Public Speaking as Performance

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Practicing Public Speaking in the Theatre & Performance Classroom

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Public Speaking as Performance

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Public Speaking as Performance: Practicing Public Speaking in the Theatre & Performance Classroom, written by theatre educators, presents the essential elements of speechwriting with the skills that actors use to communicate to an audience. In chapters such as "Actor Tools for Public Speakers" and "From Page to Stage," the textbook provides students with a creative and accessible approach to delivering speeches. Drawing on the tradition of teaching public speaking in theatre and drama departments, this textbook emphasizes the performative nature of communication.

This book was made possible by a grant provided by the University of Kansas Libraries and through additional funding from the Department of Theatre & Dance, University of Kansas.

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Cover Photo: Brad Mathewson in the role of Jaques, As You Like It, directed by Mechele Leon. University of Kansas, Spring 2020.

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PROLOGUE

What is public speaking? What is performance? The chapters in this section discuss theories of communication and performance that provide a framework for practicing public speaking.

1. Thinking about Public Speaking

What is Public Speaking?

In this chapter . . .

In this chapter, you'll learn to define public speaking by distinguishing it from everyday conversation. You'll also learn to define performance and why public speaking is performance. You'll read about two theoretical models for understanding the process of communication. In the last section, you'll be invited to consider the benefits of practicing public speaking.

What's your mental picture when you think about **public speaking**? The President of the United States delivering an inaugural address? A sales representative seeking to persuade clients in a board room? Your minister, priest, or rabbi presenting a sermon at a worship service? Your professor lecturing? A dramatic courtroom scene? Politicians debating before an election? A comedian doing stand-up at a night club?

All of these and more are instances of public speaking. Public speaking takes many forms every day in our country and across the world.

Public Speaking vs. Everyday Conversation

What do we mean by "public speaking?" The most obvious answer is "talking in front of a group of people." Public speaking is more formal than that. Public speaking is an organized, face-to-face, prepared, intentional (purposeful) attempt to inform, entertain, or persuade a group of people (usually five or more) through words, physical delivery, and (at times) visual or audio aids. In almost all cases, the speaker is the focus of attention for a specific amount of time. There still may be some back-and-forth interaction, such as questions and answers with the audience, but the speaker usually holds the responsibility to direct that interaction.

Although we communicate all the time, public speaking is bigger than everyday conversation. Public speaking is purposeful (to entertain, inform, or persuade your audience). Speeches are highly organized with certain formal elements (introduction and clear main points, for example). They are usually dependent on resources outside of your personal experience (research to support your ideas).

Unlike conversation, speech delivery is "enlarged" or "projected" as well—louder, more fluid, and more energetic, depending on the size and type of room in which you're speaking—and you'll be more conscious of the correctness and formality of your language. You might say, "That sucks" in a conversation but are less likely to do so in front of a large audience in certain situations. If you can keep in mind the basic principle that public speaking is formalized communication with an audience designed to achieve mutual understanding for mutual benefit (like a conversation), you'll be able to relate to your audience on a human and personal level.

There is a cultural practice that achieves this same goal of communication: performance.

What is Performance?

There are multiple meanings of the word **performance**. The most common use of the word refers to a cultural event that is prepared for an audience. These are live events like theatre, dance, a circus, or a concert. We say, "I'm going to a theatre performance" or a "performance of a concert." Related to this, performance also means the effort of the artist at these events. For example, we say the "actor performs," or the "musician performs."

Another common meaning of performance is achievement, as in how well one performs their job. We use phrases like "the student's performance" or "that athlete performs well in competition." This is performance as achievement or ability.

There's yet another meaning that is interesting because it has a negative connotation: performance as something fake or presentational. In this sense, performing means a person isn't authentic, not real, just playing a game, just acting.

Finally—and this is the definition that most applies to public speaking—we use performance to speak of how we present ourselves in the fulfillment of a designated social role. Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It*). The idea is that on the stage of life, we are all actors. We should ask, therefore, what role are we playing? The answer is: many, many roles. Over the course of a few days or even just a single day, you play several roles. Starting in the morning, you're showing yourself as a hard-working student in the classroom; over lunch you behave as a friend; you go to work and fulfill your role as a good employee; your parent call and you play the obedient child as you ask for gas money. As we circulate through these different social situations, we perform distinct roles. Taking it further, you can see that we perform not only social roles, but our very identity. Gender identity is one such performance.

Performance in Everyday Life

How did this broad concept of performance come about? In 1956, the Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman published a book called The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. The idea of how we present ourselves—perform ourselves—caught on for sociologists, psychologists, cultural anthropologists, and others who study theatre. Lived experience confirmed what felt like common sense: identity is flexible. How we think of ourselves changes with the situations we move through with other human beings.

There is an extension of this idea that is even more interesting. Namely, how we perform these roles isn't original. Our performed behaviors are part of previously performed behaviors. Think about the way people behave at sporting events. There are special cheers and gestures, face painting, and chants. You couldn't know how to perform at a sporting event unless these behaviors had been already performed, right? Put another way: each time a crowd gathers to enjoy the game, they are reenacting previously performed behaviors. Another example of this is a marriage ceremony. Marriage ceremonies rely on previously scripted behaviors. If you had a ceremony that was completely original, it wouldn't be recognized by attendees as a marriage ceremony at all unless it contained some conventional elements.

If our stream of everyday performances is based on already-existing performances, how did we learn them? Did we study them? Obviously not. We learned them like we learned language: naturally and by example.

Public Speaker is a Social Role

This textbook is called **Public Speaking as Performance** to highlight the central idea that speaking in public is a social role that we perform upon invitation and under specific circumstances. Like all roles, this performance takes its instructions from previously performed examples.

Public speaking has reliable, repeatable behaviors. You know most of them already. How do speakers walk to the front of a room? How do they stand at a podium? What kinds of hand gestures do speakers typically use? These are common to the practice of public speaking. You've witnessed them throughout your life and already have the building blocks for that special type of role-playing we call public speaking.

The Communication Process

Human beings communicate with each other all the time and continually, but we don't give much thought to exactly how it's that we successfully get our messages across. How do we understand each other? Are we saying what we mean? How does one person speak to many? How does a speaker know they are being understood?

There are several fields of university research that study how communication works. Linguistics, for example, looks at how human languages function. Communication Studies examines a range of communication styles from small group interpersonal interactions to the communicative force of mass media. Departments of Philosophy, Classics, and Psychology each have their way of talking about the communication process. Artists in both the visual and performing arts also think about how they communicate with their audiences.

The Communication Studies Model

According to research in the field of Communication Studies, human communication aims to share meaning between two or more people. The process is composed of certain required elements:

1. Senders and receivers (people)
2. Context
3. Message
4. Channel
5. Feedback
6. Noise
7. Outcome/result

In public speaking, it's common to call one person (the speaker) the "**sender**" and the audience the "**receiver.**" In the real world, it's not always as simple as that. Sometimes the speaker initiates the message, but other times the speaker is responding to the audience's initiation. It's enough to say that the sender and receiver exchange roles sometimes and both are as necessary as the other to the communication process.

Human communication takes place within a **context**, meaning the circumstances in which a speech happens. Context can have many levels, with several going on at the same time in any communication act.

- Historical, or what has gone on between the sender(s) and receiver(s) before the speech. The historical elements can be positive or negative, recent, or further back in time.
- Cultural, which sometimes refers to the country where someone was born and raised but can also include ethnic, racial, religious, and regional cultures or co-cultures.
- Social, or what kind of relationship the sender(s) and receiver(s) are involved in, such as teacher-student, co-workers, employer-employee, or members of the same civic organization, faith, profession, or community.
- Physical, which involves where the communication is taking place and the attributes of that location. The physical context can have cultural meaning (a famous shrine or monument) that influences the form and purpose of the communication, or attributes that influence audience attention (temperature, seating arrangements, or external noise).

Each one of these aspects of context bears upon how we behave as a communicator and specifically a public speaker.

Third, human communication of any kind involves a **message**. That message may be informal and spontaneous, such as small talk with a seatmate on a plane, conversing for no other reason than to have someone to talk to and be pleasant. On the other hand, it might be very formal, intentional, and planned, such as a commencement address.

Fourth, public speaking, like all communication, requires a **channel**. Channel is how the message gets from sender to receiver. In interpersonal human communication, we see each other and hear each other, in the same place and time. In mediated or mass communication, some sort of machine or technology (tool) comes between the people—phone, radio, television, printing press and paper, or computer.

The fifth element of human communication is **feedback**, which in public speaking is usually nonverbal, such as head movement, facial expressions, laughter, eye contact, posture, and other behaviors that we use to judge audience involvement, understanding, and approval. These types of feedback can be positive (nodding, sitting up, leaning forward, smiling) or less than positive (tapping fingers, fidgeting, lack of eye contact, checking devices).

The sixth element of human communication is **noise**, which might be considered any disruption that interrupts or interferes in the communication. Some amount of noise is almost always present due to the complexity of human behavior and context. Some categories of noise include:

- something in the room or physical environment keeps them from attending to or understanding a message.
- the receiver(s)' health affects their understanding of the message, or the sender's physical state affects her ability to be clear and have good delivery.
- the receiver(s) or sender(s) have stress, anxiety, past experiences, personal concerns, or some other psychological issue that prevents the audience from receiving an intended message.

This brief list of three types of noise isn't exhaustive, but it's enough to point out that many things can "go wrong" in a public speaking situation. However, the reason for studying public speaking is to become aware of the potential for these limitations or noise factors, to determine if they could happen during your speech, and take care of them.

The final element of the communication process is **outcome** or result, which means a change in either the audience or the context. For example, if you ask an audience to consider becoming bone marrow donors, there are certain outcomes. They will either have more information about the subject and feel more informed; they will disagree with you; they will take in the information but not follow through with any action; or they will decide it's a good idea to become a donor and go through the steps to do so.

Let's apply this model of communication to the situation of public speaking. It looks like this:

The speaker is a **sender** within a specific speaking **context**, who originates and creates a structured **message** and sends it through the visual or oral **channel** using symbols and nonverbal means to

the **receivers** who are the members of the audience. They provide (mostly nonverbal) **feedback**. The speaker and audience may or may not be aware of the types of interference or **noise** that exist, and the speaker may try to deal with them. As an **outcome** of public speaking, the audience's minds, emotions, and/or actions are affected, and possibly the speaker's as well.

Now that you understand one model of the process of human communication, let's consider another model. This model comes from the kind of communication that we see in performances such as theatre.

The Theatrical Model of Communication

First, let's remember the seven elements of communication you have already learned: senders and receivers, context, message, channel, noise, feedback, and outcome. It's all rather technical, isn't it? Senders and receivers sound like a cell tower. Message might make you think of sending a text. Channel is a word we use to talk about TV or radio—like a streaming channel. Noise and feedback are associated with sounds that machines make like a bad amplifier or a broken microphone.

Obviously, we're not communication machines. Is there another model for the process of communication? Theatre performance is an alternative. The elements of theatrical communication are actors and audience, circumstances, story, stage, audience reaction, obstacles, and effect.

Theatrical Model vs. Communication Model

Instead of a metaphor in which speakers and listeners are like a cell tower sending and receiving messages, imagine instead that communication involves **actors** who tell stories and an **audience** who listens, hopefully in rapt attention. Even though actors may have something called stage fright, they work through it because they owe it to their audiences to tell the story. As for the audience, these are people who have come willingly to listen. The occasion matters to them. Probably they paid for a ticket. Maybe they dressed up for the occasion. It doesn't matter how they came together, but it's that special meeting, essential to the nature of being human, between those who have a story to tell and those who have come to listen.

Now, let's look at the element of context. Context is akin to something that actors and directors call **given circumstances**. The given circumstances are everything that we know about the situation in which a story and the storytelling takes place. Every play has a unique set of given circumstances. When creating a theatre production, the entire team analyzes a script to understand all the elements of the world of the play.

Instead of message, think more broadly about the word **meaning**. When we ask, "what does that word mean?", we are using one sense of that word. But when we say, "You mean so much to me," then we are using the word in the sense of important or significant. Why would actors be speaking if they didn't have something meaningful to say? Why would a playwright write a play if there wasn't meaning in it? How could a theatre group expect audiences to buy tickets if not with the promise of meaning? Much more than a message, *meaning* reminds us that speaking and listening matter.

The stage could be thought of as a channel. When we talk about a stage, we usually mean a separate space, one that is different from the space of the audience. Sometimes it's higher than the audience to make it easier to see, but that isn't a requirement. Actors use the term **taking stage** to describe when a person has separated themselves from the group,

implying, "Hey, look at me for a few minutes. I have something to say!" Taking stage is a very human and powerful thing to do.

In theatre, actors want to be understood. Actors pay close attention to **audience reaction**. Often, actors can't see the audience because of the lights, so they must pay close attention to feedback like laughter and applause, but also to more subtle audience signals like coughing and moving. This feedback might change the energy of the actors, or cause them to speak louder, or to take more pauses for laughter. Actors and public speakers alike are in a dialogue with the audience.

What about those distractions called "noise"? In the theatre, we speak instead about **obstacles**. Obstacles refer to anything that stands in the way of a person fully communicating with another. Instead of seeing noise as something negative, actors understand that obstacles are the beating heart of drama. Drama wouldn't exist without people struggling to communicate with each other!

Finally, there is **effect**. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle believed that the effect of theatre was to allow an audience to experience strong emotions, so that they would be cleansed of these emotions when they emerged again into real life. In public speaking there are different goals, depending on the purpose of the speech. However, they are all connected to these questions: What is the effect we hope to have on our audience?

Both the theatrical model of communication and the communication studies model of communication have their advantages. In the theatrical model, we have people who want to speak and people who want to listen. We have circumstances that tell us who, what, where, why, and why we're speaking. Theatre tells a story that is meaningful. In the theatre, actors take stage, even when they are frightened, as a way of saying "Look at me. I have something to say." They establish a dialogue with the audience by listening to their reaction. Obstacles are inherent to the process of human interaction, but in the end, we hope we have an effect.

To conclude, you may find it productive to consider these lessons taken from what performers know about communication:

- It all begins with the desire to speak and be heard.
- The audience has made an effort to be there. Respect that effort.
- Stories worth telling are stories that are meaningful.
- Consider all the given circumstances.
- Don't be afraid to take the stage. It's the only way to tell the story.
- Communication isn't guaranteed. There will be obstacles.
- Performers are in dialogue with an audience. Communication is a two-way street.
- Whether big or small, you can have your performance make a difference.

Why Practice Public Speaking?

Do you see yourself as a public speaker? And when you do, do you see yourself as confident, prepared, and effective? Or do you see a person who is nervous, unsure of what to say, and feeling as if they are failing to get their message across? You find yourself in this public speaking course and probably have mixed emotions. Public speaking instruction may have been part of your high school experience. Maybe you competed in debates or individual speaking events, or you have acted in plays. These activities can help you in this course, especially in terms of confidence and delivery. On the other hand, it might be that the only public speaking experience you have had felt like a failure and therefore left you embarrassed and wanting to forget it and stay far away from public speaking. This class isn't something you have been looking forward to, and you may have put it off. Maybe your attitude is, "Let's just get it over with." These are

understandable emotions because, as you have probably heard or read, polls indicate public speaking is one of the things people fear the most.

Benefits of Practicing Public Speaking

First, public speaking is one of the major communication skills desired by employers. Employers are frequently polled regarding the skills they most want employees to possess, and communication is almost always in the top three (Adams, 2014). Of course, "communication skills" is a broad term and involves several abilities such as team leadership, clear writing in business formats, conflict resolution, interviewing, and listening. However, public speaking is one of those sought-after skills, even in fields where the entry-level workers may not do much formal public speaking. Nurses give training presentations to parents of newborn babies; accountants advocate for new software in their organizations; managers lead team meetings.

If you're taking this class at the beginning of your college career, you'll benefit in your future classes from the research, organizational, and presentational skills learned here. First-year college students enter with many expectations of college life and learning that they need to "un-learn," and one of those is the expectation that they will not have to give oral presentations in classes. However, that is wishful thinking. Different kinds of presentations will be common in your upcoming classes.

Another reason for taking a public speaking course is the harder-to-measure but valuable personal benefits. As an article on the USA *Today College* website states, a public speaking course can help you be a better, more informed, and critical listener; it can "encourage you to voice your ideas and take advantage of the influence you have;" and it gives you an opportunity to face a major fear you might have in a controlled environment (Massengale, 2014). Finally, the course can attune you to the power of public speaking to change the world. Presentations that lead to changes in laws, policies, leadership, and culture happen every day, all over the world.

Conclusion

To improve your public speaking, it's useful to be conscious of what you notice about other public speakers. What particular traits make them effective? How can you emulate this? Even with less effective speakers, you can take note of pitfalls you want to avoid in your own speeches. Being able to critique other speeches makes it easier to critique your own performance. As you begin this journey of improving your public speaking, commit to being more aware of how people communicate and what you can learn from it. Below are some reflections that will help you get started.

Something to Think About

- Who are some public speakers you admire? Why? (Don't name deceased historical figures whom you have not heard personally or face-to-face.)
- What behavior done by public speakers "drives you nuts," that is, creates "noise" for you in listening to them?
- When this class is over, what specific skills do you want to develop as a communicator?

2. Actor Tools for Public Speakers

What Actors Know About Performing

In this chapter . . .

In this chapter, you'll learn about the tools that actors use to strengthen their control of their body and mind. Actors understand the importance of training their bodies in preparation for the work they do. These skills can be taught, and you don't have to be an actor to use them! Public speakers can make use of these skills to their benefit. Practicing these tools will enhance the performance of any public speech.

Looking at public speaking using a performance-based model means that we can take inspiration from actors. What are the tools and techniques that actors have that can be translated to public speakers? While the content of a speech is important, equally important are the performative elements of the delivery.

In their training to become actors, aspiring performers work every day on strengthening their bodies, voice, and mind. We call this "instrument work" because, like a musician's instrument, the actor's body is a medium through which words of a play, like the notes of music, are expressed. Just as a piano works well when it's tuned, an actor should be a well-tuned instrument.

What does an actor want from their body, voice, and mind so that they become a nicely tuned instrument to play? They want to be confident, focused, physically relaxed, vocally nimble, mindful, energetic but controlled, open to the moment, and free of distracting or negative thoughts.

All of these are qualities that serve the public speaker as well. Additionally, they are all skills that can be learned! In the sections that follow, we will examine various physical and psychological tools that actors use to "tune" their instruments. We'll discuss stage fright, clearing the mind of negative thoughts, strengthening the body and voice, focus, commitment, and enhancing confidence.

Overcoming Stage Fright

Public speaking anxiety is perfectly common for anyone new to speaking in front of an audience. But we should remember that public speaking anxiety does not only apply to new speakers. Even professional actors, who may have years of experience performing nightly for hundreds of spectators, deal with nerves. Your favorite actor has probably felt various forms of anxiety before performing, such as sweaty palms, shaky voice, dry mouth, etc.

Actors feel nervous for the same reasons a public speaker does. An actor might feel conspicuous and inspected. They may feel nervous about an unfamiliar audience. Perhaps they remember past failures. An actor might feel they haven't prepared enough. In the theatre world, we call this anxiety about public performance **stage fright** or performance anxiety. Anxiety about being in the public eye produces not only physical sensations but mental symptoms as well. In reaction to fear, the mind might generate negative self-talk. Such fear sometimes makes it hard for us to think. We

lose concentration and focus. Our confidence drains away. It shuts down our awareness and can leave us mentally and physically frozen—we literally "go cold."

Fortunately, there are tools we can use to overcome all these symptoms. During their training, actors learn how to prepare themselves physically and mentally. A list of the most important of these tools includes:

- Banishing negative thoughts
- Encouraging positivity
- Releasing physical tension
- Freeing voice and speech
- Finding focus and commitment
- Enhancing confidence

In the sections that follow, you'll learn about how these tools can be applied to fear of public speaking.

Banishing Negative Thoughts

It's hard to stand in front of a room of people, often strangers, and feel like you're being judged or undergoing evaluation. It's easy to jump to negative thoughts, such as "I'm doing a terrible job" or "They all hate me." Professional actors face this dilemma too. Fortunately, there is a branch of psychology that can help with this kind of thinking. It's called **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**, or CBT. It was founded in the 1960s by a psychologist named Dr. Aaron Beck. Because it's focused on practical changes to harmful thinking patterns, it has become the foundation for many types of mental health therapies. When dealing with negative thoughts, one crucial thing you can do is take a cognitive approach to negative thinking and manage those unreasonable and non-productive thoughts.

The Cognitive Approach

Cognitive Psychology teaches us that negative thoughts about ourselves share some common errors. These include:

- Overgeneralization ("Everybody hates my speech");
- Jumping to conclusions ("The teacher looks bored; she doesn't like my topic");
- Shoulds and musts ("The speech must be perfect!");
- Magnification or catastrophizing ("This is the worst experience of my life");
- Emotional reasoning ("I feel so nervous, I must be doing a terrible job"); and
- Labeling oneself ("I'm not a good public speaker").

Do these thoughts sound familiar? They probably do because everyone experiences them to one degree or another.

As a public speaker, you could have non-productive thoughts before a speech ("I haven't prepared enough. This is a terrible topic, why did I choose it? Everyone else's speeches are more interesting. I've never felt so nervous in my life. This is a stupid assignment, it's not worth the effort."), during a speech ("The audience looks bored. Listen to how I'm fumbling these words! They noticed I messed up. I shouldn't have said that. I look ridiculous. I'm really messing this up. I just want to get this over with! I wish I could disappear."), and after a speech ("That was terrible. People didn't applaud. I never want to do this again.").

These thoughts are understandable. It's natural to feel anxious. An effective method to combat them is by taking a cognitive approach to defeat them. Take for example the thought, "this is the worst experience of my life!" and think:

> "But is it really? Okay, public speaking might make me feel nervous, and it might not be my thing, but is this really the worst experience? That sounds like an exaggeration."

Here's another example of cognitive correction: You have the negative thought "they noticed I messed up!" You might address this by saying to yourself

> "Am I sure they noticed? Sounds like emotional reasoning. The audience doesn't have the speech memorized like I do, so how do they know if I skipped a word? Anyway, so what if I messed up? Nobody's perfect."

Learning to combat negative thoughts by shining the light of logic on them is a great skill to learn. It's like a muscle and the more you do it, the better you will get at it.

As an exercise, write down a list of a few negative thoughts that you typically have before, during, or after giving a speech. Try writing down at least three. For each thought, see if you can identify the category of cognitive error and then write a reasoned response to that negative self-talk.

For example:

> Negative thought: "Everybody hates my speech!"

> Cognitive Error: Overgeneralization, Exaggeration

> Reasonable Correction: Can I really know what everybody is thinking? That doesn't make sense. Maybe one person seems uninterested in my speech, but that doesn't mean everyone feels the same. Also, "Hate" is a very strong word. It's not possible that the *entire* audience is feeling so strongly about my speech. For reasons that may have nothing to do with me, an audience member seems to disagree with my topic. There is no need to imagine that everyone is feeling that way.

If you keep up a regular practice of writing down negative thoughts and correcting them with reasoned thinking, you'll find that these thoughts will appear less often and have less power over you. This cognitive approach can ensure that you have as many positive thoughts as possible while you're performing a speech.

Encouraging Positivity

Another way to take a proactive approach to banishing negative thinking is **positivity**. Psychological studies, particularly with sports psychology, have demonstrated the benefits to overall performance as well as self-confidence by using positive self-talk. It's most effective to speak positive affirmations aloud. First, it's helpful to think about any time in the past you have felt nervous about something (other than public speaking), and you did something about it. What did you do? Did you close your eyes and count to ten? Did you play your favorite piece of music and dance around? We all have our own unique, individual ways to deal with nerves and focus on the task at hand.

Visualization

Visualization is another helpful tool in banishing negative thoughts. The process of visualization asks you to imagine

a desired result that you hope to achieve in the future. Similar to what you might know as "manifesting," visualization asks you to use all five senses in directing your subconscious towards a desired goal and believing that it will come true. Engaging in various visualization exercises, where you imagine yourself giving the perfect speech, and you see and hear yourself overcoming your fears, can be a productive daily tool in fighting negative thinking.

Releasing Physical Tension

We constantly move through life with some level of excess **physical tension**. It affects the way we hold our bodies, the way we move, and the way we breathe. We may experience more tension at some times of the day than others. Finding healthy ways to reduce physical tension is important for everyone, but for actors and public speakers, relaxing is essential because we face additional tension brought on by excitement, anticipation, and fear.

Relaxation

You can think of relaxation as having two ways to practice: regular and immediate. **Regular relaxation** practice is something you do on a regular basis to release the physical stress of everyday living. Some of those practices are yoga, running, fitness classes, and stretching. One popular technique is called the "Body Scan Meditation." This involves putting your attention on various parts of your body and using your breath to send relaxing energy to those areas. Playing team sports is also a good way to release tension; when combined with stretching, sports lead to a healthier and more relaxed physical state.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://opentext.ku.edu/publicspeakingperformance/?p=1120#h5p-2

Immediate relaxation practice, in contrast, is what performers and public speakers do to address that strong physical tension brought on by excitement, anticipation, and fear. This is the tension that tightens our muscles and makes breathing shallow. It may raise our heart rate or make us sweat. We need relaxation techniques to cope with these tensions. An actor will usually give themselves an hour before a show for this work and then refresh this relaxation just minutes before going on stage. For a public speaker, finding time to work on relaxation is similar. You might loosen up in the morning of a day you're going to speak, and then refresh your relaxation just before getting up to speak. Here is a simple 7-Minute warm-up you can try:

Warming up the body means two things: (a) being relaxed, and (b) being energetic. We all know what relaxation feels like: our breathing is free, our muscles are loose, our minds wandering. But for public speaking, it's not enough to be relaxed. You might be relaxed when you're watching television on your couch, but would you be ready to speak?

Likewise, it's not enough just to feel energetic: muscles engaged, breathing hard, highly focused on one thing. You might have lots of energy if you were running away from danger. Is that how you want to feel as a speaker? Being a performer means having **relaxed energy**. It might feel like what you feel when dancing or playing your favorite non-competitive sport. Your muscles are loose but not tired. Your breathing is fluid and engaged. Your mind is focused but still open to what's around you. Getting into that physical state is a goal for any performer.

Freeing Voice and Speech

The voice is the most important part of a speaker's instrument. The particular sound of each person's voice and speech is unique and a product of genetics, but at the same time it's shaped by culture. It's culture that creates regional accents. It's also culture that influences volume, the pace and tone of voice. Unfortunately, because voice and speech are cultural, they can also be used to negatively stereotype people. The ethics of public speaking teaches us to guard against using judgements about voice and speech to demean, dismiss, or discriminate against anyone.

A Relaxed Voice

In its natural state, the voice is free and open. Think about how much children love to scream and how natural and amazingly loud they are when they do so! Children remind us that the human voice is beautiful and unique to each person. As we get older, however, our voices tend to lose that natural state. Like our bodies, it takes on tension. The stress of life makes our breathing shallower, our throats tighter, our sound less flexible, and our lips and tongue stiffer. We become less comfortable about making sound and speaking clearly.

Actors are aware that in order for their performance to be effective they need to have a voice and speech that is relaxed, responsive, able to be heard, and easily understood by the audience. This is achieved for the voice through proper posture, breath support, and a focus on projection. Clear speech is achieved by developing better articulation of the lips and tongue.

Consider doing daily breathing exercises, regularly massaging your throat and vocal cords, humming and lip trills, and fun tongue twisters to repeat to yourself in order to strengthen your voice and speech over time. Here is a practical video for working on both voice and speech:

Vocal Variety

In everyday speech, we typically have no problem with vocal variety. We increase our volume to get attention. We speak more quietly if we don't want to be overheard. We use pauses for dramatic effect and speed up when we are excited. The pitch of our voice rises and lowers naturally. When in front of an audience, however, many people lose this vocal variety. Out of fear, or habit, they become **monotone.** Monotone means speech that is one pitch, one pace, one volume, pausing rhythmically, without change.

Volume, Pitch, Rate, Pauses

Volume refers to the relative softness or loudness of your voice. If you speak too softly ("too little" volume), your audience will struggle to hear and understand you and may give up trying to listen. If you speak with "too much" volume, your audience may feel that you are yelling at them, or at least feel uncomfortable with you shouting. The volume you use should fit the size of the audience and the room.

Pitch is the relative highness or lowness of your voice, and like everything, you can have too much or too little (with regard to variation of it). Too much pitch variation occurs when people "sing" their speeches, and their voices oscillate between very high pitched and very low pitched. More common is too little variation in pitch.

How quickly or slowly you say the words of your speech is the **rate**. Too little rate (i.e., speaking too slowly) will make it sound like you may not fully know your speech or what you are talking about, and will ultimately cost you some credibility with your audience. It may also result in the audience being bored and losing focus on what you are saying.

The common misconception for public speaking students is that **pausing** during your speech is bad, but that isn't necessarily true. You pause in normal conversations, so you shouldn't be afraid of pausing while speaking. This is especially true if you are making a particularly important point or want your statement to have a more powerful impact: you will want to give the audience a moment to digest what you have said.

What can you do to gain vocal variety? Reading texts aloud and practicing shifts in pitch, pace, and volume is the best way to break the monotone habit.

Vocalized Pauses

Monotone isn't the only speech habit to break. Performers need to be aware of habitual behaviors that are distracting or in some way detract from their overall performance. One of the most common habits is called vocalized pauses or fillers.

At various points during your speech, you may find yourself in need of a moment to collect your thoughts or prepare for the next section of your speech. At those moments, you'll be pausing and many of us fill in those pauses with sounds so that it appears that we haven't actually paused. These are known as **vocalized pauses**, or sometimes **fillers**.

Everyone uses vocalized pauses to some degree, but not everyone's pauses are problematic. This obviously becomes an issue when the vocalized pauses become distracting due to their overuse. We have little doubt that you can remember a time when you were speaking to someone who said the word "like" after every three words and you became focused on it. The most common vocalized pause in English is "uh," but then there are others. Can you think of any?

The bad news here is that there is no quick fix for getting rid of your vocalized pauses. They are so ingrained into all our speech patterns that getting rid of them is a challenge. However, there is a two-step process you can employ to begin eliminating them. First, you need to identify what your particular vocalized pause habit is. Do you say "um," "well," or "now" before each sentence? Do you finish each thought with, "you know?" Do you use "like" before every adjective (as in "he was like so unhappy")?

After figuring out what your vocalized pause is, the second step is to try carefully and meticulously to catch yourself when you say it.

Try the "uh game." Name six things in a named category (items in a refrigerator, pro-football teams, makes of cars, etc.) in twenty seconds without saying a vocalized pause word or phrase. This is a good way to practice focusing on the content and not saying a vocalized pause.

Finding Focus and Commitment

President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) said:

> "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

In performance as in life, the most powerful tool you can have is *how much you care*. For an actor, caring means being 100% committed to the performance and the character. For a public speaker, caring means being 100% committed to the act of communicating with your audience. How do we get in touch with our commitment? What does commitment look like? What gets in the way of being committed to communication?

Getting in Touch with Your Commitment

The secret to caring is to learn about being **intentional**. Advocates of intentional living, such as the author John C. Maxwell and others, emphasize the value of identifying the purpose in everything we do. This helps steer us away from a life that is on "auto-pilot" and leads us towards a life that is grounded in meaningful action.

You may be surprised to learn that one of the most important techniques for an actor is exactly the same thing: intention. Theatre mirrors life. In life, regardless of who a person is or what circumstances they find themselves in, they usually want *something*. Sometimes this is the pursuit of a basic need, like food, water, or shelter. At other times, a person may be pursuing material possessions or wealth. Even those people who don't crave material items crave happiness, health, love, knowledge, or self-awareness. This desire or goal to change our circumstances and obtain something we lack is called an intention, objective, or goal. When an actor starts playing a character, the first thing they do is work to understand the one thing the character wants most. When they find that and they fully commit to it, they can truly begin to perform the role.

It's no different for public speaking. If you want to find your way to the commitment to communicate with your audience, start by becoming intentional. *Choose* to present this speech. *Choose* to share your ideas and your knowledge. *Choose* to respect your audience by preparing the best speech you can. *Choose* to deliver your speech in a way that allows your audience to follow and enjoy.

Sounds easy, but what gets in the way of commitment to speaking? That's right: fear. We think if we withhold our effort, pretend not to care too much, be casual, then we are protecting ourselves from failure. But the opposite is true. To succeed you need to commit.

It's crucial for a public speaker to have a clear sense of their objective. What do you hope the audience will feel by the end of your speech? What do you hope they've learned? What actions would you like the audience to take after the speech is over? If a speaker doesn't know the answers to these questions, and if they are not focused on creating a speech that uses content and delivery to clearly address these questions, then a speech can easily feel aimless, ineffective, and even a waste of time. Remember, the audience will not care about what you know, unless they know you care.

Achieve Your Objective with Tactics

The actions and behaviors we utilize in service of obtaining our objectives are called **tactics**.

In theatre, we watch characters use various tactics to achieve their objectives. For example, if Sam's objective is to seduce Robert, then Sam's tactics would be anything and everything that they are willing to do in order for Robert to be seduced. This could include complimenting, teasing, smiling, and touching him.

Your objective as a public speaker is to deliver an effective and engaging speech. This could also be thought of as a super-objective because it's the overarching desire of any speech regardless of the speech context. Within a specific speech, you'll have a particular objective such as to inform the audience about a concept, persuade the audience of an idea, or to entertain. These objectives map onto the three types of speeches: informative, persuasive, and special occasion. You will learn more about these types of speeches further on.

Tactics to Fulfill Your Intention

Intention is what you want. How you go about getting what you want are called tactics.

Like most things in life, some people will have a natural ability to express themselves through public speaking. However, it's also a skill that can be taught and developed. Regardless of your initial level of proficiency, with practice, everybody can improve their public speaking. Whether you're a novice or an experienced speaker, there is always more to learn. There are two major ways to help you grow your skills and reach your super-objective of delivering effective and engaging speeches: 1) Practice giving speeches; and 2) Listen to other speeches. Both these activities provide an opportunity to consider how specific tactics are being employed and how they affect the speech overall.

The more you give public speeches, the more confident and competent you'll become. A public speaking class is great for building this foundation. You can seek out occasions outside of class where you can practice your public speaking. Being in a public speaking class, you'll also have the opportunity to listen to your classmates' speeches. Additionally, you can try to attend lectures or other events with speakers at school or in your local community. Furthermore, you can find thousands of videos of public speakers online reflecting every topic, speaking style, and ability level. While great examples of quality speeches may inspire you, any speech can be instructive. Being able to critique a speech helps you to hone in on the qualities that make a speech effective. Learning to recognize these qualities in other speeches will help you to analyze your own strengths and weaknesses.

Some of the tactics, or qualities that lead to a successful speech include:

Delivery

- Engaging physicality (eye contact, posture, body language, intentional gestures)
- Clear diction at an appropriate pace and volume
- Vocal variety (using different tones, pitches, and tempos)
- Avoiding vocalized pauses (umms and ahhs)
- Use of visual aids when appropriate
- Well-rehearsed and familiar with the performance (delivery and text)

Content

- Interesting and context appropriate topic
- Well-structured with a clear thesis and purpose
- Transitions and signposting
- Effective use of language
- Supported by research where applicable
- Fits within expectations for length, style, and formality
- Ethical

We will discuss each of these tactics in more depth throughout this book.

Concentration

Next, there's concentration. **Concentration** is necessary for a public speaker. A speech works best when the speech stays on topic: rambling or an otherwise unfocused speaker is a recipe for disaster. In order to stay committed to the scene, actors must concentrate on what is happening on stage and must react honestly to anything that occurs during the performance, even if something happens that was not rehearsed. Acting is reacting, and the best actors are the best listeners. Actors use various warm-up methods to make sure they are focused and concentrating on the task at hand before entering onstage.

Enhancing Confidence

The same way that public speaking is a skill that can be learned, so is confidence. One way to do that is to through attention to **status**. When people talk about status, they are often referring to the socio-economic position of someone or something. People with high paying jobs and in positions of authority are considered to be of higher status. Having higher status gives you increased agency to create change or maintain the current situation according to what best suits your individual needs and desires. However, in theatre and in public speaking, status takes on a related but specialized meaning. **Status** in performance refers to the way an individual moves through space and how they interact with their environment. One of the most useful tools an actor has, and public speakers can learn, is the ability to manipulate status.

Status for Public Speakers

We think of status as existing on a scale from 1-10, with one being cowering in a corner and ten being assuming you're a god. Most people have a habitual status level of five. Those who are more outspoken and enjoy being the center of attention may be closer to an eight. Those who are very introverted may be closer to a three. While all people have a base status that they typically exhibit, status is also a tool that can be changed based on context.

In any interaction with another person, you can raise or lower your own status. By exuding confidence, taking up more space, and asserting your value you raise your own status. Becoming insular or subjugating yourself to others lowers your status. Additionally, you can raise or lower the status of the other person. Complimenting or exhibiting deference towards someone are examples of raising their status. Talking down to or physically dominating someone lowers their status. Any of these can be an effective tactic for pursuing your objective under the right circumstance.

When you give a speech it's useful to assume a status of 8-10. For some people this may feel uncomfortable and think that they don't deserve to take such a high level of status. However, part of what makes status such an effective tool is that it's changeable to reflect your current situation. Just for the duration of your speech and within the confines of the speech occasion, it's okay to give yourself permission to be a status ten. You don't have to take on a character, but you want to project yourself as the most confident and competent version of yourself. Actors know that emotions can't always be easily created just by will. However, putting your body in the position it assumes when you're feeling a particular emotion can help produce that emotion. When you combine physicality with intentional mental thought you can create a desired emotion. The same works for confidence. The phrase "fake it 'til you make it" is often used to describe learning to achieve a new skill. This concept works because pretending to do or feel a certain way, leads to actually doing that thing. By standing up straight, holding your head high, and telling yourself you feel confident, eventually, you'll just be confident.

Power Posing

In a famous TED Talk from 2012, social psychologist Amy Cuddy explains how body position can shape our confidence [1]:

📧 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
https://opentext.ku.edu/publicspeakingperformance/?p=1120#h5p-7

Conclusion

To tune your delivery instrument, it can be helpful to regularly observe how others around you use move and speak. You don't necessarily have to observe someone giving a speech—even just in daily conversation, or walking on the street, notice how people hold themselves. What kind of physicality makes someone seem confident and credible? How can a person sound compelling when speaking in everyday conversation? If you regularly pay attention to the people around you and notice how you respond to the way others move and speak, soon you'll learn a lot about how you might want to use your own body and voice when standing in front of an audience.

Something to Think About

A great way to achieve that type of physical confidence is to feel grounded and comfortable in your own body. One exercise to improve your sense of space is to be intentional about noticing how you move through space in your daily life. Do you walk quickly or slowly? Do you naturally talk with your hands? Do you move in straight lines or more indirect patterns? How big is your circle of focus? There are four dimensions of movement: weight, time, direction, and level. What do you notice about your dimensions of movement? By becoming more aware of the way you move around a space, the more you're likely to feel comfortable standing (and taking space) on a stage when speaking in front of an audience.

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1. https://www.ted.com/talks/
amy_cuddy_your_body_language_may_shape_who_you_are?utm_campaign=tedspread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare

PART II
CONTEXT

Public speaking always involves context: it takes place at specific times, in specific places, for determined purposes, and for particular audiences. Speeches can be delivered in various ways, but they almost always involve a process of taking the written word from the page to the stage. The chapters in this section take you into this special world of the speech.

3. Speaking Occasion

Understanding Given Circumstances

In this chapter . . .

In this chapter, you will learn how to analyze the various questions that will arise as you prepare to write a speech intended for public performance. Broadly this can be thought of as knowing the what, why, where, when, and to whom of the speech. The combination of factors that influence a speech are known as the speaking occasion. Details about how to analyze the who-your audience, is the subject of the following chapter.

To understand how to analyze a public speaking occasion, let's consider an example from theatre. An actor prepares for a role through a process known as script analysis, where they identify the setting, the plot, character traits, relationships, and objectives of the role they will play. In other words, in order to create a character, actors must analyze who, what, where, when, and why.

For example, imagine you're playing the role of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Here are some circumstances:

- WHO AM I? I'm the Prince of Denmark. I'm a college student. I'm recently fatherless.
- WHAT IS GOING ON? I left school. I'm in love with Ophelia. My father's ghost is haunting me.
- WHERE AM I? My family's palace at Elsinore. I'm in Denmark.
- WHEN AM I? It's winter in Denmark. It's the late Middle Ages in Northern Europe,
- WHY AM I HERE? I suspect that my uncle killed my father. I'm trying to figure out what I should do.

Can you see that Shakespeare's famous play gives these circumstances to the actor? That is why we call them **given circumstances**. An actor can't accurately play Hamlet without understanding these given circumstances. The actor can't say "I'm not a Prince of Denmark"!

Given Circumstances of a Speech Occasion

What does playing Hamlet have to do with public speaking? For public speakers, circumstances are not determined by a theatre play, that is true. However, speaking circumstances are *given* to you. These are elements about the speech that have been predetermined and you are likely unable to change. This sets the structure for the expectations for your speech. These circumstances typically include the following elements:

- Invitation. Someone has asked you or required you to give a speech.
- Time to prepare. Preparation time might be anything from the spur of the moment to several weeks.
- Topic. You have been asked to speak about something, or you have proposed your own topic.
- Event. There will always be a reason for a public speaking event. It could be anything from a class presentation to a

graduation ceremony. Small or large, public speaking takes place in the context of an event.

- Place. The circumstances of a public speaking occasion also have a real or virtual place.
- Audience. By definition, there will be an audience.

All these circumstantial elements together make up what is called the **Speaking Occasion**. Just like an actor playing Hamlet, you must pay attention to all the information you have been given about the speaking occasion. For a speaker, the speech occasion is like a play. An author (the person inviting you to speak) has given you circumstances. You, the speaker, can play your role within these circumstances by deciding how to fulfill them, but you can't change the circumstances.

Analyzing the Circumstances of the Speech Occasion

Public speakers should identify the given circumstances surrounding their speech in order to write and deliver a speech that is appropriate for their audience and setting. For example, a teacher might ask you to explain to the class an important concept. A prospective employer might ask you to do a presentation at a job interview. The organizers of a college club might ask you to give an award. Understanding the speech occasion will directly influence the speech you give, both in terms of content and delivery.

Consider the scenario that you're giving a speech with a specific purpose "To inform the audience about the popular social media app TikTok." How would you deliver that speech to an audience of college-aged students at a university event? What information could you assume they already know about TikTok, social media, or smartphones?

Now, imagine that you're delivering the same speech, but this time you're at a retirement home. You would necessarily need to change the content of the speech, right? You would need to give various kinds of background information. And your delivery would need to change to suit your audience (you may need to speak louder, slower, and enunciate even clearer at a retirement home, for example). You must always shape your speech to the given circumstances of the speaking occasion.

When preparing for a speech, you can approach the given circumstances by using the model of reflecting on **what, why, where, when**, and **to whom**. Taken together, these circumstances will tell you how to approach your speech. The next sections and the following chapter will explain in further detail what to consider as you analyze the specific given circumstances.

Occasion Element #1: What Are You Going to Speak About?

Students learning about public speaking in a college course often begin a speech assignment by looking for a topic, as if they have a completely open choice about the subject matter of the speech. In real life situations, however, speakers are typically expected to address a theme and often they are given a specific topic for the speech. The occasions at which you'll speak are often planned and anticipated. Therefore, the first questions to ask yourself are about the topic:

- Have you been asked to speak on a specific topic or to address a general theme? What is that topic and/or theme?
- What is your knowledge and credibility with this topic?
- How much specific guidance have you been given about the topic?
- Is there room for creative interpretation?
- What about the topic interests you most? What information do you want to be sure to include?

- What do you want the audience to know? What do you want them to feel?

Answering these questions thoughtfully will allow you to answer a fundamental question when it comes to understanding the speech occasion: **What are you expected to speak about?**

Initially, your answer may be broad and not well-defined. Don't worry, you will have time to refine your topic as you go. What is important is having at least a general sense of your topic so you can complete your analysis of the speaking occasion. When you're able to answer fully, not just what is expected but what you plan to talk about, you're in a great position to identify an appropriate and specific topic for your speech. The chapter "Purpose and Thesis" will discuss how to articulate your topic choice.

Occasion Element #2: Why Are You Speaking?

Imagine a student is asked to speak at a college ceremony celebrating the graduating class of their peers. Instead of giving a speech that celebrates the graduates' achievements and inspires their future, the student touts the benefits of choosing a career in cybersecurity. How successful do you think that speech would be? And what if the speaker arrived to deliver this speech, not with a memorized or even fully written speech, but with a few notes written on the back of an index card? How do you think the person who invited the student to speak would feel? This may be an unlikely scenario, but versions of this kind of thing happen all the time because speakers fail to think about *why* they were asked to speak and the expectations of the *event*. Thus, to successfully answer why you are speaking, you need to know the context of the event you are speaking at and why *you* specifically were chosen to speak. Did you volunteer, were you invited, or is this an assignment or job expectation? What do you bring to this event? What is the expected outcome? How do you feel about giving this speech?

Understanding the Event

Once you have identified an appropriate topic based on what you have been asked (or volunteered) to do, you can begin more closely analyzing the speaking occasion. To do that, you need to think more deeply about the planned or anticipated event at which you'll be speaking. An **event** is any public occasion that brings together a speaker and an audience. It could be as large as a graduation ceremony or as small as a class presentation. These are questions that you can apply to any event:

- What **type** of event is this? Is it a meeting, a classroom presentation, a conference, a college ceremony, a town hall meeting, or a wedding? What does the audience expect from this event?
- Why is the audience gathering? What **effect** do they expect? Is the audience there to learn? To resolve a problem or hear a debate? To celebrate or to mourn? What is the general mood?
- Who are the **organizers** or sponsors of the event? Who else is involved?
- How **formal** or **informal** is this event? Is it taking place in the evening or at the weekend? Is it part of a normal day? Was it planned far in advance or is it spur of the moment?
- What is on the **program**? Will you be the only speaker? Is there a line-up of several speakers? Will you be introduced, or will you introduce yourself?
- What **details** about the event and expectations do you already know? What further questions about the event do you have?
- Based on this closer look at the speaking occasion, do you need to **modify your topic**?

Having answers to each of these questions will allow you to determine key features of your speech. Let's take a closer look at these:

- **Type**. The type of event provides a framework for the content of your speech. You know from experience that a toast at a wedding is different from a debate and that a classroom presentation isn't the same thing as a job interview.
- **Effect**. By asking yourself why the audience will gather and what they expect to get from your speech, you'll discover the general purpose of your speech. The three overarching purposes are (a) speeches that inform, (b) speeches that persuade, and (c) speeches delivered for special occasions to inspire or move an audience. Each of these speech types will be discussed in detail later in this textbook.
- **Organizers**. Knowing who is organizing the event and the other staff members involved, if any, will help you get answers to your questions about the speech requirements. You'll also know the staff you need to consult if you have a problem with, for example, technology.
- **Formality**. Understanding the level of formality of an event is extremely important. It will tell you if you need to write a complete manuscript, a detailed outline, or a couple of ideas written on a napkin. These three levels of preparation correspond to three different modes of delivering speeches: manuscript, extemporaneous, and impromptu. For more details on speech modes see the chapter "Ways of Delivering Speeches."
- **Program.** Understanding the scheduled program for the event will help you know how your speech fits into the event. It will allow you to clarify if you'll be introduced to the stage, or if you'll need to take the initiative when it's your turn.
- **Topic**. Finally, all these questions may lead you to think about modifying or changing your topic. Don't be afraid to do so if necessary.

Knowing the expectations of the event and these specific elements will ensure you have a speech that is appropriate for the type of event that meets the expectations of the audience and sponsors, is at an appropriate level of formality or informality, and will fit smoothly into the event.

Occasion Element #3: Where Does Your Speech Occur?

So far, we have talked about two essential elements of the speech occasion: (1) **What** you are expected to talk about, and (2) **Why** you are speaking and the context of the event. Now let's turn to the third element of the speech occasion: **where**. For this given circumstance, consider the physical space of where you'll be speaking. This includes everything in the location, from the atmosphere to the equipment available, and to the number of bodies. Space also plays a role in both how comfortable the audience will be (which may affect their attention span), and how comfortable you'll be as a speaker. Additionally, the space may dictate an expected level of formality and presentation style.

Space

When thinking through the physical space of your speech, consider these questions: Will you be speaking indoors or outside? How large is the space? Is it well lit? What is the temperature? Does the space affect your clothing choices? What are acoustics like? Is there likely to be audible background noise? How much will you need to project your voice? Will you be using a microphone? Is the microphone on a stand, wireless, or a headset? Is there a projector or other technological capabilities? Can you access the internet? Will you need to provide your own equipment or adapters? How well can the audience see any projected images? If you're using technology, are you familiar with it, and do you have a backup plan in case it doesn't work correctly? Will there be electrical cords or other potential tripping hazards? Where

are the outlets? Will you be seated or standing? Will you be speaking from behind a lectern or on a platform? Are you able to move freely through the space? Have you been in this space before and do you feel comfortable there?

Where is the Audience?

Additionally, you'll want to reflect on your spatial relationship with the audience and their relationship to the space in general. Will the audience fill the space? How much of the audience will you be able to see? A larger audience will require more volume. It also generally implies that you won't personally know the members of the audience. For some speakers, large crowds can be more anxiety-inducing, although for others speaking before a more intimate group is a scarier prospect. In a smaller space, it may be easier to interact with audience members individually and develop a more personal rapport. How does the spatial arrangement affect the audience's ability to ask questions? Will you need additional microphones in the audience?

Where is the location you'll be presenting from in relation to the audience? Are they seated straightforward facing you in rows like in a classroom? Are they seated around a single long table such as in a boardroom? Is there an audience on three sides of you as in some theatre spaces? The positioning of the audience will affect how concerned you need to be with sightlines and making sure you're addressing the whole audience. Furthermore, you may need to consider the type of seating. Is the audience seated on hard chairs or benches? If they are uncomfortable, they may be more inclined to fidget. Conversely, if they are on sofas or plush chairs, they might get so comfortable they become drowsy. Are they behind a desk or table so that they can easily take notes? How easily can they see you and any presentation aids? If the audience is further away your facial expression may be harder to read. Therefore, you'll need to rely more on gestures. Additionally, your gestures will need to be larger and crisper so they can be seen. How close to the audience are you able to get (and do you want to get)?

Often, you'll have no control over the physical space. However, you should exert what control you do have to make sure the space is as conducive to your presentation as possible. Sometimes simply adjusting the temperature or closing the door to the space can make a significant difference. If you're speaking in a place that you're less familiar with, try to visit ahead of time or arrive early so you can do a quick assessment of the space. Think through any special challenges that the space presents. How can you best use this space to your advantage?

Occasion Element #4: **When Are You Speaking?**

The circumstances of time can mean several different things for a speech occasion. There is **preparation time**, or the amount of time from first learning that you're to give a public speech until the day you present your speech. **Calendar time** refers to exactly when you're giving your speech (season, month, time of day, weekend, or weekday). Finally, **delivery time** means how much time you have been allotted for your speech. All these factors are crucial in analyzing the speaking occasion.

Preparation Time

The preparation time for a speech begins the moment you learn that you'll be giving a public speech. From that moment until the day you deliver the speech could be weeks, days, or just minutes. Whatever the timeframe, however much time you have, you must use it to prepare your speech.

Knowing when your speech occurs allows you to determine how much time you have to write and rehearse your speech. What are reasonable goals for completion in that period? Do you have the time to research and write a full manuscript speech or detailed outline? Do you have the time to memorize your speech? How much time will you allow for the research and pre-writing steps of preparation? How much time do you need for practicing and polishing your speech? How do your time goals for completing the speech fit with other obligations on your time? Even an occasion where you have been given only a few minutes to prepare should be used wisely. We discuss preparing for an impromptu speech in a later chapter.

Once you have thought about these questions you can create a timeline for your speechwriting process. Start by identifying the **deadline** for completing a speech, then work backwards. Aim to have a finalized version of your manuscript or outline at least one day beforehand. It's important to allow plenty of time for rehearsing the performative elements of the speech and becoming familiar with the language. Here is an example of a two-week preparation timeline for an informative speech:

April 15 — Analyze speech occasion circumstances. Identify topic.

> April 15-22 Create provisional purpose and thesis statement in tandem with research. Formulate notes and identify main points and sub-points. Outline ideas.

April 22 — Rough draft of speech with main points, sub-points, and content elaboration.

> April 22-27 With rough draft in place, continue research, as necessary. Shape speech with strong introduction and conclusion. Expand content as necessary, hone main points, clarify purpose and thesis statement.

April 27 — Final manuscript version of speech.

> April 27-29 Practice speech. Check for length. Revise, if necessary. Pick clothing for the presentation. Check any presentation aids or technology needed for speech. Visit speaking venue, if not already familiar.

April 30 — Presentation of Speech

Calendar Time

When does your speech take place? What time of the day is the presentation? An audience at 8:00 in the morning isn't the same as at 2:00 p.m. An audience on Monday at 10:00 a.m. isn't the same as at 3:00 Friday afternoon. The time of your presentation may tell you a great deal about how to prepare. For example, if the audience is likely to be tired, you might want to get them physically active or talking to each other in a part of the speech, especially if it's a longer presentation.

Furthermore, you'll want to know how long it will take you to get to the speech location. Ideally, you'll arrive early. If you know you'll benefit from having a few minutes to warm up or relax, build that into your schedule.

Delivery Time

Delivering your speech within the time limits given is of utmost importance. Speaking for more than your allotted time

has negative consequences: you might be taking away time from another speaker, you may be cut short, or the audience may start leaving because they expected the event to end. Staying within time limits reflects your preparation and shows respect for the occasion and for your audience.

Knowing your delivery time is also crucial to speech preparation. It allows you to decide what you can realistically include in your speech. Imagine you're giving a speech informing the audience about the rules of baseball. A twenty-minute speech on that topic would be quite different from a speech of six minutes.

How does a speaker accurately estimate a speech length? First, know your rate of speech. The average rate of speech is 100-150 words per minute, with 130 being ideal. You can assume, for example, that a seven-minute speech means writing a 900-word manuscript. However, some individuals naturally talk faster than others. Through practice, you'll develop a sense of your habitual speaking tempo. Be aware that when giving public speeches you want to intentionally speak more slowly than you would in everyday conversation. Knowing your average tempo allows you to accurately determine how much content you can cover in your speech.

If you're planning to speak, not from a manuscript (where every word is written) but from a fully developed outline, you can't rely on word count as your guide. Instead, you'll need two important strategies: (a) careful planning of your outline so that you limit the risk of time-wasting improvisation, and (b) multiple rehearsals. Whether you're speaking from a manuscript or an outline, it's critical to time your speech as you rehearse.

Multiple factors can influence your delivery time. Many people speak faster when they feel nervous. Furthermore, manipulating your tempo and rhythm is an effective means of emphasizing different points and maintaining audience attention. If applicable, you also should plan for applause or laughter which may slow down your timing. Maximizing your use of delivery time will help you to be an effective public speaker.

The fifth element of Speech Occasion analysis is Audience, discussed in depth in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Before jumping into writing a speech, it's important to go through the process of analyzing given circumstances that make up the speech occasion. You don't necessarily have to answer every question posed in each element of the process but the more information you have the stronger your speech will be. Be mindful about how these details will affect both your writing and delivery. Additionally, knowing you have done the preparation work will boost your confidence. Furthermore, you should expect to further refine your initial assessment of the speaking occasion as you learn more specific details about the event and the expectations. Make sure your speech fits within the full context of the speech event.

4. Audience Analysis

Understanding Your Audience

In this chapter . . .

In this chapter, we will consider the role of the audience in determining the full speaking occasion. What factors about your audience will be the most important in maximizing the effectiveness of your communication? What ethical considerations must be considered? How does your identity intersect with the audience?

Who is your audience? For a speech to be public, it requires an audience, even if that audience is virtual or imagined. When you give a speech, the audience isn't merely a passive witness, but instead is actively creating a relationship with you. Communication is a two-way street. Therefore, it's important to consider the needs of the audience in both the construction and delivery of your speech.

How large will the audience be? Do you personally know the members of the audience? Is it your classmates, colleagues, friends and family, or the general public? Are they all members of a particular organization? Are you a part of the same group as your audience or are you an outsider? What is their age range and other demographic factors? Did they choose to hear you speak or was it a requirement? What is their experience and interest level in your topic?

The audience is gathered because of a common interest, commitment, or responsibility. What is it? Everything you do in the speech should be relevant to that reason for their being there. What does the audience expect as to type of speech, length, kinds of sources used, and presentation aids or lack of them?

In this chapter, we'll take a closer look at how a public speaker can understand their anticipated audience.

Ethical Audience Analysis

Every ten years, the United States conducts a nationwide survey of the population of our country. With each census, the questionnaire is revised. For example, on the 1920 census is a question about "color or race" has no enumerators for Hispanic origin. In 2020, our most recent census, the questionnaire included a range of enumerators including Latino, Mexican, Chicano, and Cuban. In 1920, the census simply inquired "Sex" in question number nine, whereas the 2020 census specified "Male" and "Female." It instructed respondents to "Mark ONE box." Will that change in the next census, in 2030?

The U.S. Census is an extraordinary but imperfect way of gathering information about the population of the United States. It also demonstrates that what we know about any group of people is a product of what we are capable of asking.

As a public speaker, what are you capable of asking? For some speech occasions, you might be able to conduct an

audience survey. For most speech occasions, the person who is organizing the event should be able to tell you something about who will be in the audience. From this information you may be able to make reasonable assumptions about your audience. For example, if you have been asked to speak at a university student governance meeting, you can assume that everyone in the room shares at least an education level (H.S. diploma) and a group affiliation (students). You can safely assume that most will be between the ages of 18 and 22, but you can't assume the audience is comprised of a single religion, race, or ethnicity.

While audience analysis is useful, it also has its limitations. Demographic and psychographic factors discussed in this chapter can help you understand something about who your audience *might* be, what they *might* know, and what they *might* care about. But if you don't use the information wisely or if you're not careful about your assumptions, you'll find yourself **stereotyping** or **totalizing.**

Stereotyping is generalizing about a group of people and assuming that because a few people in that group have a characteristic, all of them do.

Totalizing is taking one characteristic of a group or person and making that the "totality" or sum total of what that person or group is. If a speaker before a group of professional women totalizes and concludes that some perception of "women's issues" are all they care about, the speaker will be less effective and possibly unethical.

Being ethical about audience analysis means avoiding unlikely assumptions, stereotyping, and totalizing. Below are more detailed descriptions of demographic and psychographic factors in audience analysis.

Demographic Factors

Demographic factors are aspects of an individual's identity that determine their place in society and membership in particular subcultures. They can be measured socially. One way to think of demographics is the "facts" of an individual. This consists of the type of questions you find on medical or government forms.

Common Demographic Categories

Age

We traditionally ascribe certain roles, behaviors, motivations, interests, and concerns to people of certain ages. Young people are concerned about career choices; people over 60 are concerned about retirement. People go to college from the age of 18 to about 22. People 50 years old have raised their children and are "empty nesters. These neat categories still exist for many, but in some respects, they are outdated.

Gender

The second demographic characteristic commonly listed is gender. This area is open to misunderstanding as much as any other. Today, more people openly identify as a gender other than traditionally male or female. Even those of us who identify as male or female don't fully follow traditional gender roles. This is an area for growing sensitivity. At

the same time, the purpose, subject, and context of the speech will probably define how and whether you address the demographic characteristic of gender.

Religion

Unless the audience is brought together because of common faith concerns or the group shares the same affiliation or commitment, religious faith may not be relevant to your topic and not a crucial factor in the audience analysis. As with other categories, be careful not to assume or stereotype about religious groups. You should be conscious of the diversity of your audience. Not everyone worships in a church, and not everyone attends a house of worship on Sunday. Be attentive to inclusive language.

Group Affiliation

One source of identity for some is group affiliation. To what groups do members of the audience predominantly belong? Sometimes it will be useful to know if the group is mostly Republican, Democrat, members of a union, members of a professional organization, and so on. Be mindful of what the group values and what binds the audience together.

Region

Region relates to where the audience members live. We can think of this in two ways. We live in regions of the country: Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Rocky Mountain region, Northwest, and West Coast. These regions can be broken down even more, such as coastal Southeastern states. The second way to think about region is as "residence" or whether the audience lives in an urban area, the suburbs, or a rural area.

Occupation

Occupation may be a demographic characteristic that is central to your presentation. For the most part in the U.S., we choose our occupations because they reflect our values, interests, and abilities, and as we associate with colleagues in that occupation, those values, interests, and abilities are strengthened.

Education

The next demographic characteristic is education, which is closely tied to occupation and is often, though not always, a matter of choice. In the United States, education usually reflects what kind of information and training a person has been *exposed to*, but it does not reflect intelligence. We are also generally proud of our educational achievements, so they should not be disregarded.

Socio-economic Level

Socio-economic level is also tied to occupation and education in many cases. Often, you can't know the socio-economic level of your audience members, you should be careful about references that would portray your own level as superior.

Family Status

Family status, such as whether the audience members are married, single, divorced, or have children or grandchildren may be particularly important to the concerns and values of your audience and even the reason the audience is brought together. For example, young parents could gather to listen to a speaker because they are concerned about the health and safety of children in the community.

Race and Ethnicity

In some areas, it's necessary to gather demographic information about race and ethnicity. For example, a university wants to measure the diversity of their student body. But for the purposes of audience analysis, the most ethical way to think about the category of race and ethnicity is to minimize your assumptions about homogeneity and maximize understanding of diversity. Many people identify as multiracial and rare is the person who can identify with only one ethnicity. Race and ethnicity can't be judged only by appearance. As a casual public speaker and not a demographer, you're not equipped with the information to know about your audience's racial and ethnic identity if that information isn't specifically communicated to you. Rather than make erroneous assumptions, embrace as a probability that your audience is comprised of a diversity of races and ethnicities.

Psychographic Factors

Psychographic factors are psychological characteristics that determine how a person thinks. While these factors are most important during a persuasive speech, they may be applicable to any type of speech.

Common Psychographic Factors

Beliefs

Beliefs are statements we hold to be true. Notice this definition does not say the beliefs *are* true, only that we hold them to be true and as such they determine how we respond to the world around us. Beliefs touch all aspects of our experience. Beliefs come from our experience and from sources we trust. Therefore, beliefs are hard to change—not impossible, just difficult.

Attitudes

Attitude is defined as a stable positive or negative response to a person, idea, object, or policy. How do you respond when you hear the name of a certain singer, movie star, political leader, sports team, or law in your state? Your response will be either positive or negative, or maybe neutral if you're not familiar with the object of the attitude. Where did that attitude come from? Attitude comes from experiences, peer groups, beliefs, rewards, and punishments.

Values

Values are goals we strive for and what we consider important and desirable. We can engage in the same behavior but for different values; one person may participate in a river cleanup because they value the future of the planet; another may value the appearance of the community in which they live; another just because friends are involved, and they value relationships.

Needs

Needs are important deficiencies that we are motivated to fulfill. Your audience members are experiencing both "felt" and "real" needs. A "felt" need is a strong "want" that the person believes will fulfill or satisfy them even if the item isn't necessary for survival. As great as WIFI and coffee are, they are not crucial to human survival, but we do want them so strongly that they operate as needs.

Who Are You to Your Audience?

While preparing for a speech, take a moment to reflect on who you are as a person, and who you are as a public speaker. Are you outgoing and confident, or are you more reserved? Do you naturally talk with your hands? Are you comfortable expressing emotions and vulnerability? Do you like incorporating humor? What are your strengths as a public speaker? What skills are you working to develop that require more conscious effort? You may want to play to your strengths, or you may intentionally wish to challenge yourself.

If you're giving a speech on a particular topic, the assumption is that you have some level of familiarity with the topic of the speech. Are you particularly knowledgeable about the subject or do you have personal experience? Part of building a rapport with the audience is to establish your credibility. Why should they trust you or care what you have to say? Even if you're not an expert in the subject matter it's helpful to express your genuine interest in a topic and to position your level of knowledge. Additionally, it's important to ground facts and arguments in relation to outside sources.

You're not using the speech to dump a large amount of content on the audience; you're making that content important, meaningful, and applicable to them. What are their needs and expectations? Additionally, the way the audience perceives you and your connection to them—such as whether there is mutual trust and respect—will determine your success with the audience. The speaker must respect the audience and the audience should trust the speaker.

Applying Audience Analysis

Now that you know the categories that comprise demographic and psychographic factors, and you see that it's important to take stock of yourself in the speaking circumstances, you can use all these elements systematically to improve your speech. In the beginning of this chapter, we discussed Ethical Audience Analysis. With information gathered directly or from the organizer of the event, you can strive to make reasonable assumptions about your audience while avoiding unlikely assumptions, stereotyping, and totalizing.

Homogenous or Heterogeneous Audiences

Among the most important distinctions you can make in audience analysis is recognizing if an audience shares many key demographic and psychographic features, or if an audience contains a mixture of people with few demographic and psychographic features in common. We call this homogeneous versus heterogeneous audiences. The speech occasion usually dictates the makeup of the audience and whether they are heterogeneous or homogeneous. Due to our diverse society, many public speeches will have a heterogeneous audience. However, if you're asked to speak to a particular group or at a specialized event, the audience may be more homogeneous.

Imagine speaking before a boy's youth group at a Christian church event. This is a homogeneous group because of many shared demographic (age, gender, religion, group affiliation) and shared psychographic (beliefs, attitudes) factors. You could lean into this shared sense of identity to connect with audience members through examples and references that are tailored to their demographic. However, a group of first year college students at an orientation event is heterogeneous because of diversity in key demographics (gender, race, ethnicity, religion) and psychographics (beliefs, attitudes, needs). Even though first-year college students may share a similar age and identity at a particular university, those shared factors may be less salient than their diversity. Particularly with a heterogeneous group, you want to use inclusive language and not alienate audience members who have divergent backgrounds. Think about how your speech can engage people on multiple levels so that regardless of their background they are able to relate to your message.

Using Your Analysis

The conclusions you draw about the composition of your audience are only useful if you let these conclusions shape the way you write and deliver your speech. Here are some questions to guide you:

- Knowing my audience, is my topic interesting and relevant? If the topic is chosen for me, how should I approach the assignment to make the topic interesting and relevant to this particular audience?
- What level of vocabulary is appropriate for this audience? Should my speech be more accessible? More formal?
- What is the right demeanor for presenting to this audience?
- Given who I am as a speaker, how can I build rapport with this specific audience?
- Are there terms or ideas that I need to carefully explain? Or will these be familiar to my audience?
- How will I motivate this specific audience to listen to my speech?
- Does my speech topic, content, or vocabulary make assumptions about homogeneity that are not true for my audience?

Conclusion

Identifying and analyzing the who, what, where, when, and why of given circumstances will help you to determine the *how* of preparing for the speaking occasion. Additionally, ethical audience analysis can be useful in determining particular themes, language, and research sources to either employ or avoid to best connect with the audience. Furthermore, you'll be able to decide how you'll deliver the speech (options for delivery will be covered in the next chapter). Below is a worksheet to aid in the process.

Something to Think About

Imagine you're asked to give a five-minute informative speech that explains the idea of the "three branches" (executive, judiciary, and legislative) of governance that forms our American democracy. You couldn't possibly know how to write this informative speech unless you knew who your audience was going to be. Consider how different your speech would be in these three imagined circumstances:

1. You're on a study abroad program in a foreign country, and students are giving class presentations about the government of their home country. Your audience is: non-American college students.
2. You're visiting a second-grade class for a job interview as a teacher, and they have asked you to explain this important idea to the students. Your audience is: second graders.
3. You're a student in law school, and in a moot court exercise, you must explain the three branches of government to the jury. Your audience is: adult American citizens.

Common sense would tell you that these different audiences require a different approach to the speech: different in the way you write it; and different in the way you deliver it. In everyday conversation and informal speaking, you instinctually adjust what you say and how you say it according to your audience. A public speaker needs to be more conscious and deliberate about these adjustments.

For instance, an audience that is mostly young kids or older adults will require you to intentionally speak slower and extra clearly. Unless speaking to a group with particular knowledge about a subject, avoid jargon and be mindful to define any unfamiliar terms or concepts. If you're addressing an unfamiliar audience lean towards a more formal tone.

5. Ways of Delivering Speeches

Understanding Delivery Modes

In this chapter . . .

In this chapter, we will explore the three modes of speech delivery: impromptu, manuscript, and extemporaneous. Each offers unique advantages and potential challenges. An effective public speaker needs to be familiar with each style so they can use the most appropriate mode for any speech occasion.

In writing, there's only one way of delivering the text: the printed word on a page. Public Speaking, however, gives you different ways to present your text. These are called the **delivery modes**, or simply, ways of delivering speeches. The three modes are **impromptu delivery**, **manuscript delivery**, and **extemporaneous delivery**. Each of these involves a different relationship between a speech text, on the one hand, and the spoken word, on the other. These are described in detail below.

Impromptu	Manuscript	Extemporaneous
Brief notes	Fully Written	Detailed Outline

Impromptu Delivery

Impromptu speaking is a short form speech given with little to no preparation. While being asked to stand in front of an audience and deliver an impromptu speech can be anxiety-producing, it's important to remember that *impromptu speaking is something most people do without thinking in their daily lives*. If you introduce yourself to a group, answer an open-ended question, express an opinion, or tell a story, you're using impromptu speaking skills. While impromptus can be stressful, the more you do it the easier it becomes.

Preparation for Impromptu Delivery

The difficulty of impromptu speaking is that there is no way to prepare, specifically, for that moment of public speaking. There are, however, some things you can do to stay ready in case you're called upon to speak unrehearsed.

For one, make sure your speaking instruments (your voice and body) are warmed up, energized, and focused. It could be helpful to employ some of the actor warm-up techniques mentioned earlier as part of an everyday routine. If appropriate to the impromptu speaking situation, you could even ask to briefly step aside and warm yourself up so that you feel relaxed and prepared.

Furthermore, a good rule when brainstorming for an impromptu speech is that your first idea is your best. You can think about impromptu speaking like improvisation: use the "yes, and" rule and trust your instincts. You'll likely not have time to fully map out the speech, so don't be too hard on yourself to find the "perfect" thing to say. You should let your opinions and honest thoughts guide your speaking. While it's easy to look back later and think of approaches you should have used, try to avoid this line of thinking and trust whatever you come up with in the moment.

Finally, as you prepare to speak, remind yourself what your purpose is for your speech. What is it that you hope to achieve by speaking? How do you hope your audience feels by the end? What information is most important to convey? Consider how you'll end your speech. If you let your purpose guide you, and stay on topic throughout your speech, you'll often find success.

Delivery of Impromptu Speeches

Here is a step-by-step guide that may be useful if you're called upon to give an impromptu speech:

- Thank the person for inviting you to speak. Don't make comments about being unprepared, called upon at the last moment, on the spot, or uneasy.
- Deliver your message, making your main point as briefly as you can while still covering it adequately and at a pace your listeners can follow.
- Stay on track. If you can, use a structure, using numbers if possible: "Two main reasons . . ." or "Three parts of our plan. . ." or "Two side effects of this drug. . ." Past, present, and future or East Coast, Midwest, and West Coast are common structures.
- Thank the person again for the opportunity to speak.
- Stop talking when you are finished (it's easy to "ramble on" when you don't have something prepared). If in front of an audience, don't keep talking as you move back to your seat. Finish clearly and strong.

Impromptu speeches are most successful when they are brief and focus on a single point.

Another helpful framing technique for impromptus is to **negate the premise.** This is the deliberate reframing of a given prompt in a way that acknowledges the original but transitions into talking about the topic in a different way than expected. Negating the premise can be an effective rhetorical technique if used carefully and can help you focus your response on a topic that you're interested in talking about.

If you suddenly run out of things to say in the middle of your speech, be open to **pivoting**. Giving another example or story is the easiest way to do this. What's important is to not panic or allow yourself to ramble aimlessly. No matter what, remember to keep breathing.

Finally, the greatest key to success for improving impromptu speaking is practice. Practice speaking without rehearsal in low-stakes environments if you can (giving a toast at a family dinner, for example). But remember this: no one is expecting the "perfect" speech if you're called upon to speak impromptu. It's okay to mess up. As Steven Tyler of the rock band Aerosmith would say: dare to suck. Take a risk and make a bold choice. What is most important is to stay sure of yourself and your knowledge.

Manuscript Delivery

The opposite of an impromptu speech is the manuscript speech. This involves having the complete text of your speech written out on paper or on notecards. You may be reading the speech from a computer or a teleprompter. In some cases, the speaker memorizes this manuscript.

Manuscript delivery is the word-for-word iteration of a written message. In a manuscript speech, the speaker maintains their attention on the printed page except when using visual aids. The advantage of reading from a manuscript is the exact repetition of original words. In some circumstances, this can be extremely important.

Advantages & Disadvantages to Manuscript Delivery

There are many advantages in speaking from a manuscript. Some people find they are less nervous when they have the whole text in front of them. If you get lost or flustered during the speech you can glance down and get back on track. For speakers who struggle with vocalized pauses, it can be easier to know exactly what you want to say so that you're not searching for the right word. Some people prefer to carefully craft the language of their speech instead of just having a sense of the main point and expounding upon it. Particularly if there are a lot of statistics or quotations, it can be helpful to have the whole passage written out to make sure you not only convey it correctly but frame it in the right context. It's also easier to rehearse and time a manuscript speech, thus making sure it stays within time limits and isn't unexpectedly too short or long. For some formal occasions or events that may be emotional for the speaker, such as a funeral, using a manuscript may be the best approach.

There are some disadvantages in delivering a speech from a manuscript. Having a manuscript in front of you often encourages looking down and reading the speech instead of performing it. A lack of eye contact makes the audience feel less engaged. The speech can feel stilted and lacking energy. Some speakers may feel constrained and that they can't deviate from their script. Furthermore, while some find it easier to find their place with a quick glance down having the full manuscript, others find it difficult to avoid losing their place. If you go off script it can be harder to recover.

Successful Manuscript Delivery

A successful manuscript delivery requires a dynamic performance that includes lots of eye contact, animated vocals, and gestures. This can only be accomplished if you're very familiar with the manuscript. Delivering a manuscript that you have written but only spoken aloud once before delivery will most often result in stumbling over words and eyes locked to the page. You'll be reading aloud *at* your audience, instead of speaking *to* them. Remember what it's like in school when a teacher asks a student to stand up and read something aloud? If the student isn't familiar with the text, it can be a struggle both for the reader and the audience.

The key to avoiding this problem is to practice your written speech as much as you can, at least five or six times. You want to get so familiar with your speech that you can take your eyes off the page and make frequent eye contact with your audience. When you're very familiar with your speech, your tone of speaking becomes more conversational. The text flows more smoothly and you begin to sound like a speaker, not a reader. You can enjoy the presentation and your audiences will enjoy it as well.

To improve your skills at manuscript delivery, practice reading written content aloud. This allows you to focus exclusively on delivery instead of worrying about writing a speech first. In particular, reading dialogue or passages from

theatre plays, film/television scripts, or books provides material that is intended to be expressive and emotive. The goal is to deliver the content in a way that is accessible, interesting, alive, and engaging for the audience.

To Memorize or Not to Memorize

One way to overcome the problem of reading from the page is to memorize your word-for-word speech. When we see TED Talks, for example, they are usually memorized.

Memorized speaking is the delivery of a written message that the speaker has committed to memory. Actors, of course, recite from memory whenever they perform from a script. When it comes to speeches, memorization can be useful when the message needs to be exact, and the speaker doesn't want to be confined by notes.

The advantage to memorization is that it enables the speaker to maintain eye contact with the audience throughout the speech. However, there are some real and potential costs. Obviously, memorizing a seven-minute speech takes a great deal of time and effort, and if you're not used to memorizing, it's difficult to pull off.

For strategies on how to successfully memorize a speech, refer to the "Memorization" section in the chapter "From Page to Stage."

Extemporaneous Delivery

Remember the fairy tale about Goldilocks and the Three Bears? One bed is too soft, the other bed is too hard, and finally one is just right? Extemporaneous delivery combines the best of impromptu and manuscript delivery. Like a manuscript speech, the content is very carefully prepared. However, instead of a word-for-word manuscript, the speaker delivers from a carefully crafted outline. Therefore, it has elements of impromptu delivery to it. We call this type of speaking *extemporaneous* (the word comes from the Latin *ex tempore*, literally "out of time").

Extemporaneous delivery is the presentation of a carefully planned and rehearsed speech, spoken in a conversational manner using brief notes. By using notes rather than a full manuscript, the extemporaneous speaker can establish and maintain eye contact with the audience and assess how well they understand the speech as it progresses. Without all the words on the page to read, you have little choice but to look up and make eye contact with your audience.

For an extemporaneous speech, the speaker uses a carefully prepared outline. We will discuss how to create an effective outline in the chapters on speechwriting.

Advantages & Disadvantages of Extemporaneous Delivery

Speaking extemporaneously has some major advantages. As mentioned above, without having a text to be beholden to it's much easier to make eye contact and engage with your audience. Extemporaneous speaking also allows flexibility; you're working from the solid foundation of an outline, but if you need to delete, add, or rephrase something at the last minute or to adapt to your audience, you can do so. Therefore, the audience is more likely to pay better attention to the message. Furthermore, it promotes the likelihood that you, the speaker, will be perceived as knowledgeable and credible since you know the speech well enough that you don't need to read it. The outline also helps you be aware of main ideas

vs. subordinate ones. For many speakers, an extemporaneous approach encourages them to feel more relaxed and to have more fun while speaking. If you're enjoying presenting your speech the audience will sense that and consequently, they will enjoy it more.

A disadvantage of extemporaneous speaking is that it requires substantial rehearsal to achieve the verbal and nonverbal engagement that is required for a good speech. Adequate preparation can't be achieved the day before you're scheduled to speak. Be aware that if you want to present an engaging and credible extemporaneous speech, you'll need to practice many times. Your practice will need to include both the performative elements as well as having a clear sense of the content you'll cover. As mentioned previously, an extemporaneous speech can also be harder to have consistent and predictable timing. While delivering the speech it's more likely you'll wander off on a tangent, struggle to find the words you want, or forget to mention crucial details. Furthermore, if you get lost it may be harder to get yourself back on track.

Successful Extemporaneous Delivery

Like other delivery modes, a dynamic performance on an extemporaneous delivery is one that includes lots of eye contact, animated vocals, and gestures. At the same time, you want a speech that is structured and focused, not disorganized and wandering.

One strategy to succeed in extemporaneous speaking is to begin by writing out a full manuscript of your speech. This allows you to map out all the information that will be covered in each main point and sub-point. This method also gives you a better sense of your timing and flow than starting from just an outline. Another approach is to write out an outline that is less complete than a manuscript but still detailed. This will be used only for preparation; once you have a clear sense of the content you can reduce it down to a streamlined performance outline which you'll use when delivering the actual speech.

By the time of presentation, an extemporaneous speech becomes a mixture of memorization and improvisation. You'll need to be familiar enough with your content and structure that you cover everything, and it flows with logical transitions. Simultaneously, you must be willing to make changes and adapt in the moment. Hence, thorough rehearsal is critical. While this approach takes more time, the benefits are worth the extra effort required.

When you're asked to prepare a speech for almost any occasion except last-minute speeches, you must choose either a manuscript or extemporaneous approach. As you experiment with assorted styles of public speaking, you'll find you prefer one style of delivery over the other. Extemporaneous speaking can be challenging, especially for beginners, but it's the preferred method of most experienced public speakers. However, the speaking occasion may dictate which method will be most effective.

Online Delivery

Impromptu, manuscript, and extemporaneous speaking are **delivery modes**. They describe the relationship between the speaker and the script according to the level of preparation (minutes or weeks) and type of preparation (manuscript or outline). Until now, we have assumed that the **medium** for the speech is in-person before an audience. *Medium* means the means or channel through which something is communicated. The written word is a medium. In art, sculpture is a medium. For in-person public speaking, the medium is the stage. For online public speaking, the medium is the camera.

The Online Medium

Public speakers very often communicate via live presentation. However, we also use the medium of recordings, shared through online technology. We see online or recorded speaking in many situations. A potential employer might ask for a short video self-presentation. Perhaps you're recording a "How-To" video for YouTube. A professor asks you to create a presentation to post to the course website. Or perhaps an organization has solicited proposals via video. Maybe a friend who lives far away is getting married and those who can't attend send a video toast. While this textbook can't address all these situations, below are three important elements to executing recorded speeches.

Creating Your Delivery Document

As with an in-person speech, it's important to consider all the given circumstances of the speech occasion. Why are you speaking? What is the topic? How much time do you have to prepare? How long is this speech? In online speeches, having a sense of your audience is critical. Not only who are they, but where are they? You may be speaking live to people across the country or around the world. If they are in a different time zone it may influence their ability to listen and respond, particularly if it's early, late, or mealtime. If you're recording a speech for a later audience, do you know who that audience will be?

As with in-person speeches, different speech circumstances suggest one of three delivery modes: impromptu, extemporaneous, or manuscript. Whether your *medium* is live or camera, to prepare you must know which of the three *delivery modes* you'll be using. Just because a speech is online does not mean it doesn't need preparation and a delivery text.

Technical Preparation

To prepare for online speaking, you'll want to practice using your online tools. To begin, record yourself speaking so you have a sense of the way your voice sounds when mediated. Consider practicing making eye contact with your camera so that you feel comfortable with your desired focal point. In addition, consider how to best set up your speaking space. It may take some experimenting to find the best camera angle and position. Consider lighting when deciding your recording place. Make the lighting as bright as possible and ensure that the light is coming from behind the camera.

You should put some thought into what you'll be wearing. You'll want to look appropriate for the occasion. Make sure your outfit looks good on camera and doesn't clash with your background. In general, keep in mind what your background will look like on-screen. You'll want a background that isn't overly distracting to viewers. Furthermore, ensure that there is a place just off-screen where you can have notes and anything else you may need readily at hand. Your recording location should be somewhere quiet and distraction-free.

You should test your camera and microphone to make sure they are working properly, and make sure you have a stable internet connection. But, even when you complete pre-checks of equipment, sometimes technology fails. Therefore, it's helpful to know how to troubleshoot on the spot. Anticipate potential hiccups and have a plan for how to either fix issues that arise or continue with your presentation.

Vibrant Delivery

The tools for successful public speaking discussed in the rest of this textbook still apply to online speaking, but there are some key differences to consider before entering the virtual space. Online speaking, for example, will not have the same energy of a back-and-forth dialogue between speaker and live audience. If you're recording without an audience, it might feel like you're speaking into a void. You must use your power of imagination to keep in mind the audience who will eventually be watching your speech.

It's important to utilize all your vocal tools, such as projection, enunciation, and vocal variety. Most important is having a high level of energy and enthusiasm reflected in your voice. If your voice communicates your passion for your speech topic, the audience will feel that and be more engaged. Use humor to keep your speech engaging and to raise your own energy level. Some experts recommend standing while giving an online speech because it helps raise your energy level and can better approximate the feeling of presenting in public.

If you're presenting online to an audience, be sure to start the presentation on time. However, be aware that some participants may sign in late. Likewise, be cognizant about finishing your speech and answering any questions by the scheduled end time. If there are still questions you can direct the audience to reach out to you by your preferred means of communication. You may be able to provide the audience with a recording of the talk in case they want to go back and rewatch something.

Finally, consider ways you can enhance your performance by sharing images on the screen. Be sure you have that technology ready.

Other suggestions from experts include:

1. Your anxiety does not go away just because you can't see everyone in your "web audience." Be aware of the likelihood of anxiety; it might not hit until you're "on air."
2. During the question-and-answer period, some participants will question orally through the webcam set-up, while others will use the chat feature. It takes time to type in the chat. Be prepared for pauses.
3. Remember the power of transitions. The speaker needs to tie the messages of their slides together.
4. Verbal pauses can be helpful. Since one of the things that put audiences to sleep is the continual, non-stop flow of words, a pause can get attention.

Conclusion

As you begin delivering more public speeches you will likely find a preference for one or more of these delivery modes. If you are given a choice, it's often best to lean into your strengths and to utilize the method you feel most comfortable with. However, the speech occasion may dictate your presentation style. Therefore, it's important to practice and become comfortable with each mode. In an increasingly technological world online speaking in particular is likely going to be a required method of communication.

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6. From Page to Stage

The Journey from Written Speech to Delivery

In this chapter . . .

In this chapter, we will cover the mechanics of how to prepare for and present a public speech. This includes creating a delivery document, rehearsal, and performance. With an emphasis on integrating body and mind, we will look at specific tactics you can employ to boost your confidence and deliver a great speech.

So far, we have covered tools used by actors to train one's instrument (body and voice) to support performance. We have learned to analyze the given circumstances of a speech occasion by asking who, what, where, when, and why. Additionally, we learned about the different modes of speech delivery. In this chapter, you'll learn about the transition from speechwriting to rehearsal and delivery of your speech.

Once you have been given a specific speech occasion you'll be speaking at, determined the relevant given circumstances, and decided on your mode of delivery, you're ready to begin the writing process. We will cover speechwriting in the next chapters. For now, we will continue to focus on delivery by assuming you have a speech written. How do you go from words on a page to a public presentation?

When approaching a speech, keep in mind the old maxim "practice and preparation prevent poor performance."

Creating a Delivery Document

Speakers will almost always have a printed document to speak from unless they are using a teleprompter or have memorized a speech. We can call this document the **delivery document.** The form of the delivery document you create depends on your **delivery mode**: impromptu, manuscript, or extemporaneous.

Impromptu Mode

The impromptu mode is a speech for which you have very little time for preparation. It follows then, that you'll likely *not* have time to prepare a delivery document. That said, if you have time to write down a few ideas, it will be helpful to you.

Manuscript Mode

If your delivery mode is manuscript, you should have the entire text in front of you. Remember that a speech manuscript is a word-for-word rendering of your speech text. It's typically printed, although it could be handwritten. Unlike an essay that is meant to be read by others, your speech manuscript is for *your eyes only*. That means you can and should format it to be as helpful as possible for your presentation. Some of the formatting techniques you can use:

- Print a larger typeface to make it easier to read, 14-point font or above
- Leave extra-wide margins, and double space your text
- Use bolding, italics, font colors, and other techniques to help you
- Print on one side only, to limit confusion if your pages get out of order
- Number your pages
- Mark important words with bolding, underlining, or highlighting
- In the margins, write reminders for yourself, like "slow down," "breathe," or "eye contact"

It's *not* recommended that you try to put a complete manuscript on notecards. But if you want to do so, be sure to write on only one side of the card and number all your cards.

Extemporaneous Mode

In the earlier chapter on [delivery modes](#), you learned that the extemporaneous delivery mode means speaking from a *thoroughly planned outline.* Not every word of the speech will be written. This makes the preparation of your delivery document especially important. It should be formatted in a way that clearly guides you through your speech delivery. A useful outline is thorough, easy to read, and provides you with clear indication of your ideas.

Be sure you follow a hierarchical form of outlining that is visible on your document. Use numbering and part names to guide you. Use complete sentences. Avoid using a single word that will leave you wondering what you meant to say.

For example, in a speech informing your audience about electric vehicles, simply writing "History" as a main point isn't helpful to you. Write your main points in complete sentence and articulate your sub-points:

- Main point #1. The history of the electric vehicle dates back more than 100 years.
    - A. Early prototypes of EVs appear in 1920s
    - B. 1970s – GM uses NASA technology to create EV
    - C. The advent of lithium batteries advances the modern EV

Do you see how this is much more useful to a speaker? Your speaking outline should be succinct, with key phrases, and in larger letters than the preparation outline. Except for any quotations that you want to say exactly as the original, you should avoid long passages of text. Your delivery document for an extraneous speech may also provide speaking cues such as "slow down," "pause," or "change slide."

Some speakers prefer to write or print the outline on a few sheets of paper while others prefer notecards. The same rules discussed above for manuscript delivery documents apply to outlines: clear structure on the page, wide margins, large text, bolding and highlighting, and numbering.

For more tips on creating notecards, see this video:

Online Speaking

Just like in-person speaking, online speaking can be impromptu, manuscript, or extemporaneous. It requires the same level of preparation and an appropriate delivery document, whether you're speaking for a live audience or recording it for a later audience, or both. There are additional considerations when you're speaking online:

- Will you print out your delivery document or have it on a screen in front of you? Choose the form that best suits the speech.
- Where is the camera? Can you balance looking at your delivery document and making eye contact with your audience? If not, consider finding a new place for your document.
- If you put your document on a computer or device, set it up to be easy to see and to move through the document without distraction and unnecessary pauses.

Rehearsing Your Speech

Rehearsal is a significant part of the acting process. Much of the magic of a theatrical production is discovered during the rehearsal process. Usually, the actors, director, and rehearsal staff for a production meet for weeks before an outside audience witnesses the play. The company repeatedly performs different parts of the play until the most effective mode of performance is found and the actors feel comfortable telling the story.

Public speakers can benefit from a similar devotion to the rehearsal process for their speech. No one expects a speaker—just as no one expects an actor—to first look at the words they are to deliver and immediately know how to communicate that content perfectly. The more comfortable a speaker is with their text, the less likely they are to stumble over words, skip lines, or run into other problems during their speech delivery.

Rehearsal is Discovery

While repetition is an essential element of rehearsing, it's *discovery* that makes the rehearsal process truly worthwhile. While rehearsing, you learn about your speech—seeing what parts work and where it needs revision. You discover the best places for eye contact, how to use your voice, and when to maximize gestures.

It's important to identify within the speech where the central idea statement (or thesis) falls. This is an important moment to make eye contact and help your audience connect to the topic. Additionally, you should note other important moments to look up. Hopefully, you'll make eye contact much more than these specific moments, however, the act of

identifying them reminds you to be conscious of making eye contact throughout. Furthermore, it gives you a sense of the overall structure and flow so you can emphasize the main points and important details.

Similarly, rehearsal will allow you to pinpoint moments within the speech text that may suggest a particular gesture or movement. Some people naturally speak with their hands but in a speech, you want to plan and rehearse specific and intentional gestures that enhance your overall delivery. Moreover, you want to analyze what specific passages dictate or benefit from vocal variety (i.e., emphasizing an important point by slowing down, changing tone when acknowledging a differing viewpoint, employing the proper vocal rhythm while reading a list of items, etc.). It may also be helpful to mark places on your delivery document where you can breathe. The performative elements of your speech are just as important to your overall presentation as the content; thus, they need to be well-constructed and rehearsed.

Best Practices for Rehearsing

Practice Your Speech Out Loud

If you only read your speech in your head, or whisper the words quietly, you're not really practicing what you'll be doing in front of your audience. Practicing aloud will help identify any places where you tend to mispronounce or stumble over words. Sentences on paper don't always translate well to the spoken medium. Practicing aloud allows you to hear where your sentences and phrases are awkward, unnatural, or too long, and allows you to correct them before getting up in front of the audience.

Practice Your Speech Standing Up

When you practice at home, lying on your bed reading your speech only prepares you for one thing: lying on a bed reading a speech. Since you'll be standing in front of your audience, you need to practice that way. The default position for delivering a speech is with your feet shoulder-width apart and your knees slightly bent. Practicing this way will help develop muscle memory and will make it feel more natural when you're doing it for real. We also suggest you wear the same shoes you'll be wearing on the day of your speech.

Practice Your Speech with an Audience

The best way to prepare for the feeling of having someone watch you while giving a speech is to have someone watch you while you practice giving a speech. Not only will you get practice in front of an audience, but they may be able to tell you about any parts that were unclear or problems you might encounter when you give it for a grade. During practice, it may help to pick out some strategically placed objects around the room to occasionally focus on just to get into the habit of looking around more often.

Practice Your Speech for Time

You want to make sure you're well within time limits. As a general rule, if your speech window is 5-7 minutes, your ideal speech time is going to be 6 minutes. If you practice at home and your 5-7-minute speech lasts 5:06, you're probably

going to be in trouble on speech day. Most likely your nerves will cause you to speak slightly faster and put you under the 5:00 mark. If your times are vastly different, you may have to practice four or more times.

When practicing your speech at home for time, it's a good idea to time yourself at least three times. This way you can see if you're coming in around the same time and feel pretty good that it's an accurate reflection of how long you'll speak. Conversely, if during your three rehearsals your times are 5:45, 5:12, and 6:37, then that is a clear indicator that you need to be more consistent in what you're saying and doing.

Rehearsal is putting all the elements together under performance-like conditions. This means running it all the way through with all planned gestures and vocal inflections, utilizing any technology for visual aids, timing the performance, and ideally presenting it for an audience. If you're unable to find people willing to be your test audience, you can perform for your pet or even a stuffed animal. Ideally, you'll record your rehearsal so the camera can serve as an audience. Having an audience changes your mindset and makes the experience feel closer to the actual performance.

Practice Your Speech by Recording Yourself

By watching yourself, you will notice all the small things you do that might prove to be distracting. Many times, students aren't aware that they have low energy or a monotone voice, or that they bounce, sway, pull at their clothes, play with hair or jewelry, or make other unusual and distracting movements. At least, they don't know this until they see themselves doing it. Since we are generally our own harshest critics, you will be quick to notice any flaws in your speech and correct them.

A Note About Memorization

Some speech circumstances, like the format of TED Talks, require memorization. In other circumstances, memorization isn't required but may enhance the speech. If you have decided to memorize your speech, you must do this during a longer rehearsal process. For a speech of five or six minutes, you'll need several days to memorize.

When memorizing a speech, it's useful to employ the strategy of "chunking." You should not try to memorize a whole speech the night before you're scheduled to deliver it. Instead, divide your speech into "chunks," and memorize one chunk a day over several days. You could, for example, divide your speech into the parts of an outline (introduction, main point #1, main point #2, main point #3, conclusion), and focus on memorizing one section a day over five days.

Memorize using a "stacking" formula for each "chunk." It works like this: Learn one sentence. Then learn the next sentence and repeat the two together. Then learn a third sentence and repeat the three together.

If you spread out the memorization process, learning chunks and stacking your memorization, it's more likely to stick in your brain, allowing you to focus on delivery and connecting to your audience when it's time to give the speech.

Preparation For Performance

Warming up means preparing physically and mentally for the task at hand. A marathon runner wouldn't run before warming up their muscles. An opera singer wouldn't sing before warming up their voice. A trial lawyer might visualize

the jury before they walked into the courtroom for their closing argument. These are all examples of warming up, and they are both physical and mental.

In the same way, a public speaker needs to warm up. By consistently performing warm-up activities or completing daily "tuning" of the body and voice, you can practice getting yourself into a place mentally and physically to become a successful speaker.

On the day of your speech presentation, it's important to prepare both physically and mentally. A focus on your overall well-being will best enable you to tap into your performance tools and have your speech reflect your preparation.

This is the moment to put into practice the actor's tools you learned in [Chapter 2: Actor Tools for Public Speakers](#).

- Overcoming Stage Fright
- Releasing Physical Tension
- Regular and immediate relaxation
- Freeing v & S
- Vocal Variety
- Finding Focus & Commitment
- Concentration
- Intention / Objective
- Tactics

Physical Preparation

The first step in physical preparation is adequate sleep and rest. You might be thinking such a thing is impossible in college, where sleep deprivation and late nights come with the territory. However, research shows the extreme effects a lifestyle of limited sleep can have, far beyond yawning or dozing off in class (Mitru, Millrood, & Mateika, 2002; Walker, 2017). As far as public speaking is concerned, your energy level and ability to be alert and aware during the speech will be affected by lack of sleep.

Secondly, you would be better off to eat something that is protein-based rather than processed sugar-based before speaking. In other words, cheese or peanut butter on whole grain toast, Greek yogurt, or eggs for breakfast rather than a donut and soft drink. Some traditionalists also discourage the drinking of milk because it's believed to stimulate mucus production, but this has not been scientifically proven (Lai & Kardos, 2013).

A third suggestion is to wear clothes that you know you look good in and are comfortable but also meet the context's requirements (that is, your instructor may have a dress code for speech days). Especially, wear comfortable shoes that give you a firm base for your posture. Flip-flops and high heels may not fit these categories.

A final suggestion for physical preparation is to utilize some stretching or relaxation techniques that will loosen your limbs or throat. Your emotions may tell you to run away, but the social situation says you must stay, so all that energy for running must go somewhere. The energy might go to your legs, hands, stomach, sweat glands, or skin, with undesirable physical consequences. Tightening and releasing muscles and stretching your hands, arms, legs, and throat (through intentional, wide yawns) for a few seconds before speaking can help release some of the tension.

Mental Preparation

Equally important to physical preparation is mental preparation. Meditation or even just some deep breathing can help you clear your head and focus on the task at hand. It's necessary to confront feelings of stage fright and negative thinking. Acknowledge your thoughts then choose to release them. Find a moment to do a quick visualization of the speech going well and the audience applauding. Or give yourself positive affirmations, perhaps while utilizing a power pose. It's ok to be practicing the day of your speech but don't obsess. Try to give yourself a break from thinking about the speech. Be intentional about staying focused and being grounded in the moment. Additionally, you want to be open and adaptable to any last-minute changes.

Logistics

If you'll be using your phone, tablet, laptop, or other device make sure it's charged. It may be useful to have a method of keeping track of time during your speech. Double check you have everything you need for your speech with you. Stay hydrated and bring extra water. Plan to arrive early.

Staff

Another consideration is whether there will be a moderator or event host that will help with audience management. Is someone going to introduce you? If there is no emcee, how will you know when to start your speech? If technical issues arise will there be somebody on hand to resolve the problem? If you're planning to conclude with a Q&A, will there be someone else to help facilitate this? Will there be security present? Who is your point person for answering any questions you have? Are you familiar with any of the people who may be helping run the event you're speaking at?

Your Body on Stage

Public Speaking is an embodied experience. Even in online delivery, you're not simply a talking head. Your posture, gestures, and eye movements all add to the communication process. This section discusses physical practices that are typical for in-person public speaking, but they are not meant to exclude speakers who, for whatever reason, employ different ways of using their body. The most important thing is that you allow yourself to be present on stage, whoever you're and however your particular body moves.

Posture

When giving a speech you should stand up straight with your feet shoulder width apart. People, especially when they get nervous, tend to lock their knees. You can overcome this by intentionally making sure your knees are just slightly bent. If your knees are relaxed it makes it much easier to stand planted and strong or move around. This posture also opens your chest allowing you to take a full deep breath of air. Your arms should hang comfortably at your sides or rest on a

lectern. Clasping your hands in front of or behind you can make you appear nervous. One trick is to press your finger gently against your leg. This way you know where your arms are, and it can help ground you if you feel nervous.

Once you feel comfortable with staying planted while speaking, you can begin to incorporate gestures and more dynamic movement. The goal is to get to a point where you feel comfortable being out in front, not behind a table or lectern, and are able to move throughout the space. Intentional movement that punctuates the speech is a great way to enhance your speech and deepen your connection to the audience.

Lectern

A **lectern** is that object behind which a speaker stands to deliver a speech. At the top is a surface—usually slated—where the speech puts their delivery document. If there is a microphone, it's usually on the lectern. Some lecterns have computer screens. Lecterns can be a sturdy piece of furniture, or they can be streamlined to look more like a music stand. In *many* live speaking situations, you'll find a lectern.

Because it provides a place to put your delivery document or device, lecterns make it easier to deliver a speech. However, on the "too much" end, some people want to trick their audience into thinking they are not nervous by leaning on the podium in a relaxed manner. The lectern isn't part of your skeletal system, to prop you up, so don't do this. Tips for using a lectern to your advantage include:

- Put your delivery document or device on the lectern. Avoid holding your document while speaking at a lectern.
- Watch your posture. A lectern tends to encourage us to slouch down and lean over. Resist this with good posture.
- Rest your hands on the lectern, but don't lean your weight on it, hunch over it, or "hug" it.
- Your hands can move off it and return to it but avoid not touching the lectern *at all*. If you do so, it will look strange and make the lectern appear more like an obstacle rather than a speaker tool.
- Avoid stepping away from the lectern, either to the side or moving backwards.
- While a lectern positions you facing forward, you can allow your body to turn left and right while still at the lectern.
- Bring to the lectern only what you need to give the speech. Anything else will distract the audience. Lecterns often have a lower, hidden shelf, which can be used to place a glass of water.

Hydrating

Speaking of water, a presentation of more than 7 or 8 minutes may require the speaker to drink some water. Even in a short speech speaker might find themselves drying up. Here are a few tips for drinking water on stage:

- Drink water before your speech. Don't start a speech when you are parched.
- Once you are in front of your audience, avoid drinking water from a bottle. Instead, have a cup of water at the lectern or nearby on a table.
- If you would rather have a water bottle, try to sip, and not chug it. Have enough water in it so that you don't have to tilt your head all the way back for the last drop!
- If the organizer is kind enough to provide you with a bottle of water, take a moment before your speech to be sure the water bottle is open and won't spill water when you lift it.
- You should pause to sip water at a transition point in your speech or at the end of a sentence. Don't feel rushed or try to return to speaking while you're still sipping!

Hands

When we get scared or nervous, our bodies emit adrenaline into our systems so we can deal with whatever problem is causing us to feel that way. Unfortunately, you'll need to be standing relatively still for 5-7 minutes, so that burst of adrenaline is going to try to work its way out of your body and manifest itself somehow. One of the main ways is through your hands.

Moving your hands too much can easily become distracting. At the other end of the scale, people who don't know what to do with their hands or use them "too little" sometimes hold their arms stiffly at their sides, behind their backs, or in their pockets, all of which can also look unnatural and distracting.

The key to knowing what to do with your hands is to use them naturally as you would in normal conversation. If you were standing around talking to your friends and wanted to list three reasons why you should all take a road trip this weekend, you would probably hold up your fingers as you counted off the reasons ("First, we hardly ever get this opportunity. Second, we can..."). Try to pay attention to what you do with your hands in regular conversations and incorporate that into your delivery.

However, with all that said, if you have nothing else to do with your hands, such as meaningful gestures, the default position for them is to be resting gently on the sides of the lectern. You don't want to grip the lectern tightly but resting them on the edges keeps them in position to move your notes on if you need to or use them to gesture.

Feet

Just like your hands, a lot of nervous energy is going to try to work its way out of your body through your feet. On the "too much" end, this is most common when people start "dancing" behind the lectern or twisting feet around each other or around the lower leg. On the other end are those who put their feet together, lock their knees, and never move from that position. Both options look unnatural, and therefore will prove to be distracting to your audience. Locking your knees can also lead to loss of oxygen in your brain, not a good state to be in, because it can cause you to faint.

The default position for your feet, then, is to have them shoulder-width apart with your knees slightly bent. Again, you want to look and feel natural, so it's fine to adjust your weight or move out from behind the lectern, but constant motion (or perpetual stillness) will not lead to good overall delivery.

Eye Contact

Eye contact is how you establish and maintain a rapport with your audience during your speech. It also allows you to check-in with the audience to gauge their reaction and make sure they are following along. Frequent and direct eye contact is a crucial element of your delivery. You want to establish genuine eye contact with your audience and not "fake" eye contact. Tips:

- Look around the entire room, including the front, back, left, and right sides of the space.
- Eye contact is more than just physically moving your head; it's about looking at your audience and establishing a connection. In general, your eye contact should last at least five seconds at a time and should be with individuals throughout the room.
- Establish eye contact with your entire audience, not just one person.

Dressing for a Speech

What to wear to present a speech is based on many factors, including the speech occasion and its given circumstances as well as who you are as a speaker. The only "rule" is to make a conscious choice about attire. In life we often give little thought to what we wear, but a speech presentation requires that we pay attention. For example, while dressing for a speech, you might overlook things that can be distracting. Some of these distracting elements can include:

- Jewelry that 'jingles' when you move, such as heavy bracelets
- Uncomfortable shoes or shoes that you're not used to
- Anything with fringe, zippers, or things hanging off it. They might become irresistible to play with while speaking
- For those with longer hair, remember that you'll be looking down at your notes and then looking back up. Don't be forced to "fix" your hair or tuck it behind your ear every time you look up

Conclusion

Good delivery is meant to augment your speech and help convey your information to the audience. Anything that potentially distracts your audience means that fewer people will be informed, persuaded, or entertained by what you have said. Practicing your speech in an environment that closely resembles the actual situation that you will be speaking in will better prepare you for what to do and how to deliver your speech when it really counts.

SPEECHWRITING

Methods for writing effective speeches have much in common with the rules of good composition employed for any writing task, but there are writing techniques unique to speechwriting. The chapters in this section explain fundamental skills of speechwriting, from structure and organization to ethics and presentation aids.

7. Writing for Listeners

Making your speeches "listener-friendly"

In this chapter . . .

Writing a speech is similar to writing an essay, however there are some important differences. Because the audience does not have the ability to go back and reread to check for comprehension, it's incumbent on the speaker to write in a style that is specifically intended to be heard. Furthermore, the speaker must be aware of potential barriers to listening and how to overcome them.

The goal of learning about public speaking isn't only how to deliver a speech, but how to write one. You might be thinking: "I can write an essay, so I can write a speech!" Yes and no. Writing a speech is closely related to other forms of writing, like a research paper on a historical event or a book report for an English class. Speechwriting, however, has unique requirements. This is true whether you are writing a full manuscript or an outline for extemporaneous delivery. In this and the next several chapters, you will learn about writing specific kinds of speeches. This chapter focuses on the general guidelines for writing a well-constructed speech that can be applied to almost any speech type. The added benefit is that improving your ability to write speeches will help you become a better writer overall.

Listener versus Reader

There is one *crucial* difference between a speech and an essay: listener versus reader. When we write an essay, we are writing a text for someone to read. Readers can go at their own pace, read parts of a text several times over, loop back to an earlier page for comprehension, and use visual signals like titles, subtitles, and paragraphs to see the structure of the text and so aid in comprehension.

Listening is different. The audience can't go back to hear something they didn't understand. They can't go slower or faster. They can't see important visual connections: the audience can't see where one paragraph topic ends, and another one begins! It's up to you, the speaker, to make your speech as "listener-friendly" as possible using the techniques discussed in this chapter.

As a speechwriter, you should be aware that there are several things you can do to overcome the disadvantages of listening over reading. Most important is the speech writing technique we call **planned redundancy**. Planned redundancy refers to purposeful ways of repeating and restating parts of the speech to help the audience listen and retain the content. In speechwriting, the elements of redundancy include:

- previewing the main points at the beginning to forecast the plan of the speech.
- providing the main idea of the speech and repeating it in the body of the speech.
- using connective statements between points to remind the audience of what was just said

- using signal works like "first, second, finally" and "to conclude."
- repeating the main idea of the speech the plan and re-emphasizing the content.
- giving an overall summary in the conclusion to help the audience remember or do something with the information.

You may think that the techniques of planned redundancy make a speech boring, but it's just the opposite. Listeners get bored when they lose track of what is being said or they must struggle to make sense of the structure. If giving a speech is like driving down a highway, planned redundancies are the road signs. When they are repeated with the right frequency, people don't get lost.

Additional techniques to make your speeches listener-friendly include writing a strong introduction that captures the attention of the audience from the outset, the use of presentation aids, movement at key points in the speech (if appropriate) and incorporating specific examples and stories.

Barriers to Listening

If listeners are at a disadvantage in terms of comprehension, impediments brought by the environment of the speech occasion further impede good listening. Since you're a listener as well as a speaker, you are susceptible to these barriers. Here's a summary of the most common ones. See if you can recognize them in yourself.

- Some people are not strong aural learners and listening may not be a personal strength. However, that does not make listening unimportant or something that can't be improved upon.
- The noisiness and constant distractions of our lives make sustained listening difficult for many. We may be distracted by the constant lure of our devices. Life concerns as well as negative news feeds hurt our ability to listen.
- Listeners can be physically uncomfortable, from hunger, fatigue, or pain, for example. Even if a person does not have a condition that makes sitting and listening difficult, the physical environment (uncomfortable chairs, a room that is too hot or too cold) may make listening to a public speaker difficult.
- Listening can be difficult because of other people. Perhaps the scent of soap or shampoo is unpleasant to you. Perhaps neighbors sitting by you can't put their cell phones down or perhaps they are whispering to each other.

Finally, in addition to these mostly environmental barriers, there is a subtle barrier in the attitudes that audiences bring to the topic or speaker. One is **confirmation bias**. The term means "a tendency to search for or interpret information in a way that confirms one's preconceptions" (Nickerson, 1998). It can cause a listener to discount, reject, or re-interpret what they hear to fit their preconceptions. Related to this barrier is prejudging a speaker from opening remarks, dismissing their topic or position at the outset due to perceived disagreement, or "tuning them out" due to appearance or nonverbal behavior. **Prejudgment** is a counterproductive behavior.

Overcoming Barriers to Listening

What can a speaker do to overcome the barriers of environment and attitude?

- For the barriers of noise in the room, see if there's any adjustments you can make. Is the microphone adjusted? Is there an air conditioner or blower that is making noise? Should doors be closed? Should you be closer to the audience?

- For the barriers of distractions. There isn't much one can do if an audience member prefers to look at their phone instead of you. That said, at the start of the speech you could ask people to silent their phones or turn them off completely.
- Like phones, there is little a speaker can do to keep audience members from distracting each other. Don't stare down a distracting audience member. Focus on another section of the audience. They'll get the message.
- Confirmation bias and prejudgment is a barrier to listening that a speaker can do little to control. The best techniques for improving the changes that your speech will reach even a biased audience include establishing your credibility as a speaker, being an ethical speechwriting through honesty, sources, and integrity. These are discussed later in this chapter and in chapters to follow.

Finally, learning about barriers to listening isn't only valuable to the speechwriter/performer, but to you as a listener. Decide that good listening in specific situations and improving your own listening behavior are important.

- Go into listening knowing that you might disagree and that the automatic "turn off" tendency of confirmation bias is a possibility. Tell yourself to keep an open mind.
- Notice if you make prejudgments about a speaker. Once you do, you can let them go.
- Be prepared to listen. This means putting away mobile devices, having a pen and paper, and situating yourself physically to listen. Have a purpose in listening.
- When taking notes, keep yourself mentally engaged by writing questions that arise. This behavior will fill in the gaps when your mind could wander and create more of an interaction with the speaker.
- Avoid temptations to talk to those sitting next to you. It's far more distracting to both the speaker and your co-listeners than you might think.

8. Purpose and Thesis

Speechwriting Essentials

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In this chapter . . .
</div>

In this chapter, we transition from delivery of public speeches to the mechanics of writing a great speech. Having selected a topic and analyzed how the given circumstances will affect your speech, it's now time to determine the best way to present the overarching information or argument. A public speech should have a clear purpose of what it wants to achieve which in turn shapes the thesis statement. You will learn how to develop a clear specific purpose statement that guides your writing of the speech. From that we demonstrate how to craft a thesis statement that informs the audience about your topic and your approach to it within the speech.

As discussed in the chapter on Speaking Occasion, speechwriting begins with *careful analysis of the speech occasion* and its given circumstances, leading to the choice of an appropriate topic. As with essay writing, the early work of speechwriting follows familiar steps: brainstorming, research, pre-writing, thesis, and so on.

This chapter focuses on techniques that are unique to speechwriting. As a spoken form, speeches must be *clear* about the purpose and main idea or "takeaway." Planned redundancy means that you will be repeating these elements several times over during the speech.

Furthermore, finding purpose and thesis are essential whether you're preparing an outline for extemporaneous delivery or a completely written manuscript for presentation. When you know your topic, your general and specific purpose, and your thesis or central idea, you have all the elements you need to write a speech that is focused, clear, and audience friendly.

> Useful guides to researching and writing are available at the University of Kansas Writing Center.

Recognizing the General Purpose

Speeches have traditionally been grouped into one of three categories according to their primary purpose: 1) to inform, 2) to persuade, or 3) to inspire, honor, or entertain. These broad goals are commonly known as the **general purpose** of a speech. Earlier, you learned about the actor's tool of intention or objectives. The general purpose is like a super-

objective; it defines the broadest goal of a speech. These three purposes are not necessarily exclusive to the others. A speech designed to be persuasive can also be informative and entertaining. However, a speech should have one *primary* goal. That is its general purpose.

Why is it helpful to talk about speeches in such broad terms? Being perfectly clear about what you want your speech to do or make happen for your audience will keep you focused. You can make a clearer distinction between whether you want your audience to leave your speech *knowing more* (to inform), or *ready to take action* (to persuade), or *feeling something* (to inspire)

It's okay to use synonyms for these broad categories. Here are some of them:

- To inform could be to explain, to demonstrate, to describe, to teach.
- To persuade could be to convince, to argue, to motivate, to prove.
- To inspire might be to honor, or entertain, to celebrate, to mourn.

In summary, the first question you must ask yourself when starting to prepare a speech is, "Is the primary purpose of my speech to inform, to persuade, or to inspire?"

Articulating Specific Purpose

A **specific purpose statement** builds upon your general purpose and makes it specific (as the name suggests). For example, if you have been invited to give a speech about how to do something, your general purpose is "to inform." Choosing a topic appropriate to that general purpose, you decide to speak about how to protect a personal from cyberattacks. Now you are on your way to identifying a specific purpose.

A good specific purpose statement has three elements: goal, target audience, and content.

Goal (To + active word)	for example: to inform, to explain, to convince, to honor
Audience	my classmates, the members of my sorority, my coworkers
Content	how to bake brownies, the history of EVs, Macs are better than PCs.

If you think about the above as a kind of recipe, then the first two "ingredients" — your goal and your audience — should be simple. Words describing the target audience should be as specific as possible. Instead of "my peers," you could say, for example, "students in their senior year at my university."

The third ingredient in this recipe is content, or what we call the topic of your speech. This is where things get a bit difficult. You want your content to be specific and something that you can express succinctly in a sentence. Here are some common problems that speakers make in defining the content, and the fix:

Topic Problem	Example	The Fix
too broad	"I'm going to talk about climate change."	Narrow down a specific topic appropriate to the general purpose. "To talk about" isn't clear. A better topic here might be: "To persuade my audience to make five simple changes in their lifestyle that support the fight against climate change."
combined topics	"My speech is about recycling and the increased frequency of hurricanes due to climate change."	The word "and" in a description of content is a sure signal of a combined topic. Combined topics are too complex, and they muddy your focus. Choose one OR the other.
content doesn't match the purpose	"To inform my classmates about why they should support LGBTQ+ safe spaces on campus.""	Match the content to the general purpose. Do you see the word "should" here? That is a sure sign that the topic is persuasive, not informative. An informative speech on this topic would be "To inform my classmates about the LGBTQ+ safe spaces available on campus."

Now you know the "recipe" for a specific purpose statement. It's made up of **T**o, plus an active **W**ord, a specific **A**udience, and clearly stated **C**ontent. Remember this formula: T + W + A + C.

> T: To
>
> W: define
>
> A: for a group of new students
>
> C: the term "plagiarism"

Here are some further examples a good specific purpose statement:

- To explain to a group of first-year students how to join a school organization.
- To persuade the members of the Greek society to take a spring break trip in Daytona Beach.
- To motivate my classmates in English 101 to participate in a study abroad program.
- To convince first-year students that they need at least seven hours of sleep per night to do well in their studies.
- To inspire my Church community about the accomplishments of our pastor.

The General and Specific Purpose Statements are writing tools in the sense that they help you, as a speechwriter, clarify your ideas.

Creating a Thesis Statement

Once you are clear about your general purpose and specific purpose, you can turn your attention to crafting a thesis statement. A thesis is the central idea in an essay or a speech. In speechwriting, the thesis or central idea explains the message of the content. It's the speech's "takeaway." A good thesis statement will also reveal and clarify the ideas or assertions you'll be addressing in your speech (your main points). Consider this example:

> General Purpose: To persuade.
>
> Specific Purpose: To motivate my classmates in English 101 to participate in a study abroad program.

Thesis: A semester-long study abroad experience produces lifelong benefits by teaching you about another culture, developing your language skills, and enhancing your future career prospects.

The difference between a specific purpose statement and a thesis statement is clear in this example. The thesis provides the takeaway (the lifelong benefits of study abroad). It also points to the assertions that will be addressed in the speech. Like the specific purpose statement, the thesis statement is a writing tool. You'll incorporate it into your speech, usually as part of the introduction and conclusion.

All good expository, rhetorical, and even narrative writing contains a thesis. Many students and even experienced writers struggle with formulating a thesis. We struggle when we attempt to "come up with something" before doing the necessary research and reflection. A thesis only becomes clear through the thinking and writing process. As you develop your speech content, keep asking yourself: What is important here? If the audience can remember only one thing about this topic, what do I want them to remember?

Example #2:

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To demonstrate to my audience the correct method for cleaning a computer keyboard.

Central Idea: Your computer keyboard needs regular cleaning to function well, and you can achieve that in four easy steps.

Example # 3

General Purpose: To Inform

Specific Purpose: To describe how makeup is done for the TV show *The Walking Dead*.

Central Idea: The wildly popular zombie show *The Walking Dead* achieves incredibly scary and believable makeup effects, and in the next few minutes I will tell you who does it, what they use, and how they do it.

Notice in the examples above that neither the specific purpose nor the central idea ever exceeds one sentence. If your central idea consists of more than one sentence, then you are probably including too much information.

Problems to Avoid

The first problem many students have in writing their specific purpose statement has already been mentioned: specific purpose statements sometimes try to cover far too much and are too broad. For example:

"To explain to my classmates the history of ballet."

Aside from the fact that this subject may be difficult for everyone in your audience to relate to, it's enough for a three-hour lecture, maybe even a whole course. You'll probably find that your first attempt at a specific purpose statement will need refining. These examples are much more specific and much more manageable given the limited amount of time you'll have.

- To explain to my classmates how ballet came to be performed and studied in the U.S.

- To explain to my classmates the difference between Russian and French ballet.
- To explain to my classmates how ballet originated as an art form in the Renaissance.
- To explain to my classmates the origin of the ballet dancers' clothing.

The second problem happens when the "communication verb" in the specific purpose does not match the content; for example, persuasive content is paired with "to inform" or "to explain." Can you find the errors in the following purpose statements?

- To inform my audience why capital punishment is unconstitutional. (This is persuasive. It can't be informative since it's taking a side)
- To persuade my audience about the three types of individual retirement accounts. (Even though the purpose statement says "persuade," it isn't persuading the audience of anything. It is informative.)
- To inform my classmates that Universal Studios is a better theme park than Six Flags over Georgia. (This is clearly an opinion; hence it is a persuasive speech and not merely informative)

The third problem exists when the content part of the specific purpose statement has two parts. One specific purpose is enough. These examples cover two different topics.

- To explain to my audience how to swing a golf club and choose the best golf shoes.
- To persuade my classmates to be involved in the Special Olympics and vote to fund better classes for the intellectually disabled.

To fix this problem of combined or hybrid purposes, you'll need to select one of the topics in these examples and speak on that one alone.

The fourth problem with both specific purpose and central idea statements is related to formatting. There are some general guidelines that need to be followed in terms of how you write out these elements of your speech:

- Don't write either statement as a question.
- Always use complete sentences for central idea statements and infinitive phrases (beginning with "to") for the specific purpose statement.
- Use concrete language ("I admire Beyoncé for being a talented performer and businesswoman") and avoid subjective or slang terms ("My speech is about why I think Beyoncé is the bomb") or jargon and acronyms ("PLA is better than CBE for adult learners.")

There are also problems to avoid in writing the central idea statement. As mentioned above, remember that:

- The specific purpose and central idea statements are not the same thing, although they are related.
- The central idea statement should be clear and not complicated or wordy; it should "stand out" to the audience. As you practice delivery, you should emphasize it with your voice.
- The central idea statement should not be the first thing you say but should follow the steps of a good introduction as outlined in the next chapters.

Conclusion

You should be aware that all aspects of your speech are constantly going to change as you move toward the moment

of giving your speech. The exact wording of your central idea may change, and you can experiment with different versions for effectiveness. However, your specific purpose statement should not change unless there is a good reason to do so. There are many aspects to consider in the seemingly simple task of writing a specific purpose statement and its companion, the central idea statement. Writing good ones at the beginning will save you some trouble later in the speech preparation process.

9. Structure and Organization

Writing a Speech That Audiences Can Grasp

In this chapter . . .

For a speech to be effective, the material must be presented in a way that makes it not only engaging but easy for the audience to follow. Having a clear structure and a well-organized speech makes this possible. In this chapter we cover the elements of a well-structured speech, using transitions to connect each element, and patterns for organizing the order of your main points.

Have you had this experience? You have an instructor who is easy to take notes from because they help you see the main ideas and give you cues as to what is most important to write down and study for the test. On the other hand, you might have an instructor who tells interesting stories, says provocative things, and leads engaging discussions, but you have a tough time following where the instruction is going. If you've experienced either of these, you already know that structure and the organized presentation of material makes a big difference for listening and learning. The structure is like a house, which has essential parts like a roof, walls, windows, and doors. Organization is like the placement of rooms within the house, arranged for a logical and easy flow.

This chapter will teach you about creating a speech through an outlining process that involves structure and organization. In the earlier chapter Ways of Delivering Speeches, you learned about several different modes of speech delivery: impromptu, extemporaneous, and manuscript. Each of these suggests a different kind of speech document. An impromptu speech will have a very minimal document or none at all. An extemporaneous delivery requires a very thorough outline, and a manuscript delivery requires a fully written speech text. Here's a crucial point to understand: Whether you plan to deliver extemporaneously or from a fully written text. The process of outlining is crucial. A manuscript is simply a thorough outline into which all the words have been written.
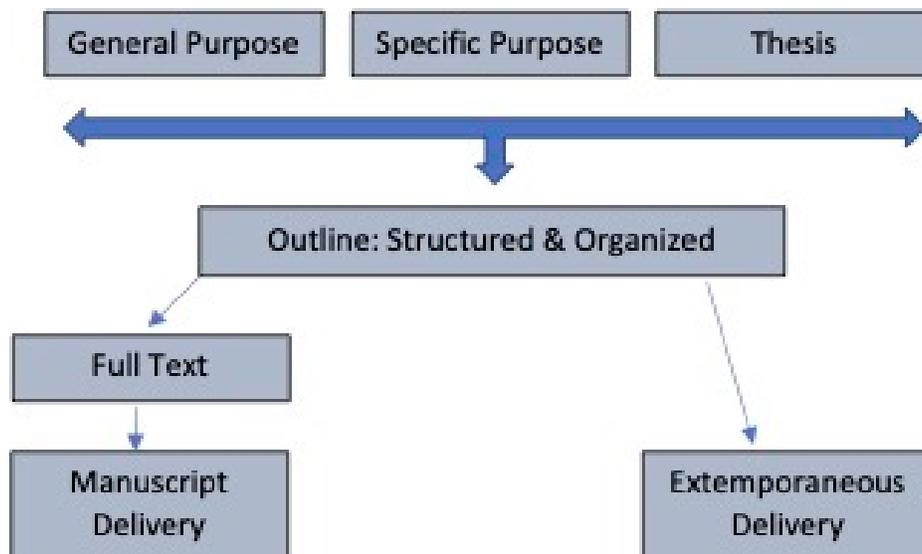
Four Elements of a Structured Speech

A well-structured speech has four distinct elements: introduction, body, connective statements, and conclusion. While this sounds simple, each of these elements has sub-elements and nuances that are important to understand. Introductions and conclusions are complex enough to warrant their own chapter and will be discussed in depth further on.

Introduction and Conclusion

The importance of a good introduction cannot be overstated. The clearer and more thorough the introduction, the more likely your audience will listen to the rest of the speech and not "turn off." An introduction, which typically occupies 10-15% of your entire speech, serves many functions including getting the audience's attention, establishing your credibility, stating your thesis, and previewing your main points.

Like an introduction, speech conclusions are essential. They serve the function of reiterating the key points of your speech and leave the audience with something to remember.

The elements of introductions and conclusions will be discussed in the following chapter. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to the body of the speech and its connectors.

The Body of a Speech

The body of a speech is comprised of several distinct groups of related information or arguments. A proper group is one where a) the group can be described in a single clear sentence, and b) there's a logical relationship between everything within it. We call that describing sentence a **main point**. Speeches typically have several main points, all logically related to the thesis/central idea of the speech. Main points are followed by explanation, elaboration, and supporting evidence that are called **sub-points**.

Main Points

A main point in a speech is a complete sentence that states the topic for information that is logically grouped together. In a writing course, you may have learned about writing a paragraph topic sentence. This is typically the first sentence of a paragraph and states the topic of the paragraph. Speechwriting is similar. Whether you're composing an essay with a paragraph topic sentences or a drafting a speech with main points, everything in the section attached to the main point should logically pertain to it. If not, then the information belongs under a different main point. Let's look at an example of three main points:

General Purpose: To persuade

Specific Purpose: To motivate my classmates in English 101 to participate in a study abroad program.

Thesis: A semester-long study abroad experience produces lifelong benefits by teaching you about another culture, developing your language skills, and enhancing your future career prospects.

Main point #1: A study abroad experience allows you to acquire firsthand experience of another culture through classes, extra-curricular activities, and social connections.

Main point #2: You'll turbocharge your acquisition of second language skills through an immersive experience living with a family.

Main point #3: A study abroad experience on your resume shows that you have acquired the kind of language and cultural skills that appeal to employers in many sectors.

Notice that each main point is expressed in a complete sentence, not merely #1 Culture; #2 Language; #3 Career. One-word signals are useless as a cue for speaking. Additionally, students are often tempted to write main points as directions to themselves, "Talk about the health department" or "Mention the solution." This isn't helpful for you, either. Better: "The health department provides many services for low-income residents" says something we can all understand.

Finally, the important thing to understand about speechwriting is that listeners have limits as to how many categories of information they can keep in mind. The number of main points that can be addressed in any speech is determined by the time allotted for a speech but is also affected by the fact that speeches are limited in their ability to convey substantial amounts of information. For a speech of five to seven minutes, three or four main points are usually enough. More than that would be difficult to manage—for both speaker and audience.

Sub-Points

Obviously, creating your main points isn't the end of the story. Each main point requires additional information or reinforcement. We call these sub-points. Sub-points provide explanation, detail, elaboration, and/or supporting evidence. Consider main point #1 in the previous example, now with sub-points:

Main point #1: A study abroad experience allows you to acquire firsthand experience of another culture through classes, extra-curricular activities, and social connections.

Sub-point A: How a country thinks about education is a window into the life of that culture. While on a study abroad program, you'll typically take 3-5 classes at foreign universities, usually with local professors. This not only provides new learning, but it opens your eyes to different modes of education.

Sub-point B: Learning about a culture isn't limited to the classroom. Study abroad programs include many extra-curricular activities that introduce you to art, food, music, sports, and other everyday elements of a country's culture. These vary depending on the program and there's something for everyone! The website gooverseas.com provides information on hundreds of programs.

Sub-point C: The opportunity to socialize with peers in other countries is one of most attractive elements of studying abroad. You may form friendships that will last a lifetime. "I have made valuable connections in a country I hope to return to someday" according to a blog post by Rachel Smith, a student at the University of Kansas.[1]

Notice that each of these sub-points pertains to the main point. The sub-points contribute to the main point by providing explanation, detail, elaboration, and/or supporting evidence. Now imagine you had a fourth sub-point:

Sub-point D: And while doing all that socializing, you'll really improve your language skills.

1. https://blog-college.ku.edu/tag/study-abroad-stories/

Does that sub-point belong to main point #1? Or should it be grouped with main point#2 or main point #3?

Connective Statements

Connectives or "connective statements" are broad terms that encompass several types of statements or phrases. They are designed to help "connect" parts of your speech to make it easier for audience members to follow. Connectives are tools that add to the planned redundancy, and they are methods for helping the audience listen, retain information, and follow your structure. In fact, it's one thing to have a well-organized speech. It's another for the audience to be able to "consume" or understand that organization.

Connectives in general perform several functions:

- Remind the audience of what has come before
- Remind the audience of the central focus or purpose of the speech
- Forecast what is coming next
- Help the audience have a sense of context in the speech—where are we?
- Explain the logical connection between the previous main idea(s) and next one or previous sub-points and the next one
- Explain your own mental processes in arranging the material as you have
- Keep the audience's attention through repetition and a sense of movement

Connective statement can include "internal summaries," "internal previews" "signposts" and "bridging or transition statements." Each of these helps connect the main ideas of your speech for the audience, but they have different emphases and are useful for different types of speeches.

Types of connectives and examples

Internal summaries emphasize what has come before and remind the audience of what has been covered.

> "So far I have shown how the designers of King Tut's burial tomb used the antechamber to scare away intruders and the second chamber to prepare royal visitors for the experience of seeing the sarcophagus."

Internal previews let your audience know what is coming up next in the speech and what to expect regarding the content of your speech.

> "In this next part of the presentation I will share with you what the truly secret and valuable part of the King Tut's pyramid: his burial chamber and the treasury."

Signposts emphasize physical movement through the speech content and let the audience know exactly where they are. Signposting can be as simple as "First," "Next," "Lastly" or numbers such as "First," "Second," Third," and "Fourth." Signposting is meant to be a brief way to let your audience know where they are in the speech. It may help to think of these like the mile markers you see along interstates that tell you where you're and how many more miles you will travel until you reach your destination.

> "The second aspect of baking chocolate chip cookies is to combine your ingredients in the recommended way."

Bridging or transition statements emphasize moving the audience psychologically to the next step.

"I have mentioned two huge disadvantages to students who don't have extracurricular music programs. Let me ask: Is that what we want for our students? If not, what can we do about it?"

They can also serve to connect seemingly disconnected (but related) material, most commonly between your main points.

"After looking at how the Cherokee Indians of the North Georgia mountain region were politically important until the 1840s and the Trail of Tears, we can compare their experience with that of the Indians of Central Georgia who did not assimilate in the same way as the Cherokee."

At a minimum, a bridge or transition statement is saying, "Now that we have looked at (talked about, etc.) X, let's look at Y."
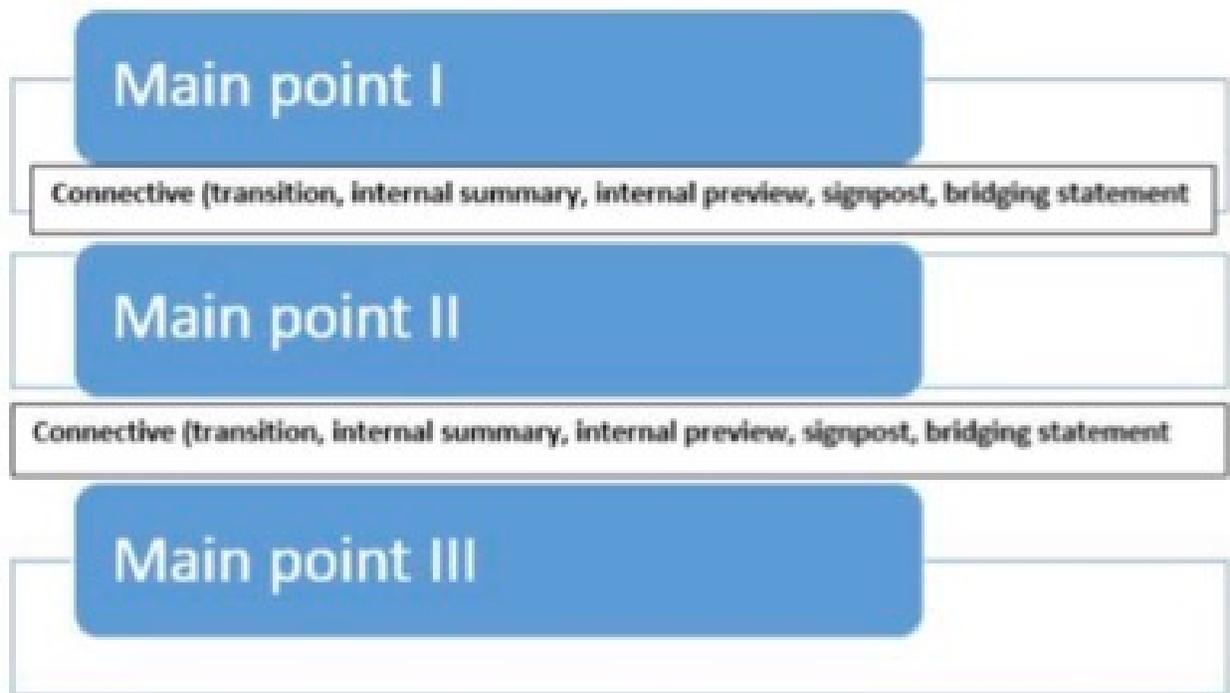
Connectors fit between each main point

There's no standard format for connectives. However, there are a few pieces of advice to keep in mind about them:

First, connectives are for connecting main points. They are *not* for providing evidence, statistics, stories, examples, or new factual information for the supporting points of the main ideas of the speech.

Second, while connectives in essay writing can be relatively short—a word or phrase, in public speaking, connectives need to be a sentence or two. When you first start preparing and practicing connectives, you may feel that you're being too obvious with them, and they are "clunky." Some connectives may seem to be hitting the audience over the head with them like a hammer. While it's possible to overdo connectives, it's less likely than you would think. The audience will appreciate them, and as you listen to your classmates' speeches, you'll become aware of when they are present and when they are absent.

Lack of connectives results in hard-to-follow speeches where the information seems to come up unexpectedly or the speaker seems to jump to something new without warning or clarification.

Finally, you'll also want to vary your connectives and not use the same one all the time. Remember that there are several types of connectives.

Patterns of Organization

At the beginning of this chapter, you read the analogy that a speech structure is like a house and organization is like the arrangement of the rooms. So far, we have talked about structure. The introduction, body, main point, sub-point, connectives—these are the house. But what about the arrangement of the rooms? How will you put your main points in a logical order?

There are some standard ways of organizing the body of a speech. These are called "patterns of organization." In each of the examples below, you'll see how the specific purpose gives shape to the organization of the speech and how each one exemplifies one of the six main organizational patterns.

Please note that these are simple, basic outlines for example purposes. The actual content of the speech outline or manuscript will be much further developed.

Chronological Pattern

Specific Purpose: To describe to my classmates the four stages of rehabilitation in addiction recovery.

Main Points:

1. The first stage is acknowledging the problem and entering treatment.
2. The second stage is early abstinence, a difficult period in the rehabilitation facility.
3. The third stage is maintaining abstinence after release from the rehab facility.
4. The fourth stage is advanced recovery after a period of several years.

The example above uses what is termed the **chronological pattern of organization**. Chronological always refers to time order. Organizing your main points chronologically is usually appropriate for process speeches (how-to speeches) or for informational speeches that emphasize how something developed from beginning to end. Since the specific purpose in the example above is about stages, it's necessary to put the four stages in the right order. It would make no sense to put the fourth stage second and the third stage first.

Chronological time can be long or short. If you were giving a speech about the history of the Civil Rights Movement, that period would cover several decades; if you were giving a speech about the process of changing the oil in a car, that process takes less than an hour. Whether the time is long or short, it's best to avoid a simple, chronological list of steps or facts. A better strategy is to put the information into three to five groups so that the audience has a framework. It would be easy in the case of the Civil Rights Movement to list the many events that happened over more than two decades, but that could be overwhelming for the audience. Instead, your chronological "grouping" might be:

1. The movement saw African Americans struggling for legal recognition before the landmark 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision.
2. The movement was galvanized and motivated by the 1955-1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott.
3. The movement saw its goals met in the Civil Rights Act of 1965.

In this way, the chronological organization isn't an overwhelming list of events. It focuses the audience on three events that pushed the Civil Rights movement forward.

Spatial Pattern

You can see that chronological is a highly-used organizational structure, since one of the ways our minds work is through time-orientation—past, present, future. Another common thought process is movement in space or direction, which is called the **spatial pattern**. For example:

> Specific Purpose: To explain to my classmates the three regional cooking styles of Italy.

1. In the mountainous region of the North, the food emphasizes cheese and meat.
2. In the middle region of Tuscany, the cuisine emphasizes grains and olives.
3. In the southern region and Sicily, the diet is based on fish and seafood.

In this example, the content is moving from northern to southern Italy, as the word "regional" would indicate. For a more localized example:

> Specific Purpose: To explain to my classmates the layout of the White House.

1. The East Wing includes the entrance ways and offices for the First Lady.
2. The most well-known part of the White House is the West Wing.
3. The residential part of the White House is on the second floor. (The emphasis here is the movement a tour would go through.)

For an even more localized example:

> Specific Purpose: To describe to my Anatomy and Physiology class the three layers of the human skin.

1. The outer layer is the epidermis, which is the outermost barrier of protection.
2. The second layer beneath is the dermis.
3. The third layer closest to the bone is the hypodermis, made of fat and connective tissue.

Topical / Parts of the Whole Pattern

The topical organizational pattern is probably the most all-purpose, in that many speech topics could use it. Many subjects will have main points that naturally divide into "types of," "kinds of," "sorts of," or "categories of." Other subjects naturally divide into "parts of the whole." However, as mentioned previously, you want to keep your categories simple, clear, distinct, and at five or fewer.

> Specific Purpose: To explain to my first-year students the concept of SMART goals.

1. SMART goals are specific and clear.
2. SMART goals are measurable.
3. SMART goals are attainable or achievable.
4. SMART goals are relevant and worth doing.

5. SMART goals are time-bound and doable within a time period.

    Specific Purpose: To explain the four characteristics of quality diamonds.

    1. Valuable diamonds have the characteristic of cut.
    2. Valuable diamonds have the characteristic of carat.
    3. Valuable diamonds have the characteristic of color.
    4. Valuable diamonds have the characteristic of clarity.

    Specific Purpose: To describe to my audience the four main chambers of a human heart.

    1. The first chamber in the blood flow is the right atrium.
    2. The second chamber in the blood flow is the right ventricle.
    3. The third chamber in the blood flow is the left atrium.
    4. The fourth chamber in the blood flow and then out to the body is the left ventricle.

At this point in discussing organizational patterns and looking at these examples, two points should be made about them and about speech organization in general:

First, you might look at the example about the chambers of the heart and say, "But couldn't that be chronological, too, since that's the order of the blood flow procedure?" Yes, it could. There will be times when a specific purpose could work with two different organizational patterns. In this case, it's just a matter of emphasis. This speech emphasizes the anatomy of the heart, and the organization is "parts of the whole." If the speech's specific purpose were "To explain to my classmates the flow of blood through the chambers of the heart," the organizational pattern would emphasize chronological, altering the pattern.

Another principle of organization to think about when using topical organization is "climax" organization. That means putting your strongest argument or most important point last when applicable. For example:

    Specific purpose: To defend before my classmates the proposition that capital punishment should be abolished in the United States.

    1. Capital punishment does not save money for the justice system.
    2. Capital punishment does not deter crime in the United States historically.
    3. Capital punishment has resulted in many unjust executions.

In most people's minds, "unjust executions" is a bigger reason to end a practice than the cost, since an unjust execution means the loss of an innocent life and a violation of our principles. If you believe Main Point III is the strongest argument of the three, putting it last builds up to a climax.

Cause & Effect Pattern

If the specific purpose mentions words such as "causes," "origins," "roots of," "foundations," "basis," "grounds," or "source," it's a causal order; if it mentions words such as "effects," "results," "outcomes," "consequences," or "products," it's effect order. If it mentions both, it would of course be cause/effect order. This example shows a cause/effect pattern:

    Specific Purpose: To explain to my classmates the causes and effects of schizophrenia.

1. Schizophrenia has genetic, social, and environmental causes.
2. Schizophrenia has educational, relational, and medical effects.

Problem-Solution Pattern

The principle behind the problem-solution pattern is that if you explain a problem to an audience, you shouldn't leave them hanging without solutions. Problems are discussed for understanding *and* to do something about them. This is why the problem-solution pattern is often used for speeches that have the objective of persuading an audience to take action.

When you want to persuade someone to act, the first reason is usually that something needs fixing. Let's say you want the members of the school board to provide more funds for music at the three local high schools in your county. What is missing because music or arts are not funded? What is the *problem*?

> Specific Purpose: To persuade the members of the school board to take action to support the music program at the school.

1. There's a problem with eliminating extracurricular music programs in high schools.
    1. Students who don't have extracurricular music in their lives have lower SAT scores.
    2. Schools that don't have extracurricular music programs have more gang violence and juvenile delinquency.
2. The solution is to provide $200,000 in the budget to sustain extracurricular music in our high schools.
    1. $120,000 would go to bands.
    2. $80,000 would go to choral programs.

Of course, this is a simple outline, and you would need to provide evidence to support the arguments, but it shows how the problem-solution pattern works.

Psychologically, it makes more sense to use problem-solution rather than solution-problem. The audience will be more motivated to listen if you address needs, deficiencies, or problems in their lives rather than giving them solutions first.

Problem-Cause-Solution Pattern

A variation of the problem-solution pattern, and one that sometimes requires more in-depth exploration of an issue, is the "problem-cause-solution" pattern. If you were giving a speech on the future extinction of certain animal species, it would be insufficient to just explain that numbers of species are about to become extinct. Your second point would logically have to explain the cause behind this happening. Is it due to climate change, some type of pollution, encroachment on habitats, disease, or some other reason? In many cases, you can't really solve a problem without first identifying what caused the problem.

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that the age to obtain a driver's license in the state of Georgia should be raised to 18.

1. There's a problem in this country with young drivers getting into serious automobile accidents leading to many preventable deaths.

2. One of the primary causes of this is younger drivers' inability to remain focused and make good decisions due to incomplete brain development.
3. One solution that will help reduce the number of young drivers involved in accidents would be to raise the age for obtaining a driver's license to 18.

Some Additional Principles of Speech Organization

It's possible that you may use more than one of these organizational patterns within a single speech. You should also note that in all the examples to this point (which have been kept simple for the purpose of explanation), each main point is relatively equal in emphasis; therefore, the time spent on each should be equal as well. You would not want your first main point to be 30 seconds long, the second one to be 90 seconds, and the third 3 minutes. For example:

Specific Purpose: To explain to my classmates the rules of baseball.

1. Baseball has rules about equipment.
2. Baseball has rules about the numbers of players.
3. Baseball has rules about play.

Main Point #2 isn't really equal in size to the other two. There's a great deal you could say about equipment and even more about the rules of playing baseball, but the number of players would take you about ten seconds to say. If Main Point #2 were "Baseball has rules about the positions on the field," that would make more sense and be closer in level of importance to the other two.

Conclusion

The organization of your speech may not be the most interesting part to think about, but without it, great ideas will seem jumbled and confusing to your audience. Even more, good connectives will ensure your audience can follow you and understand the logical connections you're making with your main ideas. Finally, because your audience will understand you better and perceive you as organized, you'll gain more credibility as a speaker if you're organized. A side benefit to learning to be an organized public speaker is that your writing skills will improve, specifically your organization and sentence structure.

Case study

Roberto is thinking about giving an informative speech on the status of HIV-AIDS currently in the U.S. He has different ideas about how to approach the speech. Here are his four main thoughts:

- pharmaceutical companies making drugs available in the developing world
- changes in attitudes toward HIV-AIDS and HIV-AIDS patients over the last three decades
- how HIV affects the body of a patient
- major breakthroughs in HIV-AIDS treatment

Assuming all these subjects would be researchable and appropriate for the audience, write specific purpose statements for each. What organizational patterns would he probably use for each specific purpose?

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- Connectives

10. Introductions and Conclusions

Starting and Ending Your Speech

In this chapter . . .

One of the most fundamental components of any public speech is having a strong introduction and conclusion. Your introduction gives the audience their first impression of you. This is your best chance to build credibility. You need to grab the audience's attention, introduce your topic, and preview how the speech will unfold. The conclusion needs to reiterate your main points and help the audience see how all your main points work together. Additionally, even if the audience got a bit lost or disengaged in the middle, a strong conclusion will leave them with an overall positive reaction to your speech.

Can you imagine how strange a speech would sound without an introduction? Or how jarring it would be if, after making a point, a speaker just walked away from the lectern and sat down? You would be confused, and the takeaway from that speech—even if the content were good—would likely be, "I couldn't follow" or "That was a weird speech."

This is just one of the reasons all speeches need introductions and conclusions. Introductions and conclusions serve to frame the speech and give it a clearly defined beginning and end. They help the audience to see what is to come in the speech, and then let them mentally prepare for the end. In doing this, introductions and conclusions provide a "preview/review" of your speech as a means to reiterate or re-emphasize to your audience what you are talking about.

Since speeches are auditory and live, you need to make sure the audience remembers what you are saying. One of the primary functions of an introduction is to preview what you will be covering in your speech, and one of the main roles of the conclusion is to review what you have covered. It may seem like you are repeating yourself and saying the same things over and over, but that repetition ensures that your audience understands and retains what you are saying.

The roles that introductions and conclusions fulfill are numerous, and, when done correctly, can make your speech stronger. The general rule is that the introduction and conclusion should each be about 10-15% of your total speech, leaving 80% for the body section. Let's say that your informative speech has a time limit of 5-7 minutes: if we average that out to 6 minutes that gives you 360 seconds. Ten to 15 percent means that the introduction and conclusion should each be no more than 1-1/2 minutes.

In the following sections, we will discuss specifically what should be included in the introduction and conclusion and offer several options for accomplishing each.

The Five Elements of an Introduction

Intro Element 1: Attention-Getter

The first major purpose of an introduction is to gain your audience's attention and make them interested in what you have to say. First impressions matter. When we meet someone for the first time, it can be only a matter of seconds before we find ourselves interested or disinterested in the person. The equivalent in speechwriting of "first impression" is what is called an **attention-getter.** This is a statement or question that piques the audience's interest in what you have to say. There are several strategies you can choose from—verbal and non-verbal—to get the audience's attention. Below are described the most popular types of attention-getters: quotations, questions, stories, humor, surprise, stories, and references. As well as non-verbal attention-getters involving images, sounds, or objects.

Quotation

Quotations are a great way to start a speech. That's why they are used so often as a strategy. Here's an example that might be used in the opening of a commencement address:

> The late actor, fashion icon, and social activist Audrey Hepburn once noted that, "Nothing is impossible. The word itself says 'I'm possible'!"

If you use a quotation as your attention getter, be sure to give the source first (as in this example) so that it isn't mistaken as your own wording.

Question

We often hear speakers begin a speech with a question for the audience. As easy as it sounds, beginning with a question is somewhat tricky. You must decide if you are asking a question because you want a response from the audience, or, on the other hand, if you are asking a question that you will answer, or that will create a dramatic effect. We call these **rhetorical questions**.

The dangers with a direct question are many. There may be an awkward pause after your question because the audience doesn't know if you actually want an answer. Or they don't know how you want the response—a verbal response or a gesture such as a raised hand. Another reason direct questions are delicate is this obvious point: what you are going to do with the response. For example, imagine you have written a speech about the importance of forgiving student debt, and you begin your speech with this question for the audience: "How many of you have more than $10,000 in student loan debt?" You would be creating a problem for yourself if just a few people in the audience raised their hand. If you want to use a direct question, follow these rules:

- make it clear to the audience the means of response. "By a show of hands, how many of you have more than $10,000 in student loan debt?"
- prepare in advance how you will acknowledge different responses.

Contrary to a direct question, you could use a rhetorical question—a question to which no actual reply is expected. For example, a speaker talking about the history of Mother's Day could start by asking the audience, "Do you remember the

last time you told your mom you loved her?" In this case, the speaker does not expect the audience to shout out an answer, but rather to think about the question as the speech goes on.

Finally, when asking a rhetorical question, don't pause after it, or the audience will get distracted wondering if you're waiting for a response. Jump right into your speech:

> "How many of you have more than $10,000 in student loan debt? If you're like 78% of college seniors, your answer is probably a yes."

Humor

Humor is an amazing tool when used properly but it's a double-edged sword. If you don't wield the sword carefully, you can turn your audience against you very quickly.

When using humor, you really need to know your audience and understand what they will find humorous. One of the biggest mistakes a speaker can make is to use some form of humor that the audience either doesn't find funny or, worse, finds offensive. We always recommend that you test out humor of any kind on a sample of potential audience members prior to actually using it during a speech. If you do use a typical narrative "joke," don't say it happened to you. Anyone who heard the joke before will think you are less than truthful!

As with other attention-getting devices, you need to make sure your humor is relevant to your topic, as one of the biggest mistakes some novices make when using humor is to add humor that really doesn't support the overall goal of the speech. Therefore, when looking for humorous attention getters, you want to make sure that the humor isn't going to be offensive to your audience and relevant to your speech.

Surprise

Another way to start your speech is to surprise your audience with information that will be surprising or startling to your audience. Often, startling statements come in the form of statistics and strange facts. For example, if you're giving a speech about oil conservation, you could start by saying,

> "A Boeing 747 airliner holds 57,285 gallons of fuel."

That's a surprising or startling fact. Another version of the surprise form of an attention-getter is to offer a strange fact. For example, you could start a speech on the gambling industry by saying, "There are no clocks in any casinos in Las Vegas." You could start a speech on the Harlem Globetrotters by saying, "In 2000, Pope John Paul II became the most famous honorary member of the Harlem Globetrotters." (These examples come from a great website for strange facts (http://www. strangefacts.com).

Although such statements are fun, it's important to use them ethically. First, make sure that your startling statement is factual. The Internet is full of startling statements and claims that are simply not factual, so when you find a statement that you'd like to use, you have an ethical duty to ascertain its truth before you use it and to provide a reliable citation. Second, make sure that your startling statement is relevant to your speech and not just thrown in for shock value. We've all heard startling claims made in the media that are clearly made for purposes of shock or fear mongering, such as "Do you know what common household appliance could kill you? Film at 11:00." As speakers, we have an ethical obligation to avoid playing on people's emotions in this way.

Stories

Another common type of attention-getter is an account or story of an interesting or humorous event. Notice the emphasis here is on the word "brief." A common mistake speakers make when telling an anecdote is to make the anecdote too long. An example of an anecdote used in a speech about the pervasiveness of technology might look something like this:

> "In July 2009, a high school student named Miranda Becker was walking along a main boulevard near her home on Staten Island, New York, typing in a message on her cell phone. Not paying attention to the world around her, she took a step and fell right into an open maintenance hole."

Notice that the anecdote is short and has a clear point. From here the speaker can begin to make their point about how technology is controlling our lives.

A personal story is another option here. This is a story about yourself or someone you know that is relevant to your topic. For example, if you had a gastric bypass surgery and you wanted to give an informative speech about the procedure, you could introduce your speech in this way:

> "In the fall of 2015, I decided that it was time that I took my life into my own hands. After suffering for years with the disease of obesity, I decided to take a leap of faith and get a gastric bypass in an attempt to finally beat the disease."

Two primary issues that you should be aware of often arise with using stories as attention getters. First, you shouldn't let your story go on for too long. If you are going to use a story to begin your speech, you need to think of it more in terms of summarizing the story rather than recounting it in its entirety. The second issue with using stories as attention getters is that the story must in some way relate to your speech. If you begin your speech by recounting the events in "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," your speech will in some way need to address such topics as finding balance or coming to a compromise. If your story doesn't relate to your topic, you will confuse your audience and they may spend the remainder of your speech trying to figure out the connection rather than listening to what you have to say.

References

You can catch the attention of the audience by referencing information of special interest. This includes references to the audience itself, and their interests. It can also mean references to current events or events in the past.

Your audience is a factor of utmost importance when crafting your speech, so it makes sense that one approach to opening your speech is to make a direct reference to the audience. In this case, the speaker has a clear understanding of the audience and points out that there is something unique about the audience that should make them interested in the speech's content. Here's an example:

> "As students at State College, you and I know the importance of selecting a major that will benefit us in the future. In today's competitive world, we need to study a topic that will help us be desirable to employers and provide us with lucrative and fulfilling careers. That's why I want you all to consider majoring in communication."

Referring to a current news event that relates to your topic is often an effective way to capture attention, as it immediately makes the audience aware of how relevant the topic is in today's world. For example, consider this attention getter for a persuasive speech on frivolous lawsuits:

> "On January 10 of this year, two prisoners escaped from a Pueblo, Colorado, jail. During their escape, the duo

attempted to rappel from the roof of the jail using a makeshift ladder of bed sheets. During one prisoner's attempt to scale the building, he slipped, fell forty feet, and injured his back. After being quickly apprehended, he filed a lawsuit against the jail for making it too easy for him to escape."

In this case, the speaker is highlighting a news event that illustrates what a frivolous lawsuit is, setting up the speech topic of a need for change in how such lawsuits are handled.

A variation of this kind of reference is to open your speech with a reference about something that happened in the past. For example, if you are giving a speech on the perception of modern music as crass or having no redeeming values, you could refer to Elvis Presley and his musical breakout in the 1950s as a way of making a comparison:

> "During the mid-1950s, Elvis Presley introduced the United States to a new genre of music: rock and roll. It was initially viewed as distasteful, and Presley was himself chastised for his gyrating dance moves and flashy style. Today he is revered as "The King of Rock 'n Roll." So, when we criticize modern artists for being flamboyant or over the top, we may be ridiculing some of the most important musical innovators we will know in our lifetimes."

In this example, the speaker is evoking the audience's knowledge of Elvis to raise awareness of similarities to current artists that may be viewed today as he was in the 1950s.

Non-Verbal Attention-Getters

The last variation of attention-getter discussed here is the non-verbal sort. You can get the audience interested in your speech by beginning with an image on a slide, music, sound, and even objects. As with all attention-getters, a non-verbal choice should be relevant to the topic of your speech and appropriate for your audience. The use of visual images and sounds shouldn't be used if they require a trigger warning or content advisory.

This list of attention-getting devices represents a thorough, but not necessarily exhaustive, range of ways that you can begin your speech. Again, as mentioned earlier, your selection of attention getter isn't only dependent on your audience, your topic, and the occasion, but also on your preferences and skills as a speaker. If you know that you are a bad storyteller, you might elect not to start your speech with a story. If you tend to tell jokes that no one laughs at, avoid starting your speech off with humor.

Intro Element 2: Establish Your Credibility

Whether you are informing, persuading, or entertaining an audience, one of the things they'll be expecting is that you know what you're talking about or that you have some special interest in the speech topic. To do this, you will need to convey to your audience, not only what you know, but *how* you know what you know about your topic.

Sometimes, this will be simple. If you're informing your audience how a baseball is thrown and you have played baseball since you were eight years old, that makes you a very credible source. In your speech, you can say something like this:

> "Having played baseball for over ten years, including two years as the starting pitcher on my high school's varsity team, I can tell you about the ways that pitchers throw different kind of balls in a baseball game."

In another example, if you were trying to convince your audience to join Big Brothers Big Sisters and you have been volunteering for years, you could say:

> "I've been serving with Big Brothers Big Sisters for the last two years, and I can tell you that the experience is very rewarding."

However, sometimes you will be speaking on a topic with which you have no experience. In these cases, use your interest in the subject as your credibility. For example, imagine you are planning a speech on the history of how red, yellow, and green traffic signals came to be used in the United States. You chose that topic because you plan to major in Urban Planning. In this case you might say something like:

> "As someone who has always been interested in the history of transportation, and as a future Urban Studies major, I will share with you what I've been learning about the invention of traffic signals in America."

It is around the credibility statement that you can usually find the moment to introduce yourself:

> "Hi, I'm Josh Cohen, a sophomore studying Psychology here at North State University. I've been serving with Big Brothers Big Sisters for the last two years, and I can tell you that the experience is very rewarding."

Establishing credibility as a speaker has a broader meaning, explained in depth in the chapter "Ethics in Public Speaking."

Intro Element 3: Establish Rapport

Credibility is about establishing the basis of your knowledge, so that the audience can trust in the reliability of *what you say*. Rapport is about establishing a connection with the audience, so that the audience can trust *who you are.*

Rapport means the relationship or connection you make with your audience. To make a good connection, you'll need to convey to your audience that you understand their interests, share them, and have a speech that will benefit them. Here is an example from an informative speech on the poet Lord Byron:

> "You may be asking yourselves why you need to know about Lord Byron. If you take Humanities 120 as I did last semester, you'll be discussing his life and works. After listening to my speech today, you'll have a good basis for better learning in that course."

In this example, the speaker connects to the audience with a shared interest and conveyed in these sentences the idea that the speaker has the best interests of the audience in mind by giving them information that would benefit them in a future course they might take.

The way that a speaker establishes connection with the audience is often by leaning in on the demographic of group affiliation.

> "As college students, we all know the challenge of finding time to get our homework done."

Intro Element 4: Preview Purpose & Central Idea

The fourth essential element of an introduction is to reveal the purpose and thesis of your speech to your audience. Have you ever come away after a speech and had no idea what the speech was about (purpose)? Have you ever sat through a speech wondering what the point was (central idea)? An introduction should provide this information from the beginning, so that the audience doesn't have to figure it out. (If you're still not certain what purpose and thesis are, now is good time to review this chapter).

Whether you're writing a speech or drafting an essay, previewing is essential. Like a sign on a highway that tells. you what's ahead, a preview is a succinct statement that reveals the content to come. The operative word here is "succinct." A preview statement for a short speech should be no more than two or three sentences. Consider the following example:

> "In my speech today, I'm going to paint a profile of Abraham Lincoln, a man who overcame great adversity to become the President of the United States. During his time in office, he faced increasing opposition from conservative voices in government, as well as some dissension among his own party, all while being thrust into a war he didn't want."

Notice that this preview provides the purpose of this informative speech and its central idea of struggle. While it's constructed from the specific purpose statement and central thesis, it presents them more smoothly, less awkwardly. Here is how purpose and thesis statements are smoothly combined in a preview:

Your Outline Draft	Your final speech manuscript
Specific Purpose: My purpose is to inform my audience about the life of Abraham Lincoln.	In my speech, today, I'm going to paint a profile of Abraham Lincoln,
Central Idea/Thesis: Abraham Lincoln was a great president even though he was faced with great adversity.	a man who overcame great adversity to become the President of the United States. During his time in office, he faced increasing opposition from conservative voices in government, as well as some dissension among his own party, all while being thrust into a war he didn't want."

Intro Element 5: Preview Your Main Points

Just like previewing your topic, previewing your main points helps your audience know what to expect throughout the course of your speech and prepares them to listen.

Your preview of the main points should be clear and easy to follow so that there is no question in your audience's minds about what they are. Be succinct and simple: "Today, in my discussion of Abraham Lincoln's life, I will look at his birth, his role a president, and his assassination." If you want to be extra sure the audiences hears these, you can always enumerate your main points by using signposts (first, second, third, and so on): "In discussing how to make chocolate chip cookies, first we will cover what ingredients you need, second we will talk about how to mix them, and third we will look at baking them."

Tips for Introductions

Together, these five elements of introduction prepare your audience by getting them interested in your speech (#1 attention-getter); conveying your knowledge (#2 credibility); conveying your good will (#3 rapport); letting them what you'll be talking about and why (#4 preview topic and thesis); and finally, that to expect in the body of the speech (#5 preview of main points). Including all five elements starts your speech off on solid ground. Here are some additional tips:

- Writers often find it best to write an introduction after the other parts of the speech are drafted.
- When selecting an attention-getting device, you want to make sure that the option you choose is appropriate to

your audience and relevant to your topic.

- Avoid starting a speech by saying your name. Instead choose a good attention-getter and put your self-introduction after it.
- You cannot "wing it" on an introduction. It needs to be carefully planned. Even if you are speaking extemporaneously, consider writing out the entire introduction.
- Avoid saying the specific purpose statement, especially as first words. Instead, shape your specific purpose and thesis statement into a smooth whole.
- When speaking your introduction, avoid these common problems:

  ◦ don't begin to talk as you approach the platform or lectern; instead, it's preferable to reach your destination, pause, smile, and then begin;
  ◦ don't just read your introduction from your notes; instead, it's vital to establish eye contact in the introduction, so knowing it very well is important;
  ◦ don't talk too fast; instead, go a little slower at the beginning of your speech and speak clearly. This will let your audience get used to your voice.

Here are two examples of a complete introduction, containing all five elements:

Example #1: "My parents knew that something was really wrong when my mom received a call from my home economics teacher saying that she needed to get to the school immediately and pick me up. This was all because of an allergy, something that everyone in this room is either vaguely or extremely familiar with. Hi, I'm Alison. I'm a physician assistant from our Student Health Center and an allergy sufferer. Allergies affect a large number of people, and three very common allergies include pet and animal allergies, seasonal allergies, and food allergies. All three of these allergies take control over certain areas of my life, as all three types affect me, starting when I was just a kid and continuing today. Because of this, I have done extensive research on the subject, and would like to share some of what I've learned with all of you today. Whether you just finished your first year of college, you are a new parent, or you have kids that are grown and out of the house, allergies will most likely affect everyone in this room at some point. So, it will benefit you all to know more about them, specifically the three most common sources of allergies and the most recent approaches to treating them."

Example #2 "When winter is approaching and the days are getting darker and shorter, do you feel a dramatic reduction in energy, or do you sleep longer than usual during the fall or winter months? If you answered "yes" to either of these questions, you may be one of the millions of people who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD. For most people, these problems don't cause great suffering in their life, but for an estimated six percent of the United States population these problems can result in major suffering. Hi, I'm Derrick and as a student in the registered nursing program here at State College, I became interested in SAD after learning more about it. I want to share this information with all of you in case you recognize some of these symptoms in yourself or someone you love. In order to fully understand SAD, it's important to look at the medical definition of SAD, the symptoms of this disorder, and the measures that are commonly used to ease symptoms."

The Three Elements of a Conclusion

Like an introduction, the conclusion has specific elements that you must incorporate in order to make it as strong as possible. Given the nature of these elements and what they do, these should be incorporated into your conclusion in the order they are presented below.

Conclusion Element 1: Signal the End

The first thing a good conclusion should do is to signal the end of a speech. You may be thinking that telling an audience that you're about to stop speaking is a "no brainer," but many speakers really don't prepare their audience for the end. When a speaker just suddenly stops speaking, the audience is left confused and disappointed. Instead, you want to make sure that audiences are left knowledgeable and satisfied with your speech. In a way, it gives them time to begin mentally organizing and cataloging all the points you have made for further consideration later.

The easiest way to signal that it's the end of your speech is to begin your conclusion with the words, "In conclusion." Similarly, "In summary" or "To conclude" work just as well.

Conclusion Element 2: Restate Main Points

In the introduction of a speech, you delivered a preview of your main points; now in the conclusion you will deliver a review. One of the biggest differences between written and oral communication is the necessity of repetition in oral communication (the technique of "planned redundancy" again). When you preview your main points in the introduction, effectively make transitions to your main points during the body of the speech, and finally, review the main points in the conclusion, you increase the likelihood that the audience will understand and retain your main points after the speech is over.

Because you are trying to remind the audience of your main points, you want to be sure *not to bring up any new material or ideas*. For example, if you said, "There are several other issues related to this topic, such as…but I don't have time for them," that would just make the audience confused. Or, if you were giving a persuasive speech on wind energy, and you ended with "Wind energy is the energy of the future, but there are still a few problems with it, such as noise and killing lots of birds," then you are bringing up an argument that should have been dealt with in the body of the speech.

As you progress as a public speaker, you will want to learn to rephrase your summary statement so that it doesn't sound like an exact repeat of the preview. For example, if your preview was:

> "The three arguments in favor of medical marijuana that I will present are that it would make necessary treatments available to all, it would cut down on the costs to law enforcement, and it would bring revenue to state budgets."

Your summary might be:

> "In the minutes we've had together, I have shown you that approving medical marijuana in our state will greatly help persons with a variety of chronic and severe conditions. Also, funds spent on law enforcement to find and convict legitimate marijuana users would go down as revenues from medical marijuana to the state budget would go up."

Conclusion Element 3: Clinchers

The third element of your conclusion is the clincher. This is something memorable with which to conclude your speech. The clincher is sometimes referred to as a **concluding device**. These are the very last words you will say in your speech, so you need to make them count. It will make your speech more memorable.

In many ways the clincher is like the inverse of the attention getter. You want to start the speech off with something strong, and you want to end the speech with something strong.

To that end, like what we discussed above with attention getters, there are several common strategies you can use to make your clincher strong and memorable: quotation, question, call to action, visualizing the future, refer back to the introduction, or appeal to audience self-interest.

Quotation

As in starting a speech with a quotation, ending the speech with one allows you to summarize your main point or provoke thought.

> I'll leave you with these inspirational words by Eleanor Roosevelt: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

Some quotations will inspire your audience to action:

> I urge you to sponsor a child in a developing country. Remember the words by Forest Witcraft, who said, "A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child."

In this case, the quotation leaves the audience with the message that monetary sacrifices are worth making.

Question

Another way you can end a speech is to ask a rhetorical question that forces the audience to ponder an idea. Maybe you are giving a speech on the importance of the environment, so you end the speech by saying, "Think about your children's future. What kind of world do you want them raised in? A world that is clean, vibrant, and beautiful—or one that is filled with smog, pollution, filth, and disease?" Notice that you aren't asking the audience to answer the question verbally or nonverbally, so it's a rhetorical question.

Call to Action

Calls to action are used specifically in persuasive speeches. It is something you want the audience to do, either immediately or in the future. If a speaker wants to see a new traffic light placed at a dangerous intersection, the clincher would be to ask all the audience members to sign a petition right then and there. For a speech about buying an electric vehicle, the clincher would ask the audience to keep in mind an electric vehicle the "next time they buy a car."

Another kind of call to action takes the form of a challenge. In a speech on the necessity of fundraising, a speaker could conclude by challenging the audience to raise 10 percent more than their original projections. In a speech on eating more vegetables, you could challenge your audience to increase their current intake of vegetables by two portions daily. In both these challenges, audience members are being asked to go out of their way to do something different that involves effort on their part.

Visualizing the Future

The purpose of a conclusion that refers to the future is to help your audience imagine the future you believe can occur. If you are giving a speech on the development of video games for learning, you could conclude by depicting the classroom of the future where video games are perceived as true learning tools. More often, speakers use visualization of the future to depict how society or how individual listeners' lives would be different if the audience accepts and acts on the speaker's main idea. For example, if a speaker proposes that a solution to illiteracy is hiring more reading specialists in public schools, the speaker could ask their audience to imagine a world without illiteracy.

Refer Back to Introduction

This method provides a good sense of closure to the speech. If you started the speech with a startling statistic or fact, such as "Last year, according to the official website of the American Humane Society, four million pets were euthanized in shelters in the United States," in the end you could say, "Remember that shocking number of four million euthanized pets? With your donation of time or money to the Northwest Georgia Rescue Shelter, you can help lower that number in our region."

Appeal to Audience Self-Interest

The last concluding device involves a direct reference to your audience. This concluding device is used when a speaker attempts to answer the basic audience question, "What's in it for me?" (WIIFM). The goal of this concluding device is to spell out the direct benefits a behavior or thought change has for audience members. For example, a speaker talking about stress reduction techniques could have a clincher like this: "If you want to better a better immune system, better heart health, and more happiness, all it takes are following the techniques I talked about today."

Tips for Conclusions

In terms of the conclusions, be careful NOT to:

- signal the end multiple times. In other words, no "multiple conclusions."
- ramble: if you signal the end, then end your speech;
- talking as you leave the platform or lectern.
- indicating with facial expression or body language that you were not happy with the speech.

Some examples of conclusions:

Conclusion Example #1: "Anxiety is a complex emotion that afflicts people of all ages and social backgrounds and is experienced uniquely by each individual. We have seen that there are multiple symptoms, causes, and remedies, all of which can often be related either directly or indirectly to cognitive behaviors. While most people don't enjoy anxiety, it seems to be part of the universal human experience, so realize that you are not alone, but also realize that you are not powerless against it. With that said, the following quote, attributed to an anonymous source, could not be truer, 'Worry does not relieve tomorrow of its stress; it merely empties today of its strength.' "

Conclusion Example #2: "I believe you should adopt a rescue animal because it helps stop forms of animal cruelty, you can add a healthy companion to your home, and it's a relatively simple process that can save a life. Each and every one of you should go to your nearest animal shelter, which may include the Catoosa Citizens for Animal Care, the Humane Society of NWGA in Dalton, the Murray County Humane Society, or the multiple other shelters in the area to bring a new animal companion into your life. I'll leave you with a paraphrased quote from Deborah Jacobs's article "Westminster Dog Show Junkie" on Forbes.com: 'You may start out thinking that you are rescuing the animal, and ultimately find that the animal rescues you right back.' "

11. Ethics in Public Speaking

Being a Speaker the Audience Can Trust

In this chapter . . .

In this chapter, you will learn about the importance of ethics in both writing and delivering public speeches. The two major aspects of ethics in terms of public speaking are credibility and plagiarism. We define these issues and present strategies for increasing your credibility and preventing plagiarism, thus allowing you to deliver ethical and effective speeches.

In the fourth century BCE, the classic philosopher Aristotle took up the study of the public speaking practices of the ruling class in Athenian society. For two years he observed the men (it was only men) who spoke publicly in the assembly and the courts. In the end, he developed a theory about persuasiveness that has come down to us in history as a written treatise called Rhetoric. Among his many ideas was the identification of three elements essential to effective public speaking: *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*. In short, these mean credibility, reasonability, and emotion.

In this chapter, we will focus on what Aristotle called *ethos* and what we today would call **ethical public speaking**. Ethics refers to the branch of philosophy that involves a determination of what is right and moral. On a personal level, it's a standard of what you should and should not do in various situations. Although ethics are based on personal decisions and values, they are also influenced by factors outside of you.

Ethical Public Speaking

Ethical Public Speaking refers to those aspects of public speaking that pertain to the **personal character** of a public speaker and the quality of the content they present in a speech. It involves honest research and truthful presentation, good intentions towards the audience, and the integrity of ideas. We are ethical speakers when we write and present speeches that respect these values.

Honesty & Truthfulness

Ethical public speaking requires adherence to factual truth and respect for your audience. This means that you'll do your best to present factual, well-documented information designed to improve their lives and help them make informed, intelligent decisions with it. Honesty and truthfulness mean not telling lies and being thorough in representing the truth. When quotes are intentionally taken out of context to misrepresent the original author's intent or to deceive the audience this isn't honest research. You may have heard of the phrase "cherry-picking facts." That's when essential

information is ignored in order to promote one version of the facts. When this happens, honesty fails because the truth is skewed.

Good Will

A speaker is ethical when the intention of their communication is in the best interest of the audience. It means approaching the speech with honest purpose and wanting the best experience for the audience. If a speaker aims at manipulation, falsifies information, insults the audience, or simply has no intention of fulfilling the purpose of a speech, then they are not acting with good will.

Integrity

When public speakers research and write speeches, they are expected to do so in a way that respects the sources from which they gain their knowledge and ideas. Furthermore, it's the responsibility of the speaker to utilize factually accurate sources. When using sources known to be biased it's important to acknowledge this. This is no different from the way that any writers (students, journalists, researchers, and teachers) are expected to acknowledge the sources of ideas. When we fail to do that, it's called plagiarism. Plagiarism is unethical and will be discussed in depth below.

When a public speaker successfully conveys to their audience that they possess the qualities of integrity, good will, honesty, and truthfulness, then they have established **speaker credibility**. "Credibility" means the "quality that someone or something has that makes people believe or trust them" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary). The success of any speech depends on the speaker's establishing credibility with their audience. Simple forms of credibility statements form a part of the introduction of a speech, as described in the chapter [Introductions and Conclusions](). What follows in this chapter is a more in-depth discussion of this important quality.

Being a Credible Speaker

Speaker credibility is the positive attitude that the audience acquires toward a speaker. It's based on both reality and perception and leads the audience to believe that the speaker is honest and competent. An audience wants to be "in good hands" and they use their intelligence and powers of observation to judge whether they should put their trust in a speaker.

Credibility is a product of both the content of a speech and its delivery. It's related to what the audience hears in a speech as well as their perceptions, or even gut feelings, about the intangible characteristics of the speaker such as appearance, friendliness, sense of humor, likability, poise, and communication ability. It's hard to overestimate the importance of establishing speaker credibility.

Let's assume you're giving an informative speech and you have worked diligently on all the elements of ethical public speaking. The content of your speech is honest (based on fact) and truthful (not "cherry-picked"). You've been careful to cite your research sources properly. You have the good intention to educate your audience about the topic and you

will avoid manipulating, talking down to, or insulting your audience. You're a credible speaker, certainly. However, your challenge is this: how do you convey to the *audience* that you are credible? What are the signs of credibility that they will hear and see? What do you say or do as a speaker so that the audience knows they are "in good hands"—that they can trust in you and in what you have to say?

Because credibility is made up of many factors, both verbal and non-verbal, this isn't a simple question to answer. Establishing credibility is achieved in both speechwriting and delivery.

Establishing Credibility through Speechwriting

Some of the traits of credibility that a speaker conveys through speechwriting include:

Competence

A speaker is credible when they establish their competence on a topic. Competence means the speaker possesses the right level of expertise and sound knowledge about the speech topic, which they have acquired through research or firsthand experience. The speaker explains what the topic means to them and how they learned about it, with statements like: "I started studying the history of Ukraine last year and became fascinated by the people I met" or "I've always loved animals and have been volunteering at my local humane society for the past three years."

Organization

A speaker establishes credibility with a speech that is organized and allows the audience to follow. Good, structured speeches allow the audience to relax and trust the speaker. Organized speeches state and restate their thesis and main ideas, using redundancy to beneficial effect. They allow the audience to follow along by providing connections, summaries, and previews.

Relationship

A speaker becomes credible by establishing a relationship with the audience. The speaker shows that they have thought about who the audience is, both demographically and psychographically and may say something like "I'm happy to be speaking to a group of new voters." The speaker introduces themselves (if they haven't already been introduced by a host); and finds common ground with the audience and communicates these similarities. "Like you, I understand the challenges of being a student athlete . . . " or "I know it must be strange to hear a 21-year-old talk to you today about retirement, but I helped my grandparents for several years and . . ."

Citation

A speaker is credible to an audience when they make use of, and cite, credible sources. Quotations without

acknowledgments or mentioning sources by saying "I read on a website that . . . " will not gain the trust of audience. In speeches that involve research, that present information beyond your own experience, be sure to properly acknowledge your sources. Not doing so will sow the seeds of doubt in an audience and undermine their trust. In speechwriting, this is called "spoken citation" and will be discussed further on in this chapter.

The Importance of the Introduction

While credibility through speechwriting is established throughout the entire speech, pay close attention to the introduction. The introduction is crucial to establishing your credibility. The introduction is the part of the speech where you state your topic and tell the audience why you chose it, what expertise you bring to it, and what it means to you. It's also the part of the speech when you state your name and affiliation and establish the common interests you share with your audience.

Establishing Credibility through Delivery

Preparation

Speakers are credible to an audience when they show they are prepared. Unless it's an entirely impromptu speech occasion, the audience expects a speaker to be ready to speak. Unprepared, unrehearsed, messy, or incomplete notes, losing their place, going off on a tangent, going over allotted time—these are things that will diminish credibility.

A Proper Start

Pay attention to how you enter the speaking area and take stage. Body language speaks volumes. This is where "good will" shows itself. If you drag your feet to the stage and look as if giving a speech is the *last* thing you want to do, why would the audience trust you to care about them?

Pace and Volume

An audience feels that they can trust a speaker who takes the time to speak to them at a comfortable pace and with a volume they can hear.

Eye Contact

A speaker enhances their credibility with an audience through eye contact, establishing a relationship with the audience. An audience wants to be seen. Engaging with them physically helps them stay engaged with your content.

Body Language

Maintaining good posture throughout the speech gives the audience more confidence in you. This will also ensure better volume and eye contact. Using clear and intentional gestures emphasizes particular points and makes the speech visual more interesting.

A Proper Ending

As with a proper start, how you leave the stage is an element in the impression the audience will take away.

On Speaker Credibility—Other Considerations

Before you can encourage the audience's trust in you, you need to do some self-examination about the elements of credibility that you possess in general and in relation to the specific speech occasion. This is a necessary step. An honest assessment of your credibility will help you in two ways: First, it helps you strategize how you will convey your strengths to the audience, and second, it helps you avoid dishonest or exaggerated claims of credibility. Ask yourself: Is your speech content honest and truthful? Have you done your best to make your speech easy to follow and understand? What do you want for your audience? Who is your audience and what do you have in common with them?

If credibility is a matter of audience perception, does that mean that credibility is only what a speaker manages to get the audience to believe about them, rather than what is *actually* true about the speaker? Of course not. The factors of credibility and ethical public speaking *must be real* before a speaker can successfully convey these qualities to an audience.

That said, it's an unfortunate fact of public discourse that speakers misrepresent their credibility all the time, either intentionally or unintentionally. Can you think of situations where speakers pretended to be experts when they were not? When they say that they really care about a subject when there is evidence to the contrary? Or, they boast of having similarities with an audience—for example, boasting of a religious affiliation with the audience—but they don't really possess these similarities? To intentionally misrepresent your background, such as experience and credentials, is clearly unethical. No doubt you can think of many such instances.

Unethical speakers do this because they know how important it's to establish credibility with an audience. But managing to pass off lies about your credibility doesn't mean you're *actually credible*! Perceptive audience members will know the difference.

> **It isn't enough to *convey* credibility. You must *be* credible.**

Defining Plagiarism

An ethical public speaker has integrity. Although there are many ways that you could undermine your ethical stance before an audience, the one that stands out and is committed most in academic contexts is **plagiarism**. A dictionary definition of plagiarism would be "the act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person" (Merriam-Webster, 2015). According to the student help website Plagiarism.org, sponsored by WriteCheck, plagiarism is often thought of as "copying another's work or borrowing someone else's original ideas" ("What is Plagiarism?" 2014). However, this source goes on to say that the common definition may mislead some people. Plagiarism also includes:

- Turning in someone else's work as your own
- Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- Failing to put quotation marks around an exact quotation correctly
- Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- Copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up most of your work, whether you give credit or not

Plagiarism exists outside of the classroom and is a temptation in business, creative endeavors, and politics.

Types of Plagiarism

Generally, there are three types of plagiarism: direct, incorrect paraphrasing, and self-plagiarism. Sometimes these types of plagiarism are intentional, and sometimes they occur unintentionally (you may not know you're plagiarizing). However, as everyone knows, "Ignorance of the law isn't an excuse for breaking it." Unintentional or accidental plagiarism is still plagiarism. Furthermore, the penalties for plagiarism are steep and it's considered a serious act of misconduct. So, let's familiarize you with how plagiarism occurs in order to prevent it from happening.

Direct

No one wants to be the victim of theft; if it has ever happened to you, you know how awful it feels. When a student takes an essay, research paper, speech, or outline completely from another source, whether it's a classmate who submitted it for another instructor, from some sort of online essay mill, or from elsewhere, this is an act of theft. If you take a whole text and claim it's yours, you are committing plagiarism; you are deliberately and directly lying about the authorship of a work. Even just lifting a short passage directly from a source without quoting it and using proper citation, is a form of stealing, thus plagiarism. You are committing plagiarism even if you delete or change a couple of words. If the structure and most of the words are the same as in the original, and you imply it's your own work, this counts as **direct plagiarism.** If properly acknowledged and justified, it's permissible to use *verbatim* short parts of another work, as discussed below.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means taking someone else's ideas and rephrasing them in your own words. There's nothing wrong with rephrasing, in fact, it's the basis of how we write and think. However, ethical writing (including speechwriting) means acknowledging the source of your ideas by citing or mentioning it. When you restate or summarize information from a

source and don't include a citation you are implying that those ideas came from you. Paraphrasing without citation is the most common form of plagiarism because it often happens unintentionally.

Another unethical, and more deliberate, form of incorrect paraphrasing is when you take two out of every three sentences and mix them up, so they don't appear in the same order as in the original work. Perhaps the student will add a fresh introduction, a personal example or two, and an original conclusion.

Many students don't see this as the same thing as stealing because they think "I did some research, I looked some stuff up, and I added some of my own work." Yet this is only marginally better than direct plagiarism. Why? Because no source has been credited, and the student has "misappropriated" the expression of the ideas as well as the ideas themselves.

A similar sort of paraphrasing plagiarism involves copying passages from various sources and editing them together, mixed with some of your own words. If you do this and don't correctly cite each source, it's plagiarism. Furthermore, if your entire paper consists of predominantly the work of other authors that you have stitched together, whether you cite it or not, it's plagiarism.

Self-Plagiarism

Some colleges and universities have a policy that penalizes or forbids "**self-plagiarism**." This means that you can't use a paper or outline that you presented in another class a second time. You may think, "How can this be plagiarism or wrong if I wrote both and, in my work, I cited sources correctly?" The issue with re-using your own work is that you are not putting in the amount of effort expected for an assignment. One way to avoid self-plagiarism, particularly if your previous work is published, is to cite yourself. When in doubt, ask first.

Other Considerations

One area in speeches where students are not careful about citing is on their presentation slides. If a graphic or photo is borrowed from a website (that is, you did not design it), there should be a citation in small letters on the slide. The same would be true of borrowed quotations, data, and ideas. Students also like to put their "works cited" or "references" on the last slide, but this really does not help the audience to match particular images or material to the original source.

An issue that often comes up with students happens when two or more students submit the same assignment. When confronted, the student says, "We worked on it together." If your instructor wants you to work collaboratively, they will make that clear. Otherwise, don't do this. Always assume you are expected o turn in your own work. Any use of unauthorized assistance is considered cheating.

Finally, using AI technologies such as chat bots to produce the text of a speech is equivalent to turning in something written by someone else. While it may be permissible to use technology for editing grammar and spelling, you are the author and the idea you present should be the result of your own thinking. Unless stated otherwise in your instructor's policy, using AI to write a speech constitutes plagiarism.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Avoiding plagiarism involves, first, the intention to create your own work. If you begin by assuming you can take other

work and present it as your own, you will surely be in the realm of plagiarism. The second part of avoiding plagiarism is to learn the proper way to cite the sources you use. To "cite" means to provide the sources for your research, creating what is called a "citation." Citations appear in written work, including essays and speeches, and on many websites, images, and more. Explaining exactly how to create citations for a written essay or research paper is outside the scope of this textbook. There are also free online tools that will generate proper citations for you. In this section and the one following it, we will focus on **spoken citations** as they appear in a speech—in other words, how to create a citation for listeners, not readers.

Avoiding Plagiarism with Direct Sources

As explained above, copying whole works from another source is plagiarism. But there are times when it's appropriate to use a small amount of a source's exact wording. You should have a good reason for inserting a direct quote. Typically, we quote when the source or author is highly respected, or they have stated the idea in a compelling way, or the material is well known, and others would recognize it. We also quote when we are discussing or analyzing a specific part of a text.

Whether you are using a phrase, a sentence, or even several sentences from another's work, if you use exact words from a source, it requires quotation. Quoting tells the reader and listener that you are using the exact words from a source. The proper way to manage direct quotes in a speech text is to provide quotation marks at the beginning and end of the quote followed by a source citation. The most common citation is a parenthetical reference such as (Smith 12) where the author's last name and the page number are written in parentheses following the quote. This parenthetical reference should correspond to a full citation in the bibliography. Alternatively, you can use a superscript number at the end of the quotation that corresponds to a full citation listed in footnotes/endnotes.

When using direct quotations, you should make it clear you're quoting by the way in which you introduce and end the borrowed material, as in examples further below. A common practice in public speaking is to say quote and/or make air quotes to specify you are about to give a direct quote. It can also be beneficial to change your vocal tone and use appropriate gestures to help differentiate the quote from your own words.

Avoiding Plagiarism when Paraphrasing

As stated earlier, paraphrasing is common form of plagiarism because it often happens unintentionally. It's important to understand what good paraphrasing is. Look at this example of an original source and three possible ways to paraphrase it.

Original information, posted on CNN.com website, October 31, 2015:

"The biggest federal inmate release on record will take place this weekend. About 6,600 inmates will be released, with 16,500 expected to get out the first year. More than 40,000 federal felons could be released early over the next several years, the U.S. Sentencing Commission said. The sentencing commission decided a year ago to lower maximum sentences for nonviolent drug offenders and to make the change retro-active, with the inmate releases effective November 1, 2015. Sentences were reduced an average of 18%, the commission said. Early release will be a challenge for the inmates as well as the judicial bureaucracy" (Casarez, 2015).

With that as the original source, which of the following three is truly paraphrasing?

1. The CNN News website says the federal government is releasing 40,000 felons from prison in the next few years.

2. According to a report posted on CNN's website on October 31 of 2015, the federal government's Sentencing Commission is beginning to release prisoners in November based on a decision made in 2014. That decision was to make maximum sentences for nonviolent drug offenders shorter by an average of 18%. Over the next several years over 40,000 federal felons could be let go. However, this policy change to early release will not be easy for the justice system or those released.

3. The largest release ever of federal inmates will take place in early November. At first 6,600 inmates will be released, and then over 16,000 over the first year. The U.S. Sentencing Commission says it could release over 40,000 federal felons over the upcoming years because the sentencing commission decided a year ago to lessen maximum sentences for nonviolent drug offenders and to make this happen for those already in jail. When the Sentencing Commission says that when it made that decision, the sentences were reduced by an average of 18%. Early release will be a challenge for the felons as well as the judicial system. This came from a story on CNN News website in later October 2015.

If you chose the second paraphrase, you would be correct. It uses different language and identifies the source of the information clearly at the beginning. The first version does not really interpret the original statement correctly, and the third choice imitates the original almost entirely. Neither of these two would be good paraphrasing.

Notice that each paraphrase example includes a citation that provides the source of the material, but only the second paraphrase does so completely: "According to a report posted on CNN's website on October 31 of 2015 . . . "

There is a general rule of research that says that if the information you are using is "common knowledge"—dates and facts for example or other information a general reader should know—then it doesn't need to be cited. A good rule of thumb is if the same information can be found in 4-5 sources where it was not cited, it's common knowledge. But if it's an original idea, research results, or the author's interpretation of common facts then it needs to be cited. If you are in doubt whether you should cite something or not, always err on the side of caution. Over-citing is much better than the alternative: plagiarism.

Keep in mind good research takes time. Procrastinating leads to being unduly pressured to finish. This sort of pressure can lead to sloppy research habits and bad decisions. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to complete your speech so it's both ethical and well executed.

One way to avoid accidental plagiarism is to keep track of your citations as you are researching and writing. This prevents forgetting where a quotation came from or misattributing the source. Citation managers such as Zotero and Mendeley (which are free to download) not only keep track of all your sources while you research and write they can create instant bibliographies.

Creating Spoken Citations

Now that you understand using two forms of source material—direct quotation, and paraphrase—and you understand the importance of citing your sources to your audience, exactly how should you include a citation in a speech?

In a paper, you would only need to include a written citation such as "(Jones 78)" for a source that the reader can find in the bibliography. But it doesn't work like for a speech. In a speech, saying "Jones, 78" doesn't mean anything. Even saying "According to Jones, p. 78," does little for the audience. Why? Because they can't turn to a bibliography. They don't have

another way to understand the type of information being conveyed. In speeches it's necessary, therefore, to give more complete information that would help the audience understand its value. This is why these are called **spoken citations**.

What information needs to be included in a spoken citation? The page number, the publishing company, and city it was published in are not very important. What is important is the **type of source**: for example, a website, scholarly article, newspaper article, or a book. Then, you should include **when** it was written, if possible, and the **position, background, or credentials** of the source. There are no fixed rules, however. In determining what should go into the verbal citation, think about the information that is necessary to clarify the relevance and credibility of your source for your audience and let that be your guide.

For example, instead of saying "According to Jones, p. 78," a better approach would be,

> According to Dr. Samuel Jones, Head of Cardiology at Vanderbilt University, in a 2010 article . . .

Whether you are introducing a direct quote or a paraphrase, you can see that it's best to **begin with the citation**. Take these examples:

> In her 2012 book, *The Iraq War in Context*, historian Mary Smith of the University of Georgia states that . . .

> In consulting the website for the American Humane Society, I found these statistics about animal abuse compiled by the Society in 2023:

In the first example, you would insert a quote from Smith's book after your spoken citation. In the second example, a paraphrase would be appropriate. For example:

> In his 2014 book, *Talk Like Ted*, public speaking guru Carmine Gallo states that "Ideas are the currency of the twenty-first century."

> In consulting the website TED.org, I learned that the TED organization does much more than sponsoring TED talks. There are also podcasts, a video series, and television programs.

Sometimes when using direct quotes, speakers find it helpful to **clarify where the quote begins and ends** by saying the word "quote." In that case, this is an example of exactly what a speaker would say:

> In her 2023 memoir entitled *Finding Me*, the actor Viola Davis writes, quote, "I felt my call was to become an actress. It wasn't. It was bigger than that. I was bigger than my successes." End quote.

As mentioned above, a speaker can achieve the same effect by making a gesture of air quotes or changing the tone of the voice.

To conclude, citing your sources is immensely important. It shows that you have done proper research to support your ideas and arguments and it allows your audience to find the material if they want more information. Using clear citations makes your speech more credible to the audience.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced you to the ethics of public speaking and how being an ethical public speaker makes you a credible public speaker that audiences will trust. Using sources ethically means not only proper citation, but taking care

that the information you use is relevant and presented in context. Avoid manipulating statistical information or taking a quotation from an expert in one field and present as if they are an expert in another field. Differentiate facts from opinions, especially when dealing with controversial subjects. In addition, be sure you understand the material you're citing before using it. If you're unsure of any words, look their definitions up so you're sure to be using the material as it's intended. Finally, it's important that you understand the type of publication or source you're using and any potential biases. It's your responsibility to help the audience understand the reliability of a particular source, the purpose of including any cited information, and how it relates to your overarching argument.

Something to Think About

The following exercise might be helpful for you to develop an understanding of orally citing your sources.

Choose one of your sources for an upcoming speech for this exercise. On a sheet of paper, answer these questions.

- Is this information you found in a unique source, or information that was repeated in all or most of your sources? (This may bear upon whether you need to cite the information or not.)
- Who is the original author or "speaker" of this quotation or material? Are they an expert, such as a scientist, doctor, government official, college professor, etc.?
- What is the title of source?
- What do you know about the source of the citation? What is the medium (book, article, website)?
- If a website, who sponsors the website (what organization, government, company)?
- When was this information published? What is the date on it?

It's not necessary to give all this information, but most of it should be included in the citation.

12. Language in Speechwriting

What language is and does

In this chapter . . .

Regardless of how interesting your speech topic is or how well it's structured, if the language you choose is difficult for the audience to understand, they will become confused and disengaged. We explain both how to shape language through rhetorical techniques to enhance mental imagery and sound sense and what type of language should be avoided.

We would be wrong to treat language as an "add-on" to the ideas and structure of the speech. Language is far too complex and foundational an aspect of our lives for us to consider it as an afterthought for a speech. In this chapter we will look at how language functions in communication, what standards language choices should meet in public speaking, and how you can become more proficient in using language in public speaking.

As a means of communication, language functions on two levels we call denotative and connotative. Denotative is the specific meaning associated with a word. We sometimes refer to denotative as dictionary definitions. Connotative, on the other hand, is the idea associated with a word at a cultural or personal level. It's the way a specific listener interprets a word. For example, the word "police" denotes, according to common dictionary definitions, "the civil force of a national or local government, responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the maintenance of public order." Connotations for the word "police," however, vary according to individuals. In practice, listening involves processing both denotation and connotation.

While as speechwriters we can't control exactly how an audience hears the words we speak, if we work towards language clarity, effectiveness, and elegance, which are discussed in the next sections, we can improve understanding between speaker and listener.

Clarity

Clarity is the first concern of a public speaker when it comes to choosing how to phrase the ideas of their speech. If you are not clear, specific, precise, detailed, and sensory with your language, you won't have to worry about being emotional or persuasive, because you won't be understood.

Be Concrete

The first aspect of clarity is concreteness. We usually think of concreteness as the opposite of abstraction. Language that

evokes many different visual images in the minds of your audience is abstract language. Unfortunately, when abstract language is used, the images evoked might not be the ones you really want to evoke. A word such as "art" is very abstract; it brings up a range of mental pictures or associations: dance, theatre, painting, drama, a child's drawing on a refrigerator, sculpture, music, etc. When asked to identify what an abstract term like "art" means, twenty people will have twenty different ideas. One the other hand, being concrete means saying specifically what you mean so audiences see what you see.

Choose the Right Word

Related to the issue of specific vs. abstract is using the right word. Mark Twain said, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug." For example, the words "prosecute" and "persecute" are commonly confused, but not interchangeable. Can you think of other such word pair confusion?

Be Simple and Familiar

In the attempt to be clear, which is your first concern, you will also want to be simple and familiar in your language. Familiar language draws in the audience. Simple does not mean simplistic, but the avoidance of multi-syllable words. If a speaker said, "A collection of pre-adolescents fabricated an obese personification comprised of compressed mounds of minute aquatic crystals," you might recognize it as "Some children made a snowman," but maybe not. The language isn't simple or familiar and therefore does not communicate well.

Add Figurative Language

Using appropriate similes and metaphors can add clarity to your speech. Similes and metaphors are tools of figurative language that provide more information through comparisons. The opposite of figurative language is literal language. Literal language says, "The truck is fast." Figurative language says, "The truck is as fast as a rocket."

Similes and metaphors do the same thing. The distinction is that similes are indirect while metaphors are direct. An example of a simile is, "Love is like a battlefield." The metaphor is "Love is a battlefield." Which one do you think is more effective?

Using figurative language to add comparisons can help you achieve clearer language, if chosen wisely. Speakers are encouraged to pick their similes and metaphors but not overuse them.

Use Imagery

Like comparisons, imagery or sensory language can help make your speech clearer. This is language that makes the recipient smell, taste, see, hear, and feel a sensation. Think of the word "ripe." What is "ripe?" Do ripe fruits feel a certain way? Smell a certain way? Taste a certain way? Ripe is a sensory word. Most words just appeal to one sense, like vision. Think of color. How can you make the word "blue" more sensory? How can you make the word "loud" more sensory?

How would you describe the current state of your bedroom or dorm room to leave a sensory impression? How would you describe your favorite meal to leave a sensory impression? or a thunderstorm?

Avoid Euphemisms

Euphemisms are often used to make something unpleasant sound more tolerable. While not unclear, euphemisms are not quite honest. During the Vietnam War, "air support" was invented to cover the real meaning: "bombing." Today, terms like "revenue enhancement" are used instead of "tax increases." Realtors sell "homes," not houses. McDonald's sells "Happy Meals" even though it's the same food they sell that are not "Happy Meals."

In everyday speech, we use euphemisms all the time. For example, we might say that someone "passed away" instead of "died." However, public speakers should use euphemisms carefully. Avoid any that are meant to mislead listeners or hide the true meaning of what we are trying to say.

Effectiveness

Language achieves effectiveness by communicating the right message to the audience. Clarity contributes to effectiveness, but there are some other aspects of effectiveness, specifically credibility and appropriateness. The way you use language helps establish your credibility as a speaker and allows you to communicate your awareness of your audience. Choosing appropriate language fosters inclusion and identification, rather than exclusion.

Unfortunately, we habitually use language for exclusion rather than inclusion. We can push people away with our word choices rather than bringing them together. Below are some examples of language that can exclude members of your audience from understanding what you are saying.

Credibility

Language is an element of credibility. As you learned, speakers establish credibility with audiences by sharing their expertise, experience, and personal interest in the speech topic. However, language plays a role in credibility, as well. Audiences trust speakers who use clear, vivid, respectful, engaging, and honest language. On the other hand, audiences tend not to trust speakers who use language that excludes others. In addition, a speaker who uses language and references that are not immediately accessible or that are unfamiliar will have diminished credibility.

Appropriateness

For language to be effective, it needs to be appropriate to the audience. Appropriateness relates to several categories involving how persons and groups should be referred to and addressed based on inclusiveness and context. People and groups should be respected and referred to in the way they choose to be. Using inclusive language in your speech will help ensure you aren't alienating or diminishing any members of your audience. Language is ever-changing and

responding to the cultural moment; being aware of changes in how language adjusts to inclusiveness, and seeking advice when unsure, is part of the responsibility of being a public speaker.

Gender-Inclusive Language

Avoid non-inclusive language that privileges one gender identity over any other one. Using "he" as generic, for example, or "man" to mean all humans. Use plural subjects and use neutral pronouns ("they" and "their"). Also, avoid gender-typing jobs, for example, by assuming that doctors are "he" and nurses are "she."

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity refers to a group an individual identifies with based on a common culture. Within the United States we have numerous ethnic groups. Avoid statements such as "The committee is made up of four women and a Vietnamese man." All that should be said is, "The committee is made up of five people."

In recent years, there has been a trend toward steering inclusive language away from broad terms like "Asians" and "Hispanics" because these terms are not considered precise labels for the groups they represent. You should ask people who belong to an ethnic group how they prefer to be referred to in that context.

Inclusive Language and Disability

A category of exclusive versus inclusive language that causes problems for some speakers relates to individuals with physical or intellectual differences. Sometimes it happens that we take a characteristic of someone and make that the totality or all of what that person is. A common example of this is how to refer to what used to be called "autism." Saying someone is "autistic" substitutes an attribute of a person for the totality of their identity. Preferable terms are "a person with an autism diagnosis" or "a person on the autism spectrum."

This is another situation where the person should be referred to as they prefer. "Hearing impaired" denotes a wide range of hearing deficit, as does "visually impaired. "Deaf" and "blind" are not generally considered offensive by these groups.

Slang words for mental illness should always be avoided, such as "crazy" or "mental."

Other Types of Appropriateness

Language in a speech should be appropriate to the speaker and the speaker's background and personality, to the context, to the audience, and to the topic. Let's say that you're an engineering student. If you're giving a presentation in an engineering class, you can use language that other engineering students will know. On the other hand, if you use that engineering vocabulary in an arts class, audience members may not understand you. As another example, if you are speaking about the Great Depression to an audience of young adults or recent immigrants, you can't assume they will know the meaning of terms like "New Deal" and "WPA," which would be familiar to an audience of senior citizens. Audience analysis is a key factor in choosing the language to use in a speech.

Elegance through Rhetorical Techniques

Elegance in speechwriting means enhancing the power of a speech through rhetorical techniques. There are several traditional techniques that have been used to engage audiences and make ideas more attention-getting and memorable. We will not mention all of them here, but some important ones are listed below.

Assonance

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in a sentence or passage. As such, it's a kind of rhyme. Minister Tony Campolo said, "When Jesus told his disciples to pray for the kingdom, this was no pie in the sky by and by when you die kind of prayer."

Alliteration

This means the repetition of initial consonant sounds in a sentence or passage. In his famous "I Have a Dream Speech," Dr. Martin Luther King said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Not only does this sentence use alliteration ("content of character"), but it also uses the next rhetorical technique on our list, antithesis.

Antithesis

Antithesis is immensely powerful in public speaking. It means the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas in balanced or parallel words, phrases, or grammatical structures. A common antithesis has the structure, "not this, but this." John F. Kennedy's statement from his 1961 inaugural address is one of the most quoted examples of antithesis:

> "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

In that speech he gave another example,

> "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

Parallelism

Like antithesis is parallelism. Parallelism is the repetition of sentence structures. It can be useful for stating your main ideas. Which one of these sounds better?

> "Give me liberty or I'd rather die." vs. "Give me liberty or give me death."

The second one uses parallelism. Quoting again from JFK's inaugural address: "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to

assure the survival and the success of liberty." The repetition of the three-word phrases in this sentence (including the word "any" in each) is an example of parallelism.

Anaphora

This is a succession of sentences beginning with the same word or group of words. In his inaugural address, JFK began several succeeding paragraphs with "To those": "To those old allies," "To those new states," "To those people," etc.

Language to Avoid

Clichés

Clichés are expressions, usually similes, which are predictable. You know what comes next because they are overused and sometimes out of date. Clichés are not just a problem because they are overused; they also sometimes don't communicate what you need, especially to audiences whose second language is English. "I will give you a ballpark figure" isn't as clear as "I will give you an estimate." As the United States becomes more diverse, being aware of your audience members whose first language isn't English is a valuable tool for a speaker.

Jargon

Jargon used in your profession or hobby should only be used with audiences who share your profession or hobby. Not only will the audience members who don't share your profession or hobby miss your meaning, but they will feel that you are not making an honest effort to communicate or are setting yourself above them in intelligence or rank. You need to be careful about assumptions of your audience's knowledge and their ability to interpret jargon.

Slang

The whole point of slang is for a subculture or group to have its own code, almost like secret words. Once slang is understood by the larger culture, it's no longer slang and may be classified as "informal" or "colloquial" language. "Bling" was slang; now it's in the dictionary. Sports have a great deal of slang used by the players and fans that then get used in everyday language. For example, "That was a slam dunk" is used to describe something easy, not just in basketball.

Complicated vocabulary

If a speaker used the word "recalcitrant," some audience members would know the meaning or figure it out, but many would not. It would make much more sense for them to use a word readily understandable: "stubborn." Especially in oral communication, we should use language that is immediately accessible. However, don't take this to mean "dumb down

for your audience." It means being clear and not showing off. For a speaker to say "I am cognizant of the fact that..." instead of "I know" or "I am aware of..." adds nothing to communication.

Profanity and cursing

It's difficult to think of many examples, other than artistic or comedy venues, where profanity or cursing would be effective or useful with most audiences, so this kind of language is discouraged.

Developing Your Ability with Language

At this point, we will make some applications and suggestions about using language as you grow as a public speaker.

First, get in the habit of using "stipulated definitions" with concrete examples (defining operationally). In other words, define your terms for the audience. This is especially necessary if you are using a technical term, a word that has multiple meanings in different contexts, or an often-misunderstood word. You can say at the beginning of the body of your speech, "In this speech I am going to be using the word "X," and what I mean by it is . . . "

Second, develop specific language. You can develop specific language with the following techniques:

- Distinguishing between individuals and the group (that is, avoid stereotyping).
- Specifying time and place of behavior instead of making broad statements. What was true of a person in 1999 isn't necessarily true of the person now.
- Using names for jobs or roles ("accountants," "administrative assistants," "instructors") instead of "people" or "workers."
- Avoid "always/never" language. "Always" and "never" usually don't reflect reality and tend to make listeners defensive.
- Avoid confusing opinions for facts. If I say, "Avatar is a terrific movie," I am stating an opinion in the language of fact. If you preface opinions with "I believe," or "It's my opinion" you will be truthful and gain the appearance of being fair-minded and non-dogmatic. Using this kind of language also helps make the speaker seem less dogmatic and closed-minded.

Third, personalize your language. In a speech it's fine to use personal pronouns as opposed to third person. That means "I," "me," "we," "us," "you," etc. are often helpful in a speech. It gives more immediacy to the speech. Be careful of using "you" for examples that might be embarrassing. "Let's say you are arrested for possession of a concealed weapon," sounds like the audience members are potential criminals.

Finally, develop your vocabulary, but don't show it off. One of the benefits of a college education is that your vocabulary will expand greatly—and it should. A larger vocabulary will give you access to more complicated reading material and allow you to understand the world better. But knowing the meaning of a more complicated word doesn't mean you have to use it with every audience.

Conclusion

Language choices, or what the ancient rhetoricians called "style," are as important as other parts of speechwriting. Audience analysis will help you to develop language that is clear, vivid, appropriate, credible, and persuasive.

Something to Think About

What are some of the clichés and slang that have become popular recently? What do they mean? Why would they not be useful in public speaking?

Listen to a presidential speech, such as an inaugural address, and study it for the figurative language (similes, metaphors), rhetorical techniques, and use of words to build and reflect the power of the presidency as well as connect with the audience.

13. Presentation Aids

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

In this chapter . . .

Most public speeches given today are supplemented by presentation aids. While these can be useful in providing a visual element and helping clarify speech, if used poorly they can be more distracting. In this chapter we cover both technological presentation aids such as slide shows as well as other less conventional methods.

When you perform a speech, your audience members will experience your presentation through all five of their senses: hearing, vision, smell, taste, and touch. In some speaking situations, the speaker appeals only to the sense of hearing. But the speaking event can be greatly enriched by appeals to the other senses. This is the role of presentation aids.

Presentation aids are the resources beyond the speech words and delivery that a speaker uses to enhance the message conveyed to the audience. The type of presentation aids that speakers most typically make use of are visual aids: slideshows, pictures, diagrams, charts and graphs, maps, and the like. Audible aids include musical excerpts, audio speech excerpts, and sound effects. A speaker may also use fragrance samples or food samples as olfactory (sense of smell) or gustatory (sense of taste) aids. Finally, presentation aids can be three-dimensional objects, animals, and people.

When used correctly, presentation aids can significantly improve the quality of a speech performance.

Why Use Presentation Aids

Public speakers can deploy presentation aids for many useful reasons, including to highlight important points, clarify confusing details, amuse the audience, express emotions that are impossible to convey through words alone, and much more.

Presentation Aids Support Audience Understanding

As a speaker, your most basic goal is to help your audience understand your message. Presentation aids can reduce the possibility of misunderstanding. Presentation aids do this by **clarifying** or **emphasizing** what you are saying in your speech.

Clarification is important in a speech because if some of the information you convey is unclear, your listeners will come away puzzled or possibly even misled. Presentation aids can help clarify a message if the information is complex or if the point being made is a visual one.

Clarifying is especially important when a speaker wants to help audience members understand a visual concept. For example, if a speaker is talking about the importance of petroglyphs in Native American culture, just describing the petroglyphs won't completely help your audience to visualize what they look like. Instead, showing an example of a petroglyph, as in Figure 1.1 ("Petroglyph") can more easily help your audience form a clear mental image of your intended meaning.
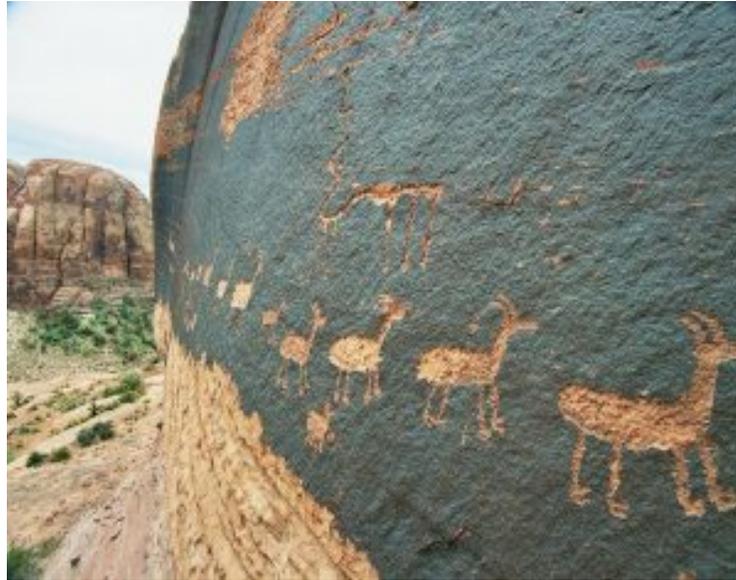
Figure 1.1

Another way presentation aids improve understanding is through emphasis. When you use a presentational aid for emphasis, you impress your listeners with the importance of an idea. In a speech on rising levels of CO_2, you might show a chart. When you use a chart like the one in Figure 1.2 ("Global CO_2 Emissions") you give a pictorial emphasis on the changes in levels of CO_2.
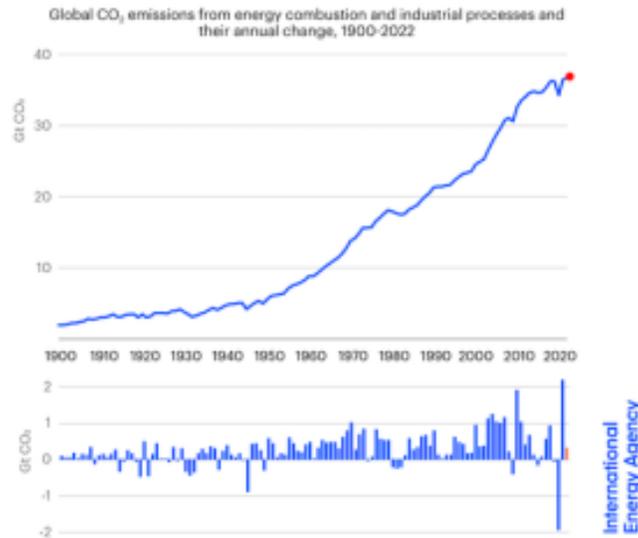
Figure 1.2. International Energy Agency, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Presentation Aids Help Retention and Recall

Presentation aids can also increase the audience's chances of remembering your speech. An image can serve as a memory aid to your listeners. Moreover, people remember information that is presented in sequential steps more easily than if that information is presented in an unorganized pattern. When you use a presentation aid to display the organization of your speech (such as can be done with PowerPoint slides), you'll help your listeners to observe, follow, and remember the sequence of information you conveyed to them. This is why some instructors display a lecture outline for their students to follow during class and why a slide with a preview of your main points can be helpful as you move into the body of your speech.

Another advantage of using presentation aids is that they can boost *your* memory while you're speaking. Using your presentation aids while you rehearse your speech will familiarize you with the association between a given place in your speech and the presentation aid that accompanies that material.

Presentation Aids Add Variety and Interest

Furthermore, presentation aids simply make your speech more interesting. For example, wouldn't a speech on varieties of roses have greater impact if you accompanied your remarks with a picture of each rose? Similarly, if you were speaking to a group of gourmet cooks about Indian spices, you might want to provide tiny samples of spices that they could smell and taste during your speech.

Presentation Aids Enhance a Speaker's Credibility

Even if you give a good speech, you run the risk of appearing unprofessional if your presentation aids are poorly executed. Conversely, a high-quality presentation will contribute to your professional image. This means that in addition to containing important information, your presentation aids must be clear, uncluttered, organized, and large enough for the audience to see and interpret correctly. Misspellings and poorly designed presentation aids can damage your credibility as a speaker. If you focus your efforts on producing presentation aids that contribute effectively to your meaning, that look professional, and that are managed well, your audience will appreciate your efforts and pay close attention to your message.

Types of Presentation Aids

Slideshow: When we think of public speaking presentation aids, our thoughts go first to a slideshow. Slide presentation software is the most common tool used by speakers to accompany their speeches. The most well-known one is PowerPoint, although there are several others like Prezi and Keynote. A slideshow is a presentation aid that is made up of slides that typically contain words, images, or a combination of both.

Video: A speaker may wish to show the audience a clip of a video or other moving image in their speech. This can be played stand-alone or incorporated into a slideshow.

Music or Sound: Similarly, sound and music can be used as a presentation aid, recorded or live. Similarly, a sound recording could be played stand-alone or incorporated into a slideshow.

Physical Objects: A speaker may bring in a model, or other physical object, as an aid to presentation. For example, if you were doing a speech about the importance of emotional support animals, you might bring in a dog.

People: It is possible to use a person as a presentation aid, as in the case of demonstrations.

Other Aids: Other "low-tech" presentation aids include printed handouts, whiteboards, and flipcharts.

The sections that follow will discuss each of these types in more depth.

Designing Slideshows

In many industries and businesses, there is an assumption that speakers will use presentation slideshows. They allow visualization of concepts, they are easily portable, and they can be embedded with videos and audio. You'll probably be expected to have slide presentations in future assignments in college. Knowing how to use them, beyond the basic technology, is vital to being a proficient presenter.

But when do presentation slides become less effective? We have all sat through a presenter who committed the common error of putting far too much text on the slide. When a speaker does this, the audience is confused—do they read the text or listen to the speaker? An audience member can't do both. Then, the speaker feels the need to read the slides rather than use PowerPoint for what it does best, visual reinforcement and clarification.

We have also seen many poorly designed PowerPoint slides, either through haste or lack of knowledge: slides where

the graphics are distorted (elongated or squatty), words and graphics not balanced, text too small, words printed over photographs, garish or nauseating colors, or animated figures left up on the screen for too long and distracting the audience.

There are principles you can follow to create slides and slideshows that are effective. In addition to the rules below, Microsoft offers tips on best practices for PowerPoint slides.

Unity and Consistency

Generally, it's best to use a single font for the text on your visuals so that they look like a unified set. Or you can use two different fonts in consistent ways, such as having all headings and titles in the same font and all bullet points in the same font. Additionally, the background should remain consistent.

Each slide should have one message, often only one photo or graphic. The audience members should know what they are supposed to look at on the slide.

Another area related to unity and consistency is the use of animation or movement. There are three types of animation in slideshows:

- little characters or icons that have movement. These may seem like fun, but they can be distracting.
- movement of text or objects on and off the screen. Although using this function takes up time when preparing your slides, it's very useful. You can control what your audience sees. It also avoids bringing up all the text and material on a slide at one time.
- slide transitions, which is the design of how the next slide appears.

Emphasis, Focal Point, and Visibility

Several points should be made about how to make sure the audience sees what they need to see on the slides.

- make sure the information is large enough for the audience to see. Text being at least 22-point font is best for visibility.
- the standard rule for amount of text is that you should have no more than seven horizontal lines of text and the longest line should not exceed seven words.
- you should also avoid too many slides. Less sometimes really is more. Again, there is no fixed rule, but a ten-minute speech probably needs fewer than ten slides.
- Good contrast between the text and background is extremely important. Sans serif fonts such as Arial, Tahoma, and Verdana are better for reading from screens than serif fonts such as Times New Roman, or Garamond.

Tone

Fonts, color, clip art, photographs, and templates all contribute to tone, which is the attitude being conveyed in the slides. If you want a light tone, such as for a speech about cruises, some colors (springtime, pastel, cool, warm, or primary colors) and fonts (such as Comic Sans) and lots of photographs will be more appropriate. For a speech about the Holocaust, more somber colors and design elements would be more fitting, whereas clip art would not be.

Scale and Proportion

Although there are several ways to think about scale and proportion, we will discuss two here.

First, bullet points. Bullet points infer that the items in the bulleted list are equal, and the sequence doesn't matter. If you want to communicate order, sequence, or priority, then use numbers. Bullet points should be short—not long, full sentences—but at the same time should be long enough to mean something. In a speech on spaying and neutering pets, the bullet point "pain" may be better replaced with "Pet feels little pain."

Second, when you're designing your slides, it's best to choose a template and stick with it. If you input all your graphics and material and then change the template, the format of the slide will change, in some cases dramatically, and you'll have distorted graphics and words covered up. You'll then have to redesign each slide, which can be unnecessarily time-consuming.

Suitable Visual Images

Often, a speaker alternates text slides with slides containing visual images. Sometimes, a slideshow is made up entirely of images. Let's look at the kinds of images you might use in a slideshow.

Charts: A chart is commonly defined as a graphical representation of data (often numerical) or a sketch representing an ordered process. Whether you create your charts or do research to find charts that already exist, it's important for them to exactly match the specific purpose in your speech. Three common types of charts are statistical charts, sequence-of-steps chart, and decision trees.

Graphs: A graph is a pictorial representation of the relationships of quantitative data using dots, lines, bars, pie slices, and the like. Common graphs speakers utilize in their speeches include line graphs, bar graphs, pie graphs, and pictographs.

Diagrams: Diagrams are drawings or sketches that outline and explain the parts of an object, process, or phenomenon that can't be readily seen.

Maps: Maps are extremely useful if the information is clear and limited. There are all kinds of maps, including population, weather, ocean current, political, and economic maps.

Photographs: and/or **Drawings**: Sometimes a photograph or a drawing is the best way to show an unfamiliar but important detail. Audiences expect high quality photographs, and as with all presentation aids, they should enhance the speech.

Using Video and/or Audio Recordings

Another particularly useful type of presentation aid is a video or audio recording. Whether it's a short video from a website such as YouTube or Vimeo, a segment from a song, or a piece of a podcast, a well-chosen video or audio recording may be a good choice to enhance your speech.

There is one major warning to using audio and video clips during a speech: don't forget that they are supposed to be aids

to your speech, not the speech itself. Be sure to avoid these five mistakes that speakers often make when using audio and video clips:

- Avoid choosing clips that are too long for the overall length of the speech.
- Practice with the audio or video equipment prior to speaking. Fiddling around will not only take your audience out of your speech but also have a negative impact on your credibility. Be sure that the speakers on the computer are on and at the right volume level.
- Cue the clip to the appropriate place prior to beginning your speech.
- In addition to cueing up clip to the appropriate place, the browser window should be open and ready to go.
- The audience must be given context before a video or audio clip is played, specifically what the clip is and why it relates to the speech. At the same time, the video should not repeat what you have already said but add to it.

Objects or Models

Objects refer to anything you could hold up and talk about during your speech, as in Figure 1.3. If you're talking about the importance of not using plastic water bottles, you might hold up a plastic water bottle and a stainless-steel water bottle as examples.

Figure 1.3

People

We can often use ourselves or other people to adequately demonstrate an idea during our speeches. If your speech is about ballroom dancing or ballet, you might use your body to demonstrate the basic moves in the cha-cha or the five basic ballet positions.

In some cases, such as for a demonstration speech, you might want to ask someone else to serve as your presentation aid. You should arrange ahead of time for a person (or persons) to be an effective aid—don't assume that an audience member will volunteer on the spot. The transaction between you and your human presentation aid must be appropriate,

especially if you're going to demonstrate something like a dance step. In short, make sure your helper will know what is expected of them and consents to it.

Other Types of Presentation Aids

Dry-Erase Board

Numerous speakers utilize dry-erase boards effectively. Typically, these speakers use the dry-erase board for interactive components of a speech. For example, maybe you're giving a speech in front of a group of executives. You may have a PowerPoint all prepared, but at various points in your speech you want to get your audience's responses.

If you ever use a chalk or dry-erase board, follow these four simple rules:

- Write large enough so that everyone in the room can see.
- Print legibly; don't write in cursive script.
- Write short phrases; don't take time to write complete sentences.
- Be sure you have markers that will not go dry; clean the board afterward.

Flipchart

A flipchart is useful for situations when you want to save what you have written for future reference or to distribute to the audience after the presentation. As with whiteboards, you'll need good markers and readable handwriting, as well as a strong easel to keep the flipchart upright.

Handouts

Handouts are appropriate for delivering information that audience members can take away with them.

- make sure the handout is worth the trouble of making, copying, and distributing it. Does the audience really need the handout?
- make sure to bring enough copies of the handout for each audience member to get one.
- Stay away from providing a single copy of a handout to pass around. It's distracting and everyone will see it at different times in the speech, which is also true about passing any object around the room.
- If you have access to the room ahead of time, place a copy of the handout at or on each seat in the audience. If the handout is a "takeaway," leave it on a table near the door so that those audience members who are interested can take one on their way out.

How to Perform with Presentation Aids

Just as everything else in public speaking performance, it takes practice to effectively perform a speech while seamlessly

incorporating presentation aids. Below are some tips and tricks for how to include presentation aids as part of a strong speech delivery.

Speaking with a Slide Presentation

The rhythm of your slide presentation should be reasonably consistent—you would not want to display a dozen different slides in the first minute of a five-minute presentation and then display only one slide per minute for the rest of the speech.

Whether using a remote "clicker" or the attached mouse, you should connect what is on the screen to what you're talking about at the moment. Put reminders in your notes about when you need to change slides during your speech.

A basic presentation rule is to only show your visual aid when you're talking about it and remove it when you no longer are talking about it. If you're using PowerPoint and if you're not talking about something on a slide, put a black slide between slides in the presentation so that you have a blank screen for parts of the speech.

Some other practical considerations are as follows:

- Be sure the file is saved in a format that will be "readable" on the computer where you're presenting.
- Any borrowed graphic must be cited on the slide where it's used; the same would be true of borrowed textual material. Putting your sources only on the last slide is insufficient.
- A strong temptation for speakers is to look at the projected image rather than the audience during the speech. This practice cuts down on eye contact, of course, and is distracting for the audience. Two solutions for that are to print your notes from the presentation slides and/or use the slides as your note structure. Also remember that if the image is on the computer monitor in front of you, it's on the screen behind you.
- Always remember—and this can't be emphasized enough—technology works for you, not you for the technology. The presentation aids are aids, not the speech itself.
- As mentioned before, sometimes life happens—technology does not work. It could be that the projector bulb goes out or the Internet connection is down. The show must go on.
- If you're using a video or audio clip from an Internet source, it's probably best to hyperlink the URL on one of the slides rather than minimize the program and change to the Internet site.
- Finally, it's common for speakers to think "the slide changes, so the audience know there is a change, so I don't need a verbal transition." Please don't fall into this trap. Verbal transitions are just as, and maybe more, necessary for a speech using slides.

Other Tips

- Do not obscure your visual aid– practice standing to the side of your aid when rehearsing.
- Remember to keep eye contact with the audience, even when referring to a visual aid. Certainly, never turn your back on the audience!
- Rehearse with your visual aids. You want to have transitions between showing and hiding visual aids to be seamless, with as little filler time or distractions as possible. Practice makes perfect in this regard.
- As will be mentioned again below: simplicity is key. Avoid anything too distracting, too complicated, anything that will take a lot of time away from your speech content. You always want aids to supplement, not supplant, your speech content and delivery.

Avoiding Problems with Presentation Aids

Presentation aids can be tricky to use, as they can easily distract from the focus of your speech: the content and your delivery. One tip to keep in mind is to use only as many presentation aids as necessary to present your message or to fulfill your classroom assignment. The number and the technical sophistication of your presentation aids should never overshadow your speech.

Another important consideration is technology. Keep your presentation aids within the limits of the working technology available to you. As the speaker, you're responsible for arranging the things you need to make your presentation aids work as intended. Test the computer and projector setup. Have your slides on a flash drive AND send it to yourself as an attachment or upload to a Cloud service. Have an alternative plan prepared in case there is some glitch that prevents your computer-based presentation aids from being usable. And of course, you must know how to use the technology.

More important than the method of delivery is the audience's ability to see and understand the presentation aid. It must deliver clear information, and it must not distract from the message. Avoid overly elaborate or confusing presentation aids. Instead, simplify as much as possible, emphasizing the information you want your audience to understand. Remember the acronym KISS: Keep it Simple, Speaker!

Another thing to remember is that presentation aids don't "speak for themselves." When you display a visual aid, you should explain what it shows, pointing out and naming the most important features.

Conclusion

To finish this chapter, we will recap and remind you about the principles of effective presentation aids. Whether your aid is a slide show, object, a person, or dry erase board, these standards are essential:

- Presentation aids must be easily seen or heard by your audience.
- Presentation aids must be portable, easily handled, and efficient.
- Presentation aids should disappear when not in use.
- Presentation aids should be aesthetically pleasing, which includes in good taste. Avoid shock value just for shock value.

Media Attributions

PART IV
PURPOSES

On the theatre stage or the public speaking podium, communication is driven by purpose—a reason to speak. For the sake of simplicity, speeches are assigned to one of three broad purposes: informing, persuading, and a third category for such motivations as celebrating, inspiring, honoring, and remembering. The chapters in this section explain these three purposes and how each shapes the content and organization of a speech.

14. Informative Speeches

Speeches to Educate, Explain, or Describe

In this chapter . . .

In this chapter we examine our first type of public speech, the informative speech. This is used in lectures, briefings, and anytime you want to transmit fact-based information to an audience. We cover what makes an informative speech unique, the types of informative speeches, and how to construct this type of speech.

What is an informative Speech? Defining what an informative speech is can be both straight-forward and somewhat tricky at the same time. Very simply, an informative speech can first be defined as a speech based entirely and exclusively on facts. An informative speech conveys knowledge, a task that every person engages in every day in some form or another. Whether giving someone who is lost driving directions, explaining the specials of the day as a server, or describing the plot of a movie to friends, people engage in forms of informative speaking daily.

An informative speech does not attempt to convince the audience that one thing is better than another. It does not advocate a course of action or incorporate opinion as its basis. This can be the tricky part of developing an informative speech because some opinion statements sound like facts (since they are generally agreed upon by many people) but are really opinions.

For example, in an informative speech on George Washington, you might want to say, "George Washington was one of the greatest presidents in the history of the United States." While this statement may be agreed upon by many people, it's not irrefutable, meaning someone could argue against this claim. However, you could include this statement in an informative speech if you present the opinion from a reputable source: "Ron Chernow, in his 2011 best-selling biography of George Washington, describes the first president as one of the greatest presidents in the history of the United States." That is an acceptable way of presenting an opinion within the framework of a factual speech. While you may not be able to avoid opinion, you don't want your central idea, your main points, and most of your supporting material to be opinion or argument in an informative speech.

Additionally, you should never take sides on an issue in an informative speech, nor should you "spin" the facts to influence the opinions of the listeners. Even if you are informing the audience about differences in views on controversial topics, you should simply and clearly explain the issues.

This doesn't mean that an informative speech will have no effect on the audience. An audience can learn things from an informative speech that will affect what they do or how they think about something—that's their choice. Your only focus is to provide the clearest and most factual information you can.

Types of Informative Speeches

While the topics to choose from for informative speeches are nearly limitless, they can be categorized according to five broad categories based on the primary goal of the speech. Understanding the type of informative speech that you will be giving can help you to figure out the best way to research and speechwriting.

Type 1: History

An informative speech on the history or development of something. Your focus is to explain to an audience how something came into existence. History speeches can be about objects, places, ideas, or even events. For example, imagine your informative speech was on the history of the football (the object, not the game). Someone at some point in history was the first to develop what is considered the modern football. Who was it? What was it originally made of? How did it evolve into the football that is used by the NFL today? For the history of a place, like a university, you would describe the specific year it opened, the number of students who were initially enrolled, and how it got its name. It's also possible to provide the history of an idea, like "democracy." By explaining the civilizations and cultures that adopted forms of democracy throughout history, it's possible to provide an audience with a better understanding of how the idea has been shaped into what it has become today.

Type 2: Biography

A biographical speech is similar to a history one, but in this case the subject is a person, whether living or deceased. As with histories of objects, places, or ideas, there are specific and irrefutable facts that provide the details of someone's life. Your focus is to tell the audience about someone's life.

Type 3: Processes

Process speeches are informative speeches that explain how to do something or how something is achieved. These speeches require you to provide steps that will help your audience understand how to accomplish a specific task or process. We see examples of "how-to" presentations frequently—especially on YouTube. There's a second type of process speech that focuses not on how the audience can achieve a result, but on how a process is achieved. The goal is understanding of a process instead of the performance of a process. After a speech on how to change a car tire, for example, the audience members could probably do it (they might not want to, but they would know the steps). However, after a speech on how a bill goes through Congress, the audience would understand this important part of democracy but not be ready to serve in Congress. Either way, if your speech aims at teaching the audience how something works, it's a process speech.

Type 4: Ideas and Concepts

It is possible to have an informative speech about an idea or concept where your primary focus isn't on the history of the

idea, but how it exists now. In the examples above, we have seen two types of speeches about democracy: democracy as the topic of a speech that focuses on its history and democracy in a speech that focuses on a process in democratic legislation. In this fourth type of informative speech, you could focus on the concept of democracy as interpreted, for example, in three different countries. Your speech is neither about history nor about process but focuses on the definition itself.

Type 5: General

Sometimes an informative speech topic doesn't lend itself to a focus on history, process, or concept. In those cases, the topics tend to fall into the general category of informative speeches. The focus in this type of informative speech is determined by the topic. For example, imagine a speech about customs to know when traveling in Japan. This isn't a speech about the history of *anime*, nor a biography of a former emperor. It's not about the process of planning a trip to Japan, nor is it about the concept of *kawaii*. Customs of Japan falls into the "general" type of informative speech.

Tips for Informational Speeches

Use the Type of Speech to Determine the Structure

Identifying the type of informative speech being given can help in several ways (conducting research, writing the introduction and conclusion), but the biggest benefit is that the type of informative speech being given will help determine the organizational pattern that is best for a speech.

For example, a How-To speech must be in chronological order (step 1, step 2, step 3). Similarly, most speeches that focus on providing history or biography will be organized chronologically, but not always. It makes sense to use chronology to explain the history of the football from the moment it was first developed to where it's today, but for an informative speech on Benjamin Franklin a student might choose a topical pattern (idea 1, idea 2, idea 3) as their three main points: 1) His time as a printer, 2) His time as an inventor, 3) His time as a diplomat. These main points are not in strict chronological order because Franklin was a printer, inventor, and diplomat at the same time during periods of his whole life. However, this example would still be one way to inform an audience about him without using the chronological organizational pattern.

As for general informative speeches, since the topics that can be included in this category are so diverse and cover a range of possible subject matter, the way they are organized will be varied as well and may use chronological, spatial, or topical structures. (Refer to Chapter x on speech structure and organization).

Keep Your Topic Specific

One of the biggest and most common mistakes students make is pursuing a topic that is much too broad. Let's consider the example of a student who proposes the topic "To inform my audience about the Civil War." The Civil War was, conservatively speaking, four years long, resulted in over 750,000 casualties, and arguably changed the course of human

history. To think that it's possible to cover all of that in a speech is unrealistic. Even a very experienced professor in American history would find it difficult to deliver a one-hour lecture that accomplished that goal.

The better approach in this case is to be as specific as possible. A revised specific purpose for this speech might be something like "To inform my audience about the Gettysburg Address." This topic is much more compact (the Gettysburg Address is only a few minutes long) and doing research will be easier—although you will still find hundreds of sources on it. An even more specific topic would be "To inform my classmates of the specific places in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania that are considered haunted."

Avoid Fake Informative Speech Topics

Sometimes students think that because something sounds like an informative speech topic, it's one. This happens a lot with political issues that are usually partisan in nature. Some students may feel that the speech topic "To inform my audience why William Henry Harrison was a bad president" sounds factual, but really this is an opinion—in other words, it's a **fake informational** speech because it's a persuasive speech disguised as an informational speech. Similarly, a few topics that include conspiracy and paranormal subject matter are usually mistaken for good informative topics as well. It is common for a student to propose the topic "To inform my audience about the existence of extraterrestrials," thinking it's a good topic. After all, there is plenty of evidence to support the claim, right? There are pictures of unidentified objects in the sky that people claim are from outer space, there are people who claim to have seen extraterrestrials, and most powerful of all, there are people who say that they have been abducted by aliens and taken into space.

The problem here, as you have probably already guessed, is that these facts are not irrefutable. Not every single person who sees something unknown in the sky will agree it's an alien spacecraft, and there can be little doubt that not everyone who claims to have been abducted by a UFO is telling the truth. This isn't to say that you can't still do an informative speech on alien sites. For example, two viable options are "To inform my audience about the SETI Project" or "To inform my audience of the origin of the Area 51 conspiracy." However, these types of speeches can quickly devolve into opinion if you aren't careful, which would then make them persuasive speeches. Even if you start by trying to be objective, unless you can present each side equally, it will end up becoming a persuasive speech. Additionally, when a speaker picks such a topic, it's often because of a hidden desire to persuade the audience about them.

Be Selective about Content

Even if you have chosen a specific and focused topic, you must still make choices about what you can and cannot include. Writing an informative speech isn't about dumping enormous amounts of information on your audience that you can only get to by speaking at breakneck speed. It's about carefully choosing what to include, making it interesting and clear, and presenting it to your audience at a comfortable pace. What's better: too much information that audiences can't grasp or less information for audiences that hear every word? Regardless of the topic, you will never be able to cover everything that is known about your topic, so don't try. Select the things that will best help the audience gain a general understanding of the topic that will interest them, and that they hopefully will find valuable.

Be Accurate, Clear, and Interesting

A good informative speech conveys accurate information to the audience clearly and keeps the listener interested in

the topic. Achieving all three of these goals—accuracy, clarity, and interest—is the key to being an effective speaker. If information is inaccurate, incomplete, or unclear, it will be of limited usefulness to the audience.

Part of being accurate is making sure that your information is current. Even if you know a great deal about your topic or wrote a good paper on the topic in a high school course, you will need to verify the accuracy and completeness of what you know, especially if it's medical or scientific information.

What defines "interesting?" In approaching the informative speech, you should keep in mind the good overall principle that the audience is asking, "what's in it for me?" The audience is either consciously or unconsciously wondering "What in this topic for me? How can I use this information? Of what value is this speech content to me? Why should I listen to it?"

Keep in Mind Audience Diversity

Finally, remember that not everyone in your audience is the same, so an informative speech should be prepared with audience diversity in mind. If the information in a speech is too complex or too simplistic, it will not hold the interest of the listeners. Determining the right level of complexity can be hard. Audience analysis is one important way to do this (see Chapter 2). Do the members of your audience belong to different age groups? Did they all go to public schools in the United States, or are some of them international students? Are they all students majoring in the same subject, or is there a mixture of majors? Never assume that just because an audience is made up of students, they all share a knowledge set.

Learning how to give informative speeches will serve you well in your college career and your future work. Keep in mind the principles in this chapter but also those of the previous chapters: relating to the informational needs of the audience, using clear structure, and incorporating interesting and attention-getting supporting evidence.

Conclusion

Learning how to give informative speeches will serve you well in your college career and your future work. Keep in mind the principles in this chapter but also those of the previous chapters: relating to the informational needs of the audience, using clear structure, and incorporating interesting and attention-getting supporting evidence.

Something to Think About

Here are three general topics for informative speeches. Write specific purposes for them and explain how you would answer the WIIFM question.

1. Type 1 diabetes
2. The psychological effects of using social media
3. Guitars

15. Persuasive Speeches

Speeches that Make a Change

In this chapter . . .

For many public speeches, the specific purpose is to convince the audience of a particular opinion or claim or to convince them to take some action in response to the speech. When your intention is to affect change in your audience (not just the acquisition of knowledge) then you are delivering a persuasive speech. In this chapter you will learn about the elements of persuasion, why persuasion is difficult, and how to overcome people's resistance to change by using effective and ethical methods.

Although a persuasive speech involves information—even as much as an informative speech—the key difference is that a persuasive speech is designed for "creating, reinforcing, or changing people's beliefs or actions" (Lucas, 2015. p. 306). A persuasive speech makes something happen. In other words, it performs a job.

Traditional Views of Persuasion

In the fourth century BCE, the classic philosopher Aristotle took up the study of the public practices of the ruling class in Athenian society. For two years he observed the **rhetoric** (the art of persuasion) of the men who spoke in the assembly and the courts. In the end, he developed a theory about persuasiveness that has come down to us in history as a treatise called Rhetoric. Among his many ideas was the identification of three elements essential to persuasion: ethos, logos, and pathos. In short, they mean credibility, reasonability, and emotion.

Ethos

Ethos has come to mean speaker character and credentials. It is the element that establishes the audience's trust in you as a speaker. A speaker's credibility is based on who the speaker is and what they know: experience, education, expertise, and background. If you're delivering a persuasive speech about adopting a pet from a shelter and you have raised several shelter dogs, then you have credibility through experience and should share that fact about yourself with the audience to enhance their trust in your persuasive argument. Another way to establish your credibility is through research sources. You may not be an expert in climate change, but if you were giving a persuasive speech about it, you can cite reliable authoritative sources.

The word ethos looks very much like the word "ethics," and there are many close parallels to the trust an audience has in a speaker and their honesty and ethical stance. In terms of ethics, it goes without saying that your speech will be truthful.

In addition to expertise and truthfulness is your personal involvement in the topic. Ideally you have chosen the topic because it means something to you personally. Audiences will have more trust in you if they feel you have something as stake or something personal in the subject. For example, perhaps your speech is designed to motivate audience members to take action against bullying in schools, and it's important to you because you work with the Boys and Girls Club organization and have seen how anti-bullying programs can have positive results. Sharing your own involvement and commitment is key to establishing your credibility on this topic.

Logos

Logos is the second key element in Aristotle's theory of rhetoric. Related to our word "logic," the Greek term logos in persuasion means presenting ideas that appeal to logic or reason. *Logos* in a speech pertain to arguments that the audience would find acceptable. Imagine a speech, for example, which has the goal of persuading an audience to adopt healthier eating habits. Would the speech be effective if the arguments focused on how expensive organic foods are? Of course not.

Logic and reason are persuasive not only as matters of content. *Logos* pertains to organization, as well. An effective persuasive speech presents arguments in an organized fashion.

Pathos

In words like "empathy," "sympathy," and "compassion" we see the root word behind the Greek word pathos. Pathos, for Aristotle, meant exciting emotions such as anger, joy, hate, love, and desire to persuade the audience of the rightness of a proposition. In a positive sense, appealing to the emotions of the audience is a highly effective persuasive tool. In the earlier example of a speech designed to encourage an audience to take action against bullying in schools, including a touching story about a student experiencing bullying would make the audience more likely to support your call for action.

However, we recognize that pathos can be used in a negative way. Emotional appeals that use anger, guilt, hatred, inflammatory language like name-calling, or that try to frighten the audience with horrible images, are counter-productive and even unethical. They might incite emotion in the audience, but they are poor uses of pathos.

One negative emotion used frequently by persuasive speakers is fear. Candidates for political office, for example, often try to provoke fear to move us to vote for them. Intense, over-the-top fear appeals, based on factual falsehoods or cherry-picking, and/or including shocking photos, are not ethical and are often dismissed by discerning audience members. Appealing to the emotion of fear can be ethical if it's managed carefully. This means being strictly factual and avoiding extremes.

Persuasion and the Audience

It makes sense that if a speaker wants to affect the audience's beliefs or actions, then the speaker must be perfectly clear about their expectations. If you were listening to a persuasive speech call for your audience to support animals, wouldn't you want to know exactly what "support" the speaker was talking about? Giving money to charities? Volunteering at an

animal shelter? Writing state legislators and urging them to change laws? Your job as a persuasive speaker is to be clear about what you want to create, reinforce, or change in your audience.

For your speech to have persuasive power, you must also consider your audience and choose a goal that is feasible for them. Persuasion isn't an on/off switch. It's more like a thermometer. Skillful persuasive speakers respect and identify a persuasive goal that is calibrated to the audience. Think of persuasion as a continuum or line going both directions. At one end is strong disagreement. At the other end is strong agreement. Your audience members, either as a group or individually, are sitting somewhere on that line in relation to your central idea statement, or what we are going to call a proposition in this chapter.

Persuasion Scale

For example, your speech proposition might be something like "The main cause of climate change is human activity." You are claiming that climate change is due to the harmful things that humans have done to the environment. To be an effective persuasive speaker, one of your first jobs after choosing this topic would be to determine where your audience "sits" on the continuum.

> + 3 means strongly agree to the point of making lifestyle choices to lessen climate change (such as riding a bike instead of driving a car, recycling, eating certain kinds of foods, and advocating for government policy changes).
>
> + 2 means agree but not to the point of acting upon it or only acting on it in small ways.
>
> + 1 as mildly agrees with your proposition; that is, they think it's probably true, but the issue doesn't affect them personally.
>
> 0 means neutral, no opinion, or feeling too uninformed to decide.
>
> – 1 means mildly opposed to the proposition but willing to listen to those with whom they disagree.
>
> – 2 means disagreement to the point of dismissing the idea pretty quickly.
>
> – 3 means strong opposition to the point that the concept of climate change itself isn't even listened to or acknowledged as a valid subject.

Since everyone in the audience is somewhere on this line or continuum, you can accept the fact that any movement toward +3 or to the right is a win. Trying to change an audience from -3 (strong disagreement) to +3 (strong agreement) in a single speech would be quite impossible. When you understand this, you can make strategic choices about the content of your speech.

In this example, if you knew that most of the audience was at -2 or -3, your speech could focus on opening their minds to the possibility of climate change and provide the science behind human causes. On the other hand, if you knew your audience was at +1 or +2, you could focus on urging them to take bold steps, like giving up their gasoline-powered vehicles.

A proposition is assumed to be in some way controversial, or a "stretch" for the audience. Some people in the audience will disagree with your proposition or at least have no opinion; they are not "on your side."

There will be those in the audience who disagree with your proposition but who are willing to listen. Some members of the audience may already agree with you, although they don't know why. Both groups could be called the **target audience**. At the same time, another cluster of your audience may be extremely opposed to your position to the degree that they probably will not give you a fair hearing. They probably can't be persuaded. Focus on your target audience, they are the one you can persuade.

Why is Persuasion Hard?

Persuasion is hard mainly because we have a bias against change. We go out of our way to protect our beliefs, attitudes, and values. We selectively expose ourselves to messages that we already agree with, rather than those that confront or challenge us. We find it uncomfortable to be confronted with conflicting information or viewpoints.

Additionally, during a persuasive speech the audience members are holding a mental dialogue with the speaker or at least the speaker's content. The processes that the human mind goes through while it listens to a persuasive message is like a silent conversation. In their minds, audience members are producing doubts or reservations about your proposal. If we could listen in on one of these conversations, it might go something like this:

> Speaker: Switching to a plant-based diet is the best action you can take to support a reduction in the CO-2 emissions harming the climate.

> Audience Member Mind: Yeah, I hear what you're saying, but eating like that won't give me enough protein.

The audience member has a doubt or reservation about the speaker's proposal. We can call these doubts "yeah, buts" because the audience members are thinking, "Yeah, but what about—?" It's a skill of good persuasion speechwriting to anticipate reservations.

Solutions to the Difficulty of Persuasion

With these reasons for the resistance audience members have to persuasion, what is a speaker to do? Here are some strategies.

First, choose a feasible goal for the persuasive action you want the audience to take. Going back to our continuum, trying to move an audience from -3 to +2 or +3 is too big a move. Having reasonable persuasive goals is the first way to meet resistance. Even moving someone from -3 to -2 is progress, and over time these small shifts can eventually result in a significant amount of persuasion.

Secondly, as speakers we must address reservations. While speechwriters aren't mind-readers, we can easily imagine reservations about our proposition and build a response to those reservations into the speech. Using the example above, a speaker might say:

> Switching to a plant-based diet is the best action you can take to support a reduction in the CO-2 emissions harming the climate. I urge all of you to consider this important dietary change. Perhaps you are thinking that

a plant-based diet won't provide enough protein. That is a common concern. Nutritionists at the website Forks Over Knives explain how the staples of a PB diet—whole grains, legumes, and nuts—provide ample protein.

Here, the speaker acknowledges a valid reservation and then offers a rebuttal. This is called a two-tailed argument. The speaker articulates a possible argument against their proposition and then refutes it.

The third strategy is to keep in mind that since you are asking the audience to change something, they must view the benefits of the change as worth the stress of the change. In effect, audiences want to know: "What's in it for me?" (WIIFM). As a speaker, you should give thought to that question and in your speech address the benefit, advantage, or improvement that the audience will gain by taking the action you propose.

Structure of a Persuasive Speech

A persuasive speech shares with an informational speech the same four elements for a strongly structured speech: introduction, body, conclusion, and connectors. Like informative speeches, preparation requires thoughtful attention to the given circumstances of the speech occasion, as well as audience analysis in terms of demographic and psychographic features. That said, there are some elements unique to a persuasive speech.

General and Specific Purpose

General Purpose: To Persuade

Specific Purpose: To motivate my audience of campus administrators to provide LGBTQ+ safe spaces on campus.

This looks familiar up to this point. The general purpose is one of the three broad speech goals (to instruct, to persuade, to inspire or entertain). The specific purpose statement follows a clear T.W.A.C. pattern:

To + **W**ord: To convince

Audience: campus administrators

Content: LGBTQ+ safe spaces

What is unique to persuasive speeches is what comes next, the proposition.

Propositions

Informational speeches require a thesis. This is the central idea of the speech; its "takeaway." Persuasive speeches equally require a strong focus on the main idea, but we call this something else: a **proposition**. A proposition is a statement that expresses a judgement or opinion about which you want audience in agreement. Remember that propositions must be something that can be argued. To say, "The earth is round" isn't a proposition. "The earth is flat" is a proposition.

- Converting to solar energy saves homeowners money.
- A vegan diet is the most ethical way to eat.
- Universities should provide on-line learning options for all classes.
- The Constitution's Second Amendment does not include possession of automatic weapons for private use.

Like a thesis statement for an informative speech, a proposition statement is best when it not only clearly states the judgment or opinion for which you seek audience agreement, but also provides a succinct preview of the reasons for that judgement.

Universities should provide LGBTQ+ safe spaces on campus to promote visibility, build community, and protect well-being for LGBTQ+ students and their allies.

Types of Propositions

If you take a closer look at the propositions above, you'll notice that they suggest several types of persuasion. In fact, there are several broad categories of propositions, determined by their primary goal. These are: a) propositions of fact, b) propositions of value, c) propositions of policy, and d) propositions of definition.

Proposition of Fact

Speeches with this type of proposition attempt to establish the truth of a statement. The core of the proposition isn't whether something is morally right or wrong, only that a statement is supported by evidence or not. These propositions are not facts such as "the chemical symbol for water is H20." Rather, propositions of fact are statements over which people disagree and there is evidence on both sides. Some examples of propositions of fact are:

- Converting to solar energy saves homeowners money.
- Experiments using animals are essential to the development of many life-saving medical procedures.
- Climate change has been caused by human activity.

Notice that in none of these are any values—good or bad—mentioned. The point of these propositions is to prove with evidence the truth of a statement.

Proposition of Value

Propositions of fact have the primary purpose of arguing that something exists in a particular way. Propositions of value, on the other hand, have as their primary purpose to argue that one thing is better than another. When the proposition has a word such as "good," "bad," "best," "worst," "just," "unjust," "ethical," "unethical," "moral," "immoral," "beneficial," "harmful," "advantageous," or "disadvantageous," then it's a proposition of value. Some examples include:

- Hybrid cars are the best form of automobile transportation available today.
- Mascots that involve Native American names, characters, and symbols are unjust.
- A vegan diet is the most ethical way to eat.

Propositions of value require a first step: defining the "value" word. If you are trying to convince your audience that something is "unjust," you will have to make clear what you mean by that term. For different people, "best" might mean "safest," "least expensive," "most environmentally responsible," "stylish," "powerful," or "prestigious." Obviously, in the case of the first proposition above, it means "environmentally responsible." It's the first job of the speaker, after introducing the speech and stating the proposition, to explain what "best form of automobile transportation" means. Then the proposition would be defended with separate arguments.

Proposition of Policy

These propositions are easy to identify because they almost always have the word "should" in them. These propositions call for a change in policy or practice (including those in a government, community, or school), or they can call for the audience to adopt a certain behavior.

- The federal government should act to ensure clean water standards for all citizens.
- Universities should eliminate attendance requirements.
- States should lower taxes on food.

The proposition determines the approach to the speech, especially the organization. The exact phrasing of the proposition should be carefully done to be reasonable, positive, and appropriate for the context and audience.

Propositions of Definition

Propositions of definitions argue that a word, phrase, or concept has a particular meaning. Lawyers, legislators, and scholars often write briefs, present persuasive speeches, or compose articles to define terms that are vital to defendants, citizens, or disciplines. Some examples might be:

- The Second Amendment to the Constitution does not include possession of automatic weapons for private use.
- Alcoholism should be considered a disease because...
- Thomas Jefferson's definition of inalienable rights did not include a right to privacy.

In each of these examples, the proposition is that the definition of these things needs to be changed or viewed differently, but the audience isn't asked to change an attitude or action.

These are not strict categories. A proposition of value most likely contains elements of facts and definitions, for example. However, identifying the primary category for a persuasive speech focuses the speaker on the ultimate purpose of the speech.

Pro-Arguments

Once you know your proposition, the next step is to make your case for your judgement or opinion through clear and distinct points. These are the main points of the body of your persuasive speech. We call these the "pro" or "for" arguments. You should present at least three distinct arguments in favor of your proposition. Expanding on the example above,

> General Purpose: To Persuade

> Specific Purpose: To motivate my audience of campus administrators to provide LGBTQ+ safe spaces on campus.

> Proposition: Universities should provide LGBTQ+ safe spaces on campus in order to promote visibility, build community, and protect well-being for LGBTQ+ students and their allies.

Three pro-arguments for the proposition are:

Pro-Argument #1: Creating a safe space makes LGBTQ+ community more visible and central to campus life, instead of marginalized.

Pro-Argument #2: Safe spaces create a place where LGBTQ+ and their allies learn to build networks, friendship, and support circles.

Pro-Argument #3: With a safe and centralized space bringing together this community, instances of bias or harassment can be brought to counselors, making for a safer community.

Two-Tailed Arguments

There is one more crucial element following pro-arguments. These are unique to persuasive speeches. As discussed above, it's essential to anticipate and address audience reservations about your propositions. These are the two-tailed arguments that articulate the reservation and then address it or refute it. In the example we're using, such a statement might look like this:

"Perhaps you are thinking that an LGBTQ+ safe space isn't necessary on campus because there are already places on campus that provide this function. I understand that concern. However, a space that is officially provided by the University provides access to resources with trained personnel. The national organization CampusPride provides training to university facilitators for exactly this reason."

There are some techniques for rebuttal or refutation that work better than others. You would not want to say, "If you are one of the people who believe this about my proposition, you are wrong." It's better to say that their reservations are "misconceptions," "myths," or "mistaken ideas" that are commonly held about the proposition.

Building Upon Your Persuasive Speech's Arguments

Once you have constructed the key arguments, it's time to be sure the main points are well supported with evidence.

First, your evidence should be from sources that the audience will find credible. If you can find the same essential information from two sources but know that the audience will find the information more credible from one source than another, use and cite the information from the more credible one. For example, if you find the same statistical data on Wikipedia and the US Department of Labor's website, cite the US Department of Labor. Audiences also accept information from sources they consider unbiased or indifferent. Gallup polls, for example, have been considered reliable sources of survey data because unlike some organizations, Gallup does not have a cause (political or otherwise) it's supporting.

Secondly, your evidence should be new to the audience. New evidence is more attention-getting, and you will appear more credible if you tell the audience something new (as long as you cite it well) than if you use the "same old, same old" evidence they have heard before.

Third, in order to be effective and ethical, your supporting evidence should be relevant and not used out of context, manipulated, or edited to change its meaning.

After choosing the evidence and apportioning it to the correct parts of the speech, you will want to consider the use of metaphors, quotations, rhetorical devices, and narratives that will enhance the language and "listenability" of your speech. Narratives are especially good for introduction and conclusions, to get attention and to leave the audience with

something dramatic. You might refer to the narrative in the introduction again in the conclusion to give the speech a sense of finality.

Lastly, you will want to decide if you should use any type of presentation aid for the speech. The decision to use visuals such as PowerPoint slides or a video clip in a persuasive speech should take into consideration the effect of the visuals on the audience and the time allotted for the speech. The charts, graphs, or photographs you use should be focused and credibly done.

Organization of a Persuasive Speech

You can see that the overall structure of a persuasive speech follows a common model: introduction, body (arguments and support), two-tailed arguments, and conclusion. Study the example at the end of this chapter to see this structure in action.

In speechwriting, you can think of a speech structure like the building of a house and organization like the arrangement of the rooms within it. As with other speeches, persuasive speeches can be organized topically, chronologically, or spatially. However, persuasive speeches often follow a problem-solution or problem-cause-solution pattern.

Organization for a proposition of fact

If your proposition is one of fact or definition, it will be best to use a topical organization for the body of your speech. That means that you will have two to four discrete, separate topics in support of the proposition.

Proposition: Converting to solar energy saves homeowners money.

1. (Pro-Argument 1) Solar energy can be economical to install.
2. (Pro-Argument 2) The government awards grants for solar.
3. (Pro-Argument 3) Solar energy reduces power bills.
4. (Pro-Argument 4) Solar energy requires less money for maintenance.

Organization for a proposition of value

A persuasive speech that incorporates a proposition of value will have a slightly different structure. A proposition of value must first define the "value" word for clarity and provide a basis for the other arguments of the speech. Then the pro-arguments for the proposition based on the definition.

Proposition: Hybrid cars are the best form of automotive transportation available today.

1. (Definition of value) Automotive transportation that is best meets three standards: dependable, economical, and environmentally responsible.
2. (Pro-Argument 1) Studies show that hybrid cars are durable and dependable.
3. (Pro-Argument 2) Hybrid cars are fuel-efficient.
4. (Pro-Argument 3) Hybrid cars are environmentally responsible.

Organization for a propositions of policy

The most common type of outline organizations for speeches with propositions of policy is problem-solution or problem-cause-solution. Typically, we don't feel any motivation to change unless we are convinced that some harm, problem, need, or deficiency exists, and even more, that it affects us personally. Therefore, the organization of a speech about policy needs to first explain the problem and its cause, followed by the solution in the form of 3-5 pro-arguments.

Proposition: Universities should provide on-line learning options for all classes.

1. (Problem) Regular attendance in a physical classroom is no longer possible for all students.
2. (Cause) Changes brought about by the COVID pandemic have made guaranteed classroom attendance difficult.
3. (Pro-Argument 1) Providing on-line learning options protects the health of students.
4. (Pro-Argument 2) On-line learning serves students who cannot come to campus.
5. (Pro-Argument 3) Access to on-line learning allows students to maintain employment while still going to school.

To complete this outline, along with introduction and conclusion, your pro-arguments should be supported with fact, quotations, and statistics.

Conclusion

Your persuasive speech in class, as well as in real life, is an opportunity to share a passion or cause that you believe will matter to society and help the audience live a better life. Even if you are initially uncomfortable with the idea of persuasion, we use it all the time in diverse ways. Choose your topic based on your commitment and experience, look for quality evidence, craft your proposition so that it will be clear and audience appropriate, and put the finishing touches on it with an eye toward enhancing your *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*.

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16. Special Occasion Speeches

Speaking to Inspire, Entertain, or Honor

In this chapter . . .

Special occasion speeches are the umbrella term for all speeches that don't fall into either informative or persuasive. As such there is a lot of diversity within speeches of this style. These speeches are often more personal. Additionally, they are more likely to use elements of storytelling and personal reflection. We cover the four ingredients of special occasion speeches, types of speeches in this category, and tips for delivering a special occasion speech.

Sometimes the speaking opportunities that life brings our way have nothing to do with specifically informing or persuading an audience; instead, we are asked to speak during special occasions in our lives. Whether you are standing up to give a speech at an awards ceremony or a toast at a wedding, knowing how to deliver speeches in a variety of different contexts is the nature of special occasion speaking. In this chapter, we are going to explore what special occasion speeches are as well as several types of special occasion speeches ranging from humorous to somber.

In broad terms, a special occasion speech is designed to honor, celebrate, appreciate, acknowledge, commemorate, or eulogize. Like informative or persuasive speeches, special occasion speeches should communicate a clear message, but the manner of speaking used is typically different. The word "special" in the term "special occasion speeches" is subjective in that while some speaking occasions truly are special occasions (e.g., a toast at a wedding, an acceptance speech at an awards banquet, a eulogy at a funeral for a loved one), they can also be given at more mundane events, such as the hundreds of public relations speeches that big companies give every day. The goal of a special occasion speech is to stir an audience's emotions and make them feel a certain way in response to the situation or occasion. The general purpose of a special occasion speech might be "to inspire," "to celebrate," "to honor," or "to entertain."

To help us think through how to be effective in delivering special occasion speeches, let's look at four key ingredients: preparation, adaptation to the occasion, adaptation to the audience, and mindfulness about the time.

Four Key Ingredients of Special Occasion Speeches

Be Prepared

First, the biggest mistake you can make when standing to deliver a special occasion speech is to under-prepare or simply not prepare at all. We've stressed the need for preparation throughout this text, and special occasion speeches are no exception. You must think through the speech before you stand up and speak out. If the situation is impromptu, like a

toast, even jotting down some basic notes on a napkin is better than not having any plan at all for what you are going to say.

Adapt to the Occasion

Not all content is appropriate for all occasions. Wedding toasts are often humorous. If you are asked to deliver a speech commemorating the first anniversary of a school shooting, then obviously telling a joke wouldn't be appropriate. Commencement speeches at graduation are usually full of energy as they celebrate and inspire the audience. A eulogy, on the other hand, is typically solemn. Being a competent speaker is about being both personally effective and socially appropriate. Different special speaking occasions require different content, but also appropriate levels of formality, seriousness, tone, and demeanor.

Adapt to Your Audience

Once again, we cannot stress the importance of audience adaptation enough in this text. Different audiences will respond differently to speech material, so the more you know about your audience, the more likely you'll succeed in your speech.

Be Mindful of the Time

The last major consideration for delivering special occasion speeches successfully is to be mindful of your time. Acceptance speeches and toasts should be relatively short (typically under two minutes). A speech of introduction should be brief, too—just long enough to tell the audience what they need to know about the person being introduced in a style that prepares them to appreciate that person's remarks. In contrast, commencement speeches, eulogies, and speeches to commemorate events can run ten to twenty minutes in length, depending on the context.

Types of Special Occasion Speeches

Speeches of Introduction

A speech of introduction is a short speech given by the host of an event or ceremony that introduces another speaker and their speech. Few things are worse than when the introducer of a speaker stands up and says, "This is Wyatt Ford. He's going to talk about stress." While we did learn the speaker's name and the topic, the introduction falls flat. Just like any other speech, a speech of introduction should be a complete speech and have a clear introduction (beginning), body, and conclusion.

For the introduction element of a speech of introduction, think of a hook that will make your audience interested in the upcoming speaker. Did you read a news article related to the speaker's topic? Have you been impressed by a

presentation that you've heard the speaker give in the past? You need to find something that can grab the audience's attention and make them excited about hearing the main speaker.

The body of your speech should be devoted to three main points.

- First, tell your audience in general terms about the overarching topic of the speech.
- Next, tell the audience why the speaker is a credible presenter on the topic. Has the speaker written books or articles on the subject? Has the speaker had special life events that made them qualified?
- Lastly, you need to briefly explain to the audience why they should care about the upcoming speech. This outline can be adjusted; for example, you can give the biographical information first, but these three areas should be covered.

The conclusion for this type of speech welcomes the speaker to the platform. Many introducers will conclude by saying something like, "I am looking forward to hearing how Wyatt Ford's advice and wisdom can help all of us today, so please join me in welcoming Dr. Wyatt Ford." At this point, you as the person introducing the speaker are "handing off" the speaking duties to someone else, so it's common to end your speech of introduction by clapping as the speaker comes on stage or shaking the speaker's hand.

Speeches of Presentation

A presentation speech is a brief speech given to accompany a prize, award, or honor. Speeches of presentation can be as simple as saying, "This year's recipient of the Lavache Public Speaking prize is Ryann Curley," or could last up to five minutes as the speaker explains why the honoree was chosen for the award.
When preparing a speech for a presentation, it's always important to ask how long the speech should be. Once you know the time limit, then you can set out to create the speech itself.

- First, explain what the award or honor is and why the award is important, significant, or special.
- Second, explain what the recipient has accomplished to earn the award. Why is this person the best person for this award? Did the person win a race? Did the person write an important piece of literature? Did the person mediate conflict? Whatever the recipient has done, you need to clearly highlight their work.
- Lastly, if the race or competition was conducted in a public forum and numerous people didn't win, you may want to recognize those people for their efforts as well. While you don't want to steal the show away from the winner, you may want to highlight the work of the other competitors or nominees.

Speeches of Acceptance

The complement to a speech of presentation is the speech of acceptance. This is a speech given by the recipient of a prize or honor. There are three typical components of a speech of acceptance:

- First, thank the givers of the award or honor, thank those who helped you achieve your goal, and put the award or honor into perspective. You want to thank the people who have given you the award or honor and possibly those who voted for you.
- Second, you want to give credit to those who helped you achieve the award or honor. No person accomplishes things in life on their own. We all have family members, friends, and colleagues who support us and help us achieve what we do in life, and a speech of acceptance is the time to graciously recognize those individuals.

- Lastly, put the award in perspective. Tell the people listening to your speech why the award is meaningful to you. If you know you are up for an award, the odds of your winning are high. In order to avoid blubbering through an acceptance speech, have one ready. A good rule to remember is: Be thankful, be gracious, be short.

Toasts

At one time or another, almost everyone is going to be asked to deliver a toast. A toast is a speech designed to congratulate, appreciate, or remember. Toasts can be delivered for the purpose of congratulating someone for an honor, a new job, or getting married. You can also toast someone to show your appreciation for something they have done. Often, we toast people to remember them and what they have accomplished.

When preparing a toast, the first goal is always to keep your remarks brief. Toasts are usually given during the middle of some kind of festive event (e.g., wedding, retirement party, farewell party), and you don't want your toast to take away from those festivities for too long. Second, the goal of a toast is to focus attention on the person or persons being toasted—not on the speaker.

As such, while you are speaking, you need to focus your attention on the people being toasted, both by physically looking at them and by keeping your message about them. You should also avoid any inside jokes between you and the people being toasted because toasts are public and should be accessible for everyone who hears them. To conclude a toast, simply say something like, "Please join me in recognizing Gina for her achievement" and lift your glass. When you lift your glass, this will signal to others to do the same and then you can all take a drink, which is the end of your speech.

Eulogies

A eulogy is a speech given in honor of someone who has died (Don't confuse "eulogy" with "elegy," a poem or song of mourning). Not to sound depressing, but since everyone who is alive will someday die, the chance of your being asked to give a eulogy someday for a friend or family member is significant. However, when the time comes to deliver a eulogy, it's good to know how to prepare your remarks.

When preparing a eulogy, first you need to know as much information about the deceased as possible. While you can rely on your own information, it's a good idea to ask friends and relatives of the deceased for their memories. Second, although eulogies are delivered on the serious and sad occasion of a funeral or memorial service for the deceased, it's very helpful to look for at least one point to be lighter or humorous.

If you are asked to give a eulogy, that means you were probably close to the deceased and are experiencing shock, sadness, and disbelief at your loved one's passing. The last thing that you will want to do (or be in a mental state to do) is figure out how to structure your eulogy. To that end, here are three parts of a eulogy (i.e., main points) you can use to write one without worrying about being original with structure or organizational patterns: praise, lament, and consolation.

- Praise. Remind the audience what made that person so special. Praise them and their accomplishments. This can include notable achievements, personal qualities or anecdotes and stories.
- Lament. To lament means to express grief or sorrow, which is what everyone at a funeral has gathered to do. You will want to acknowledge that everyone is sad, and that the deceased's passing will be difficult to get through.
- Console. The last step in a eulogy is to console the audience, or to offer comfort in a time of grief. What you must remember (and many people often forget) is that a eulogy isn't a speech for the person who has died; it's a speech for the people who are still living to try to help them deal with the loss. You'll want to end your eulogy on a positive

note. Offer some hope that someday, things will get better. If the deceased was a religious person, this is where you might want to incorporate elements of that belief system.

Speeches of Farewell

A farewell speech allows someone to say good-bye to one part of their life as they move on to the next part of life. Perhaps you've accepted a new job and are leaving your current job, or you're graduating from college and entering the work force. When preparing a farewell speech, the goal should be to thank the people in your current position and let them know how much you appreciate them as you make the move to your next position in life. Second, you want to express to your audience how much the experience has meant to you. A farewell speech is a time to commemorate and think about the good times you've had. As such, you should avoid negativity during this speech. Lastly, you want to make sure that you end the speech on a high note.

Speeches for Commencements

A commencement speech is designed to recognize and celebrate the achievements of a graduating class or other group of people. If you're ever asked to deliver a commencement speech, there are some key points to think through when deciding on your speech's content.

- If there is a specific theme for the graduation, make sure that your commencement speech addresses that theme. If there is no specific theme, come up with one for your speech. Some common commencement speech themes are commitment, competitiveness, competence, confidence, decision making, discipline, ethics, failure (and overcoming failure), faith, generosity, integrity, involvement, leadership, learning, persistence, personal improvement, professionalism, reality, responsibility, and self-respect.
- Talk about your life and how graduates can learn from your experiences to avoid pitfalls or take advantages of life. How can your life inspire the graduates in their future endeavors?
- Make the speech humorous. Commencement speeches should be entertaining and make the audience laugh a bit.
- Be brief! Nothing is more painful than a commencement speaker who drones on and on. Remember, the graduates are there to get their diplomas; their families are there to watch the graduates walk across the stage.
- Remember, while you may be the speaker, you've been asked to impart wisdom and advice for the people graduating and moving on with their lives, so keep it focused on them.
- Place the commencement speech into the broader context of the graduates' lives. Show the graduates how the advice and wisdom you are offering can be utilized to make their own lives better.

Overall, it's important to make sure that you have fun when delivering a commencement speech. Remember, it's a huge honor and responsibility to be asked to deliver a commencement speech, so take the time to really think through and prepare your speech.

Special Occasion Delivery

Your delivery for a special occasion speech will skew in favor of manuscript speaking rather than extemporaneous. While

it's still vital to establish eye contact with your audience and to not sound like you are reading, it's also important to get the words exactly right because the occasion is special.

You will need to practice your special occasion speech as much as or even more than you did for your informative or persuasive speeches. You need to know what you are going to say and feel comfortable knowing what is coming next. Knowing your speech will also allow you to counteract the flow of adrenaline into your system, something particularly important given that special occasion speeches tend to be very emotional, not just for the audience, but for you as well. Basically, knowing your speech well allows you to incorporate the emotion that a special occasion speech is meant to convey, something that is hard to do when you read the entirety of your speech. In this way your audience will sense the pride you feel for a graduating class during a commencement speech, the sorrow you feel for the deceased during a eulogy, or the gratitude you have when accepting an award.

Conclusion

Special occasion speaking is the most varied type of speaking to cover; however, there are some general rules to keep in mind regardless of what type you are engaged in. Remember that using good, evocative language is key, and that it's important that you deliver your speech in a way that both conveys the proper emotion for the occasion as well as allows you to give the speech exactly as you wrote it.

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