

Persuade with a Mystery Number

If you make it a mystery, you can get your listener's attention and help them remember the facts. Imagine you have a radio interview about PA's education spending. To start, remember this simple phrase:

One person and one point.

One Person

Imagine one person listening to your interview—picture where they are and what they are doing.

Example: It's a drive-time radio show. That means the person is likely driving to work and catching local news. They didn't wake up wanting to hear about education spending—it is your job to make it interesting.

One Point

Think about the one point you want the person to remember a week from now.

Example: The one point is that PA is generous with its education spending—it is ranked 8th in the country in education spending and spends \$4,000 more per student than the average state.

The Mystery

Create a mystery with these steps after the one person and one point.

1. Start with a bit of intrigue about a number.
2. Reveal a part of the answer.
3. Reveal a little more.
4. Wrap up by summarizing the mystery number and the one point.

Mystery Number Example



In your radio interview you could say:

Whenever we talk about education spending in PA, it's critical to remember two numbers: the numbers 8 and 4.

Let's start with why 8 is important. I want you to hold up 8 fingers. I know many listeners are driving, but go ahead and hold the steering wheel with your thumbs and hold up 8 fingers.

Why is 8 important? Because of every state in America, PA is the 8th highest education spending per student. *Our education spending is incredibly generous at the state and local levels. In fact, there are only a few states in the whole nation that spend more than us.*

Now close one of your hands and just leave four fingers up.

Why is 4 important? Because in PA, we spend \$4,000 more per student than the average state.

So whenever you hear anyone talk about education spending, remember 8 and 4. And remember, Pennsylvania has the 8th highest education spending in the country and spends \$4,000 more than the average state.

This example would take a minute, and the audience would likely remember it weeks from now. It's also extra memorable because the audience created a visual for themselves.

The Bottom Line

To create mystery numbers, think about One Person and the One Point you want them to remember. Then make it a mystery by starting with intrigue, then keep revealing a part of the answer, and end with a wrap-up by summarizing the number and the one point.