resources.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Most people are not experts in evolution or in science. Therefore, whether you are writing a letter or preparing a talk, you should draw upon evidence but avoid scientific jargon. Think about how you would explain the issue to a friend or neighbor who doesn't have a background in science.

KEEP IT SHORT

Limit letters-to-the-editor to between 200 and 300 words. Op-eds and letters to your officials can be longer, but limit them to 800 words or less. Stick to one issue. [Click here for more letter and op-ed writing tips.](#)

KEEP MEETINGS FOCUSED

Whether you're meeting with a public official or speaking to your school board, you probably won't have a lot of time to communicate your message. Bring talking points to help you stay focused. If you have access to audio-visual equipment, consider bringing slides or a PowerPoint presentation. [Click here for presentation templates you can use.](#)

PERSONALIZE

Do you know a teacher or student who has been affected by challenges to teaching evolution? If so, draw upon this--personal anecdotes get people's attention and make it easier for them to relate to your message.

DRAW UPON YOUR EXPERTISE

Are you a local scientist or teacher? If so, make sure to state that. In addition to lending credibility to your arguments, this will send a message that local experts in science and education oppose the weakening of evolution education.

ORGANIZE

You don't have to go it alone, and decision-makers will be more likely to heed an organized group. Draw on your existing social networks and don't be afraid to reach out to unfamiliar ones.

DISCUSSING SCIENCE AND FAITH

Many people are concerned that accepting evolution stands in opposition to their religious beliefs. If you see no contradiction between faith and accepting the evidence for evolution, let people know. For more information on this topic, see [NCSE's list of statements on evolution from religious organizations](#).

YOU'LL CATCH MORE FLIES WITH HONEY...

While it is important to present your viewpoint confidently and to stand your ground, you should never be threatening or disrespectful. Always be polite to your audience even if you disagree with them.

Click below for specific tips on:

-  [Monitoring Evolution Education Policies](#)
-  [Writing Letters-to-the-Editor and Op-Eds](#)
-  [Communicating with Your Public Officials](#)
-  [Meeting with Public Officials](#)
-  [Testifying at School Board Meetings](#)