



Dynamic Presentations

| Amanda Quibell



Open Educational Resource

Digital textbook | Fall 2023

DYNAMIC PRESENTATIONS

COMM 2021

AMANDA QUIBELL

Georgian College; College Libraries Ontario



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ACCESSING AND USING DYNAMIC PRESENTATIONS

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- [Front Matter](#)
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- [Communication Anxiety: The Fear of Public Speaking](#)
- [Presentation Priorities: Audience, Voice, Delivery, and Visuals](#)
- [Structuring your Speech](#)
- [Types of Speeches](#)
- [Research and Citations](#)
- [Considerations for Speech](#)

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Amanda Quibell

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This OER, *Dynamic Presentations*, is a collection of resources adapted by Amanda Quibell to meet the needs of students in *Dynamic Presentation* courses. In most sections of this OER, updates have been made to the existing content to improve usability and accessibility, incorporate interactive elements and improve the overall student experience. This collection reuses content from the following key resources:

- [Advanced Public Speaking](#) by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).
- [Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking](#) by University of Minnesota, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#).

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ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Amanda Quibell

Accessibility concerns or feedback about this OER? Please email [OER\[at\]georgiancollege.ca](mailto:OER[at]georgiancollege.ca)

Accessibility features of the web version of this resource

The web version of *Dynamic Presentations* has been designed with accessibility in mind by incorporating the following features:

- It has been optimized for people who use screen-reader technology.
 - all content can be navigated using a keyboard.
 - links, headings, and tables are formatted to work with screen readers.
- All images in this guide are described fully in the text, alt-tag or in an image description section for complex images.
- Information is not conveyed by colour alone.
- Pressbooks has built in features such as the ability to change font size.

Other file formats available

In addition to the web version, additional files are available in a number of file formats including PDF.

Known accessibility issues and areas for improvement

This book's adapters have attempted to improve upon existing features from the original sources and improve these materials for all users.

While we strive to ensure that this resource is as accessible and usable as possible, we might not always get it right. Any issues we identify will be listed below. If you encounter issues with this text, please notify your Professor.

List of Known Accessibility Issues

Location of Issue	Need for Improvement	Timeline	Work Around
Throughout	APA style references use a full typed out URL that is not accessible	Wait for official APA style update	Leave the links as plain text to avoid the reading out of the URL x 2
Throughout	Video captioning is limited to mostly autogenerated text	–	Meets current AODA requirements.

Accessibility standards

The web version of this resource has been designed to meet AODA requirements, along with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#), level AA. In addition, it follows all guidelines in [Appendix A: Checklist for Accessibility](#) of the [Accessibility Toolkit – 2nd Edition](#).

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INTRODUCTION: TAKING A PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS

Dynamic Presentations by Amanda Quibell

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Please visit the web version of [*Dynamic Presentations*](#) to access the complete book, watch videos or complete interactive. You may also use the links provided to access video content on the web.

In this chapter...

- [Public Speaking—So What, Who Cares?](#)
- [Giving and Receiving Feedback: It is Harder Than You Think](#)
- [Virtual Presentations: Making Eye Contact is Key](#)
- [Team Speeches](#)

PUBLIC SPEAKING - SO WHAT, WHO CARES?

If you can't communicate and talk to other people and get across your ideas, you're giving up your potential.
– Warren Buffet, American business magnate

Why Does Public Speaking Matter?

If you are a student, public speaking may be the most important class you take. Some of you expect public speaking will be part of your future—maybe you are going into business, teaching, or politics, and you will be expected to give speeches on a regular basis. Even if you don't expect to be delivering formal speeches, *all* careers require some public speaking – for example, training others at work, speaking to clients, or explaining things to patients.

Here are a few more reasons having good presentation skills is important to you.

Employers Seek Good Communicators

*Getting ahead of the next curve requires courage and communication:
Courage to determine the next bold move, and communication to keep the troops committed to the value of moving forward.*

Rallying stakeholders to move together in a common course of action is all part of the innovation and survival process.

Leaders at every level in an organization need to be skillful at creating resonance if that organization is to control its own destiny.

— Nancy Duarte, *Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Audiences*

Employers want to hire people who are good communicators. Learning to develop your public speaking skills will help you to be employable and to succeed in your future career. The Conference Board of Canada lists communications skills as the top attributes employers want to see on resumes.

Public Speaking Skills Helps with Career Improvement

Public speaking is not just essential to get the job but to keep and advance in a job. Surveys of college graduates reported oral and written communication skills, public speaking, group leadership, and motivating and managing others were most essential for career improvement. In a Gallup Alumni survey, graduates reported they wished they had more communication training to help them once they have graduated.

Public Speaking is a Part of Your Civic Responsibility

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world.

Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead, American Cultural Anthropologist

Speaking up for what you believe in is an important part of being in a democracy. This is not all about you. The opportunities you have been given and the education you are receiving can be used to help others. [Boyer, in an article titled *Civic Education for Responsible Citizens*](#), suggests at the heart of a good education is civic engagement. Students should “develop responsible ways of thinking, believing and acting.”

You Can Make a Difference

Take a look at how others have spoken out and made a difference.

Watch this excerpt from Greta Thunberg. At age 16, she spoke at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019.

Watch [Greta’s full speech on YouTube \(2 mins\)](#).

At age 19, Zach Wahls stood before the Iowa House Judiciary Committee to talk about his experience of growing up with same-sex parents.

Watch [Zaach Wahls Speaks about Family on YouTube \(3 mins\)](#)

Amanda Gorman at 22-years-old read her poem, *The Hill We Climb* at the inauguration of US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

Watch [Amanda Gorman reads inauguration poem, ‘The Hill We Climb’ on YouTube \(6 mins\)](#)

Presentational Literacy Helps You Share Your Ideas

Chris Anderson, from TED Talks, reminds us of the campfires of old have become the fires of the internet

where ideas can spread. More than ever presentational literacy is important. (Heads up, there is an embedded ad in this video)

Watch [We can help you master public speaking – Chris Anderson on YouTube \(5 mins\)](#)

Public Speaking Allows You to Tell Your Story

Each of us has a story to tell. Think about a tough time you went through and how you came out stronger having been through that experience. What if you could take that experience and use it to help others push through?

Think about how you had to learn something the hard way. What if you could tell others about what you learned so they don't make the same mistake?

Think about a historic event you witnessed: 911, Global Pandemic, Race Riots. What if you could tell others what you witnessed so they could see history as more than words on a page?

A lot of public speaking is just people telling their stories. Here examples.

Go to National Public Radio's [This I Believe](#) and find a story.

Go to the [Moth, the Art and Craft of Storytelling](#), and watch one of the speeches. This club in New York City had now gone international. (Think of a coffeehouse meets poetry slam meets comedy club.)

Public Speaking Can Help You Grow as a Person

When most people think about public speaking, they think about what they are giving to others. Very few people think of public speaking in terms of what they get. You will find when you deliver a speech, you gain knowledge, you gain confidence, and you gain a wonderful feeling of accomplishment.

Speech coach Martin McDermott helps his students think about what they will gain by asking them, "What will go right when you speak?"

- I will learn about public speaking, a workplace skill in great demand.
- I will stand up to one of the greatest fears human beings face.
- My audience will learn something valuable from me they can apply to their lives.
- I will experience power and self-confidence I didn't know I had.
- I will see myself in a new and more positive light.
- I will share interesting parts of myself, and others will come to know and like me.
- I will discover a hidden talent for speaking.
- I will grow as a person. So What, Who Cares?

One of the things you should do as you write a speech is to ask, "**So what who cares?**" Who is going to listen to your speech and why they should care about what you are saying?

You should care because public speaking is not a class you take, it is what you do to get your message across.

It is not about getting a grade; it is about learning to develop important skills that will help you accomplish your goals. It is not about you as a professional, having to give a speech; it is about you having an opportunity to share your message. It is not about you as a teacher having to teach, but about students who need to learn.

So what, who cares? Hopefully, you care. Hopefully, you care enough about yourself to try to be the best version of yourself.

What happens from this point on, is up to you.

Be skillful in speech, that you may be strong.
Merikare, Egyptian Pharaoh

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- Public speaking is a skill that is not only helpful while you are in college but will likely be helpful in job attainment and career advancement.
- Doing public speaking will help you grow in knowledge and gain confidence.

Bonus Features

Watch [Happy National Speech and Debate Education Day from Jared Padalecki!](#)

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GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK: IT IS HARDER THAN YOU THINK

- Your colleague asks you to listen to them practice their speech practice and give them feedback.
- Your teacher asks you to give feedback to another classmate about their speech.
- Your boss asks, “What did you think about my speech?”

In each case, the person is looking to you to provide feedback. In this chapter, you will learn about how to assess the feedback situation, how to offer constructive criticism, and how to graciously receive criticism. Let’s start with how to ask for feedback and listen graciously.

Receiving Feedback

When you ask for feedback from others, receive their feedback as a gift. Someone is taking their time and giving it to you; someone is putting themselves out there and saying things that might cause discomfort, but they are doing it for you. Individuals vary on how they receive feedback and how comfortable they are with being evaluated.

When receiving feedback, try doing the following:

- Sit in a non-defensive posture. It is tempting to cross your arms and to tense up all your muscles when receiving oral feedback. Keep your body open and loose. Staying open helps them to feel like you really want their suggestions and closed arms can equal a closed mind — keep an open body.
- Do not take feedback as a personal insult.
- If the feedback is verbal, write down the suggestions, even if you disagree with the suggestions. Respect the other person’s opinions by writing them down. It makes them feel like they have been heard and you appreciate the feedback they are giving. Writing the feedback down also helps you to not cross your arms defensively—see suggestion one— and it helps you remember the suggestions.
- Do not take it as a personal insult. *Seriously!*
- Avoid the temptation to defend yourself. “I did it this way because...” or, “I thought it would be best to...” You already know why you did things the way you did. Interrupting them to tell them the reasons you did what you did comes off as defensive and reduces the likelihood they will give you all the feedback

they have to offer. You already know what you were thinking and by telling them you haven't advanced your situation. Use this time to learn what they are thinking.

- Do not take it as a personal insult. *Really, this is so important.*
- Breathe. Most people feel stress when someone is giving them constructive criticism, breathe and relax so you can really listen.
- Do not take it personally. Do not take it personally. Do not take it personally. This cannot be emphasized enough! Since it is about your performance or your speech writing, it is hard not to feel criticism of your speech as a criticism of your person. Try to take criticism instead as someone caring enough about you to push you to grow.

After Every Speech, Do a Self-Evaluation

Allison Shapira of Global Speaking suggests you do a self-evaluation after each speech:

1. **What did I do well?**
2. **What didn't I do so well?**
3. **What am I going to do differently next time?**

Write these down and keep this on file for the next time you give a speech.

Constructive Criticism

There will be times when others look to you to read over their speech or listen to them practice and then give them constructive criticism. Constructive criticism is made up of two words: constructive—the building of something, and criticism—the giving of a critique. So constructive criticism is critiquing with the intention of building something. When we give others constructive criticism, our goal should be to help build them to be better speakers.

Give Them Help

Reagel and Reagle came up with a creative way to remember the goal of feedback, it should **HELP**:

- Help** the speaker improve
 - Encourage** another speech
 - Lift** self-esteem
 - Provide** useful recommendations
-

Give Them a Sandwich



Diagram of the Sandwich Feedback Technique is licensed under a [CCO \(Creative Commons Zero\)](#)

One way to give constructive criticism is to use the sandwich method. Say something positive, give feedback about something they can work on to improve, and then say something positive. This way, the first and last words out of your mouth are positive.

Ask Questions

Ask honest questions that can help lead them to solutions or ask questions to soften the sound of negative feedback:

“What did you mean by...”

“Have you considered? ”

“Have you thought about...?”

“When you said... did you really mean?”

For example:

“Have you considered the impact of showing such a gruesome photo on your slide?”

“Have you considered starting with a quote? ”

“Have you thought about whether the people in the back will be able to see your poster?”

“Have you thought about using a microphone so everyone can hear you?”

Beyond the Sandwich: Data Points and Impact Statements

In her video, called “The Secret to giving Great Feedback”, LeeAnn Renninger refers to a 4 Step “Feedback Formula”.

[Watch The secret to giving great feedback | The Way We Work, a TED series on YouTube \(0 mins\)](#)

In our college class, we will focus on **steps 2 & 3**.

Data points (or clear examples)

- Name specifically what you saw or heard, and leave out any words that aren’t objective. Avoid “blur words”, which are not specific and could mean different things to different people.
- Convert any blur words into actual data points or observations. For example, instead of saying, “You didn’t engage your audience”, be specific and say “Your introduction didn’t mention what the benefits are to the audience”
- Being specific is also important with positive feedback. Saying “I really liked your presentation” doesn’t offer the other person any clear ideas of what they should keep doing. Instead, try to name specifics: “You made it very easy to understand the process when you described [give the example],” or “The visuals you included showed that [give the example]”.
- Be as clear as you can, so the presenter knows to continue doing these things!

The Impact statement

- Don’t stop at just giving the “evidence” or describing your observations. Keep going – explain how what you saw and heard impacted you.
- You might say “I really liked how you added those stories, because it helped me grasp the concepts faster,” or “the way you opened your presentation surprised me and got my attention.

By providing data points as well as impact statements, your peer critiques will be clear, specific, and provide your classmate with something they can actually use to work on to improve!

Source: Except where otherwise noted, “Beyond the Sandwich: Data Points and Impact Statements” by Amanda Quibell is licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#).

Different People, Different Types of Feedback

It is no surprise that people give and receive feedback differently. One person might take a feedback statement and be grateful for the corrections while the next person might take it as a complete insult. Below, you'll learn about some of the most common differences.

High and Low Self Monitors

Psychology researcher Mark Snyder identified people as being either high self-monitors or low self-monitors. High self-monitors typically try to fit in and play the role according to the context. They are about image, and they are motivated to fit in with their peers. They like to know what is expected, so they can adapt to the situation. Giving them useful feedback may mean pointing out how they can make changes in their message to meet the audience's expectations. When giving feedback to high self-monitors, focus the feedback on how they can elevate their credibility in the eyes of the audience.

On the other hand, low self-monitors tend to be motivated to act based on their inner beliefs and values. They are motivated to be true to their sense of self and to above all— be genuine. When giving low self-monitors feedback, encourage them to be the best speaker they can be while being true to themselves. Focus on giving them feedback in a way that encourages them to harness their unique talents.

While you may not know exactly whether they are high or low self-monitor, you likely have some idea of what motivates them. The more you can tailor your feedback to them, the more likely it is they will hear what you are saying. If you are curious about your type, you can take the quiz. You can have the person giving you feedback take the quiz as well. This can be a helpful exercise to think about how you give and receive feedback.

[Take the high and low self-monitor quiz to find out your type](#)

Cultural Differences

When you know your sickness

You're halfway cured.

French saying

In the book, *The Culture Map*, a Dutch businessman is quoted as saying. "It is all a lot of hogwash. All that positive feedback just strikes us in the face and not in the least bit motivating." People from different cultural groups have different feedback norms. As our society grows increasingly diverse, it is important to learn not just how to give good feedback, but to give feedback that demonstrates an awareness of how different cultures give and receive feedback.

Erin Meyer does international training to help business professionals understand differences and similarities and how to bridge the gap:

Managers in different parts of the world are conditioned to give feedback in drastically different ways. The Chinese manager learns never to criticize a colleague openly or in front of others, while the Dutch managers learn always to be honest and to give the message straight. Americans are trained to wrap positive messages around negative ones, while the French are trained to criticize passionately and provide positive feedback sparingly. Having a clear understanding of these differences and strategies for navigating them is crucial for leaders of cross-cultural teams.

Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map*

Upgraders and Downgraders

Meyer identifies cultures as *Upgraders* and *Downgraders*. Upgraders use words or phrases to make negative feedback feel stronger. An upgrader might say, “this is *absolutely* inappropriate.” As you read this, see if you identify more as an upgrader or downgrader.

Upgraders say:

- Absolutely—“That was absolutely shameful.”
- Totally—“You totally missed the point.”
- Strongly—“I strongly suggest that you...”

By contrast, downgraders use words to soften the criticism. A downgrader might say, “We are not quite there yet” or “This is just my opinion, but...”

Downgraders say:

- “Kind of”
- “Sort of”
- “A little”
- “Maybe”
- “Slightly”
- “This is just my opinion.”

When giving and receiving feedback across cultures, it is helpful to be aware of these differences so you can “hear” what they are really saying. Take for example this statement as a Dutch person complains about how Americans give feedback.

The problem is that we can't tell when the feedback is supposed to register to us as excellent, ok, or really poor. For a Dutchman, the word “excellent” is saved for a rare occasion and “okay” is...well, neutral. But with the Americans, the grid is different. “Excellent” is used all the time, “Okay” seems to mean, “not okay.” “Good” is only a mild complement. And when the message was intended to be bad, you can pretty much assume that, if

an American is speaking and the listener is Dutch, the real meaning of the message will be lost all together.
Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map*.

Nannette Ripmeester, Director of Expertise in Labour Mobility, illustrates these differences to her clients with a chart. This chart shows the differences between what the British say, what they mean, and what the Dutch understand. This is a condensed version of her list.

Table 1: What the British say & mean vs. what the Dutch Understand

What the British Say	What the British Mean	What the Dutch Understand
Very interesting	I don't like it	They are impressed.
Perhaps you would think about... I would suggest...	This is an order. Do it or be prepared to justify yourself	Think about this idea and do it if you like it.
Please think about that some more	It's a bad idea. Don't do it.	It's a good idea, keep developing it.
I would suggest	Do it as I want you to	An open suggestion
An issue that worries me slightly	A great worry	A minor issue
A few issues that need to be addressed	A whole lot needs to be changed	2-3 issues need rewriting

Chances are as you read this list, you identified yourself in some of the statements and identified someone you know who is in the other list. Hopefully, this made you think about how personal style can be as different as cultural style. The big idea here is when you are giving and receiving feedback, it can be helpful to try to identify their communication style and adjust accordingly.

Politeness Strategies

As you already know, whenever you critique someone's work, there is a potential to hurt their feelings. There are many factors that influence whether the feedback is helpful or hurtful. In communication, we use the term "face" to mean the sense of self a person projects. People can "take face" by creating a situation where someone looks bad to others or people can "lose face" by doing something that diminishes them in the eyes of

others. Optimally, we want people to feel like they “gain-face” and feel encouraged. The way that you give feedback as well as the person’s natural tendencies will influence how “face” is affected.

When giving feedback, you should think about how your feedback takes or gives face. You also need to consider what is at stake for the other person. Is this a small speech assignment or is it a career-defining presentation? In addition, critiquing someone privately vs critiquing someone in front of their boss will have different “face” outcomes.

How much you are willing to “take face” from someone may depend on the importance of the feedback. You will likely want to provide more suggestions for someone who is doing a career speech to get their dream job vs that same person doing a college speech worth minimal points. You will likely be more invested in helping a friend polish a speech to make it just right as opposed to someone you barely know.

Finally, the other thing influencing feedback is the power difference between people. You will likely give feedback differently to your little sister than you would to your boss. The status of the individuals and how important power is to them will impact how “face” is taken and given. For example, a high-power country like China would consider an open critique of a teacher, boss, or elder a huge insult, whereas someone from a low-power country, would be less offended. In any situation, you will be negotiating power, context, and the need to save face.

Taking all these factors into account, Brown and Levinson created Politeness Theory as a way to explain the different ways we give feedback to save face.

Bald on Record: This type of feedback is very direct without concern for the person’s esteem face. This type of feedback is usually given if there is a small fix the speaker would feel strongly about.

Examples of bald on record feedback:

- “Be sure you bold the headings.”
- “Alphabetize the references.”

Positive Politeness: In this type of feedback, you would build up the face or esteem of the other person. You would make them feel good before you make any suggestions. (It looks a lot like the sandwich method, huh?)

Examples of positive politeness feedback:

- “You are so organized; this one little fix and it will be perfect.”
- “I love the story you told, a few more details would really help me see the character.”

Negative Politeness: The name of this type of feedback is a little misleading. It doesn’t mean you are negative. It means you acknowledge that getting feedback may make them feel negative. You would say things

that acknowledge their discomfort. You might minimize the criticism so it doesn't make them feel bad or find other ways to soften the blow of criticism.

Examples of negative politeness feedback:

- “I know this critique might sound rough and I hope it helps, but I think you really need to work on the middle section.”
- “This is just me making suggestions, but I would be able to understand more if your slide has a heading.”
- I'm not an expert on this, but I think you might need to have a stronger thesis.”
- “I see what you are trying to do here, but I think some of your audience members might not get it.”

Off Record: When you give feedback that is off the record, you are hinting vaguely that they should make a change.

Examples of off the record feedback.

- “How many sources are we supposed to have?” (Instead of saying, “You need to have more research”)
- “I thought we were supposed to have slides with our speech, maybe I heard that wrong.”
- “Are other people in the class dressing up?”

Avoidance: Some people are afraid of giving feedback so they will avoid the situation altogether.

Try This

Avoid the three C's

- Criticize
- Complain
- Condemn

Perform the three R's

- Review
- Reward
- Recommend

From Westside Toastmasters

Giving Feedback During a Speech

When you are listening to someone speak, you are giving constant nonverbal feedback. Are you leaning forward listening intently or are you leaned back picking at your fingernails? The way you listen lets the speaker know that you value them and what they are saying. It can be reassuring to the speaker to have people who are in the audience smiling and nodding.

Try this little experiment: If you have a speaker who is average or boring, lean in and listen intently. Don't be insincere and cheesy, but rather try to be an earnest listener. You will find that when the speaker notices you paying attention, they will usually become less monotone and more engaging. The speaker affects the audience, and the audience affects the speaker.

Asking for Feedback During Your Speech

Appoint someone to be your speech buddy who will give you signals and alert you during your speech, for example: to speak louder or to check your microphone. If you know that you tend to pace, lean on the podium, or say um's, have them give you the signal.

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak.
Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.

Winston Churchill
Former Prime Ministre of the United Kingdom

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- Be open to the feedback of others, it can help you improve as a speaker.
- When giving feedback to others consider the context, their needs, the impact on their esteem, and their culture.
- Use the feedback sandwich as a model for giving constructive criticism.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from [“Giving and Receiving Feedback: It is Harder Than You Think”](#) In [Advanced Public Speaking](#) by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS: MAKING EYE CONTACT IS KEY

*Zoom in, Zoom out.
But never lose your focus.
Shikha Td, poet*

There are many reasons you will need to know how to speak to a camera.

1. You are in an online class and you have to record your speech to submit it.
2. You are making a conference presentation and the conference is online.
3. You are in a Zoom/Teams (or other online) meeting.
4. You are making a career presentation as part of a job interview.
5. You are a teacher/trainer doing remote training.
6. You are a businessperson making pitches online.



Photo by [Beci Harmony](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Let's face it, the pandemic elevated the need for video meetings and presentations, and it is likely they are here to stay. Many businesses are doing interviews remotely and several have moved to online platforms for training. This chapter will talk about best practices for using a camera in a live online format and in a recorded and then playback format.

Understand the Context

The first thing you need to do is fully understand the context. Will you be recording and uploading, or will you present live? Is this a one-time presentation? Will this presentation be recorded so others can see it online? All these factors will make a difference.

Check Your Light

Make sure you have adequate lighting.

1. Never be in front of a window where you are backlit.
2. Always have adequate lighting on your face.
3. Use a lamp or lighting system to light your face and adjust it properly.
4. If you use a ring light, try bouncing it off the ceiling so you do not get light rings in your pupils.
5. Avoid using an overhead light because it casts shadows under your eyes.

Check your Camera

I once made a 30-minute video recording of a lecture to realize later that I didn't have the equipment set up correctly. The sound was not recorded. I was so frustrated because I had to do the entire thing over again. Avoid my mistake and record a test segment and then make sure it works before you record too much of your speech. Look at the playback and consider whether the lighting is good enough for the audience to see your face.

If you have an important conference on Zoom or Teams, check your equipment beforehand. The first time I taught online, I practiced with my family. I practiced making the slides work, checking the microphone, the lighting, and the camera angle. Most accounts will allow you to sign up for a temporary free account if you need to practice outside of school or work.

Check the Sound

Record yourself speaking for a minute and then play it back. Is the sound OK? Can the audience hear you clearly? If not, adjust your microphone. Sometimes the sound echoes in the room or there are too many background noises. Make sure your audio is clear and there is very little interference.

Some setups work better using a headset and microphone and some computers and cell phones work well with the main microphone. In many programs, you can go in through settings and adjust to the sound.

Check for Interferences

I had a student give his speech using his computer and he set his phone on the desk beside his laptop. He kept getting audio notifications beeping throughout his speech. It was very distracting. Turn off notifications or turn off your cell phone entirely. If you are working from home, tell your roommates, siblings, and friends

you will need the space to be quiet. Closing the window and closing the door can help keep out some ambient sound.

Put the Video Camera at or Above Eye Level

This may mean you set your laptop on a stack of books, or you readjust your web camera on your desktop. However it is accomplished, make sure the camera is level or a little higher than your eyes. The most common mistake that I see is when someone leans the laptop lid back making it look like the camera is looking up the nose of the speaker.

Look Directly into the Camera

Eye contact is established when you look at the camera directly. If it helps, draw a smiley face and put it on your camera to remind you to look in the “eyes” of your audience.



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Think About Where to Put the Note Cards

Tape your note cards to the top of your computer screen or hang them on something behind your computer. Place your cards so you never have to look down to see your notes.

Frame the Shot

Depending on the type of speech, you want to frame your head or do a 3/4 shot. It is best to frame the shot so the audience can see your gestures.

Head Shot

Notice how public speaking guru uses a close up shot, allowing us to see his gestures while making strong eye contact.

Watch [Virtual Communication | Mark Bowden on YouTube \(7 mins\)](#)

Stand Don't Sit (If possible)

You should read the situation on this one, but if in doubt stand. You will have better air support if you are standing. You will also gesture more freely.

Gesture

You should have open gestures. If you do a tight headshot, you will not see your gestures, so you need to pull the camera back and gesture higher.

Fix the Camera Zoom in One Place

If you are having a friend record you with a handheld device, make sure that the zoom is kept in one place. Sometimes bored camera operators will zoom in and out making for a very unprofessional recording.

Plan the Ending

Your ending will leave a lasting impression so do not leave it to chance. Plan out the exact last words and then resist the temptation to tack on any last comments. Speech endings are always challenging, they are even more difficult online.

Edit the Video

If you are recording your video in advance to be played back later. Edit the part where your arm reaches up to

turn on and turn off your recording device. If appropriate, use the feature that allows you to put words on the screen if important words or concepts are relevant.

Here is a video I found helpful (mostly) about lighting setup and camera placement. I particularly like her advice to wear pants.

Watch [How To Look Better On Video Calls/FaceTime/Zoom on YouTube \(10 mins\)](#)

During the 2020 pandemic when many things went viral, Toastmasters held its speech contests virally. Notice how this creative speaker made the most of the situation to earn him the first-place win.

Watch [2020 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking: Mike Carr on YouTube \(8 mins\)](#)

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- Always check your equipment: Camera, microphone, lighting.
- Make “eye contact” by looking into your camera.
- Adjust your camera so it is eye level or slightly above eye level

Attribution

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TEAM SPEECHES

What are the advantages and disadvantages of group decision-making?



Dragon Boat Races, by [Marc Dalmulder](#), licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

Groups can, however, overcome this impediment to performance through teamwork. A group may include many talented individuals, but they must learn how to pool their individual abilities and energies to maximize the team's performance. Team goals must be set, work patterns structured, and a sense of group identity developed. Individual members must learn how to coordinate their actions, and any strains and stresses in interpersonal relations need to be identified and resolved (Salas et al., 2009).

Group decision-making has the advantage of drawing from the experiences and perspectives of a larger number of individuals. Hence, the ideas have

the potential to be more creative and lead to a more effective decision. In fact, groups may sometimes achieve results beyond what they could have done as individuals. Groups also make the task more enjoyable for members in question. Finally, when the decision is made by a group rather than a single individual, implementation of the decision will be easier because group members will be invested in the decision. If the group is diverse, better decisions may be made because different group members may have different ideas based on their backgrounds and experiences. Research shows that for top management teams, groups that debate issues and that are diverse make decisions that are more comprehensive and better for the bottom line in terms of profitability and sales (Simons et al., 1999).

There are various ways groups come to a decision.

Delegation to an expert

In some cases, groups may make a **decision by expert**. A group may not be ready to make a decision at a given time, either because it lacks sufficient information or is experiencing unresolved conflict among members with differing views. In such a situation, the group may not want to simply drop the matter and

move on. Instead, it may turn to one of its members who everyone feels has the expertise to choose wisely among the alternatives that the group is considering. The group may also turn to an outside expert, someone who is external to the group who may be able to provide guidance. The group can either ask the expert to come back later with a final proposal or simply allow the person to make the decision alone after having gathered whatever further information he or she feels is necessary.

Averaging

Group members may shift their individual stances regarding a question by “splitting the difference” to reach a “middle ground.” This technique tends to work most easily if numbers are involved. For instance, a group trying to decide how much money to spend on a gift for a departing member might ask everyone for a preferred amount and agree to spend whatever is computed by averaging those amounts.

Voting

If you need to be quick and definitive in making a decision, voting is probably the best method. Everyone in mainstream American society is familiar with the process, for one thing, and its outcome is inherently clear and obvious. A majority vote requires that more than half of a group’s members vote for a proposal, whereas a proposal subject to a two-thirds vote will not pass unless twice as many members show support as those who oppose it.

Voting is essentially a win/lose activity. You can probably remember a time when you or someone else in a group composed part of a strong and passionate minority whose desires were thwarted because of the results of a vote. How much commitment did you feel to support the results of that vote?

Voting does offer a quick and simple way to reach decisions, but it works better in some situations than in others. If the members of a group see no other way to overcome a deadlock, for instance, voting may make sense. Likewise, very large groups and those facing serious time constraints may see advantages to voting. Finally, the efficiency of voting is appealing when it comes to making routine or noncontroversial decisions that need only to be officially approved.

Consensus

Consensus is another decision-making rule that groups may use when the goal is to gain support for an idea or plan of action. While consensus tends to take longer in the first place, it may make sense when support is needed to enact the plan. The process works by discussing the issues, generating a proposal, calling for consensus, and discussing any concerns. If concerns still exist, the proposal is modified to accommodate them. These steps are repeated until consensus is reached. Thus, this decision-making rule is inclusive, participatory, cooperative, and democratic. Research shows that consensus can lead to better accuracy (Roch, 2007), and it

helps members feel greater satisfaction with decisions (Mohammed & Ringseis, 2001) and to have greater acceptance. However, groups take longer with this approach, and groups that cannot reach consensus become frustrated (Peterson, 1999).

Consensus should not be confused with unanimity, which means only that no one has explicitly stated objections to a proposal or decision. Although unanimity can certainly convey an accurate perspective of a group's views at times, groupthink, as discussed below, also often leads to unanimous decisions. Therefore, it's probably wise to be cautious when a group of diverse people seems to have formed a totally unified bloc with respect to choices among controversial alternatives.

When a consensus decision is reached through a full interchange of views and is then adopted in good faith by all parties to a discussion, it can energize and motivate a group. Besides avoiding the win/lose elements intrinsic to voting, it converts each member's investment in a decision into a stake in preserving and promoting the decision after it has been agreed upon.

Guidelines for Seeking Consensus

How can a group actually go about working toward consensus? Here are some guidelines for the process:

- **First, be sure everyone knows the definition of consensus and is comfortable with observing them.** For many group members, this may mean suspending judgment and trying something they've never done before. Remind people that consensus requires a joint dedication to moving forward toward improvement in and by the group.
- **Second, endeavor to solicit participation by every member of the group.** Even the naturally quietest person should be actively "polled" from time to time for his or her perspectives. In fact, it's a good idea to take special pains to ask for varied viewpoints when discussion seems to be stalled or contentious.
- **Third, listen honestly and openly to each group member's viewpoints.** Attempt to seek and gather information from others. Do your best to subdue your emotions and your tendency to judge and evaluate.
- **Fourth, be patient.** Reaching consensus often takes much more time than voting would. A premature "agreement" reached because people give in to speed things up or avoid conflict is likely later to weaken or fall apart.
- **Fifth, always look for mutually acceptable ways to make it through challenging circumstances.**



["We are better when we are united"](#), by Clay Banks, licensed under [Unsplash License](#)

Don't resort to chance mechanisms like flipping a coin, and don't trade decisions arbitrarily just so that things come out equally for people who remain committed to opposing views.

- **Sixth, resolve gridlock earnestly.** Stop and ask, "Have we really identified every possible feasible way that our group might act?" If members of a group simply can't agree on one alternative, see if they can all find and accept the next-best option. Then be sure to request an explicit statement from them that they are prepared to genuinely commit themselves to that option.

One variation on consensus decision-making calls upon a group's leader to ask its members, before initiating a discussion, to agree to a *deadline* and a "*safety valve*." The deadline would be a time by which everyone in the group feels they need to have reached a decision. The "safety valve" would be a statement that any member can veto the will of the rest of the group to act in a certain way, but only if he or she takes responsibility for moving the group forward in some other positive direction.

Although consensus entails full participation and assent within a group, it usually can't be reached without guidance from a leader. One college president we knew was a master at escorting his executive team to consensus. Without coercing or rushing them, he would regularly involve them all in discussions and lead their conversations to a point at which everyone was nodding in agreement, or at least conveying acceptance of a decision. Rather than leaving things at that point, however, the president would generally say, "We seem to have reached a decision to do XYZ. Is there anyone who objects?" Once people had this last opportunity to add further comments of their own, the group could move forward with a sense that it had a common vision in mind.

Consensus decision-making is easiest within groups whose members know and respect each other, whose authority is more or less evenly distributed, and whose basic values are shared. Some charitable and religious groups meet these conditions and have long been able to use consensus decision-making as a matter of principle. The Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, began using consensus as early as the 17th century. Its affiliated international service agency, the American Friends Service Committee, employs the same approach. The Mennonite Church has also long made use of consensus decision-making.

Groupthink

Have you ever been in a decision-making group that you felt was heading in the wrong direction, but you didn't speak up and say so? If so, you have already been a victim of groupthink. **Groupthink** is a group pressure phenomenon that increases the risk of the group making flawed decisions by leading to reduced mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment. According to Janis (1972), groupthink is characterized by eight symptoms that include:

1. *Illusion of invulnerability* shared by most or all of the group members creates excessive optimism and encourages them to take extreme risks.

2. *Collective rationalizations* where members downplay negative information or warnings that might cause them to reconsider their assumptions.
3. *An unquestioned belief in the group's inherent morality* may incline members to ignore the ethical or moral consequences of their actions.
4. *Stereotyped views of out-groups* are seen when groups discount rivals' abilities to make effective responses.
5. *Direct pressure* on any member who expresses strong arguments against any of the group's stereotypes, illusions, or commitments.
6. *Self-censorship* is when members of the group minimize their own doubts and counterarguments.
7. *Illusion of unanimity* is based on self-censorship and direct pressure on the group; the lack of dissent is viewed as unanimity.
8. *The emergence of self-appointed mindguards* where one or more members protect the group from information that runs counter to the group's assumptions and course of action.

Groups do tend to be more likely to suffer from symptoms of groupthink when they are large and when the group is cohesive because the members like each other (Esser, 1998; Mullen et al., 1994). The assumption is that the more frequently a group displays one or more of the eight symptoms, the worse the quality of their decisions will be. However, if your group is cohesive, it is not necessarily doomed to engage in groupthink.

Recommendations for avoiding groupthink

The following are strategies for avoiding groupthink:

Groups Should:

- Discuss the symptoms of groupthink and how to avoid them.
- Assign a rotating devil's advocate to every meeting.
- Invite experts or qualified colleagues who are not part of the core decision-making group to attend meetings, and get reactions from outsiders regularly and share these with the group.
- Encourage a culture of difference where different ideas are valued.
- Debate the ethical implications of the decisions and potential solutions being considered.

Individuals Should:

- Monitor their own behavior for signs of groupthink and modify behavior if needed.
- Check themselves for self-censorship.
- Carefully avoid mindguard behaviors.
- Avoid putting pressure on other group members to conform.

- Remind members of the ground rules for avoiding groupthink if they get off track.

Group Leaders Should:

- Break the group into two subgroups from time to time.
- Have more than one group work on the same problem if time and resources allow it. This makes sense for highly critical decisions.
- Remain impartial and refrain from stating preferences at the outset of decisions.
- Set a tone of encouraging critical evaluations throughout deliberations.
- Create an anonymous feedback channel where all group members can contribute if desired.

What are relationship roles and task roles?

It is often useful to use task roles and relationship roles in a group. These roles can help groups to stay organized and ensure that everyone is contributing in a meaningful way.

Helpful Task Roles

- Leader: walks members through the agenda of each meeting
- Recorder: officially takes notes of what happens in each meeting and what decisions are made
- Editor: pieces together each member's researched part into a cohesive whole
- Presentation Software Expert: collects slides needed for the presentation and makes them cohesive making sure the guidelines for effective slides are needed; also changes slides as the speakers need
- Information Giver: offers facts, beliefs, input
- Boy Scouter: prepared with map and info
- Information Seeker: asks for clarification, raises helpful questions
- Administrator: keeps people on track, organizes logistics
- Elaborator: offers further clarification
- Clarifier: explains
- Interpreter: makes sense of info for group
- Watch Dog: time manager
- Housekeeper: checks for loose ends
- Idea Giver: Comes up with new ideas
- Feedback Giver: reflects and evaluates
- Summarizer: reviews decisions, goals or outcomes
- Critiquer: looks at a problem from all sides

Not Helpful Task Roles

Not all task roles are created equally. Some are much more helpful than others. Here are some to stay away from.

- Dominator: talks and does not allow anyone else to talk
- Blocker: negative resistant behavior, groundless disagreement
- Avoider: non-involvement, does not contribute ideas or communicate
- Recognition Seeker: calls attention to self
- Distractor: goes off on tangents, irrelevant
- Slider: does little or no work, procrastinates

Helpful Relationship Roles

- Harmonizer: helps settle differences
- Sensor: expresses group mood and feelings
- Tension Reliever: creates fun and uses humor to diffuse tense situations
- Listener: hears content and feeling

Not Helpful Relationship Roles

- Clown: distracts from task with self-focused play
- Captain Oblivious: disconnected
- Discombobulator: keeps group in upheaval
- Criticizer: attacks persons, not issues

How do we use the Nominal Group Technique to choose our Team Name and Topic?

We are going to teach you two great ways to make decisions in your team. The first one you are going to use to make a decision as to what your team name should be. This decision making process is called the **Nominal Group Technique**.

1. Each member privately writes down a list of all team names they like.
2. When everyone has finished writing, all members share their entire list. (This is more helpful than brainstorming as a group right away because it prevents group members from accidentally criticizing another member's ideas before they have a chance to be seen.)

3. The Recorder writes down a master list with all the team names suggested.
4. Now as a group brainstorming can begin. Remember, no criticism of ideas at this stage. You can modify names, piggy back one name on another. Maybe someone's suggestion triggers an idea for a new name. All these ideas are written down by the Recorder.
5. When the team has exhausted ideas, the team can choose a team name. Now is the time you can evaluate the possible choices. You can decide to vote either by secret ballot or openly. Does majority rule? So you want 2/3rd of the group to be in favor. Do you want full consensus? Up to you.

You can use this same technique to choose your **Team Speech Topic**. You need to decide on a great resource here at SLCC that you would like to persuade your fellow students to use. What will it be? There are so many great resources, some obvious and some almost hidden. Find one you feel would be a great benefit to your fellow students.

What is the Reflective Thinking Process of Decision Making?

The next most valuable group problem-solving process is called the **Reflective Thinking Process**. This one you will want to use as you decide how you will go about creating your Team Speech. What you will want to include, what research do you need, who will do what part?

Group Problem-Solving Process

There are several variations of similar problem-solving models based on American scholar John Dewey's **reflective thinking process** (Bormann & Bormann, 1988). As you read through the steps in the process, think about how you can apply this to organizing your speech. Some of the following steps are straightforward, and they are things we would logically do when faced with a problem. However, taking a deliberate and systematic approach to problem-solving has been shown to benefit group functioning and performance. A deliberate approach is especially beneficial for groups that do not have an established history of working together and will only be able to meet occasionally. Although a group should attend to each step of the process, group leaders or other group members who facilitate problem-solving should be cautious not to dogmatically follow each element of the process or force a group along. Such a lack of flexibility could limit group member input and negatively affect the group's cohesion and climate.

Step 1: Define the Problem

Define the problem by considering the three elements shared by every problem: the current undesirable

situation, the goal or more desirable situation, and obstacles in the way (Adams & Galanes, 2009). At this stage, group members share what they know about the current situation, without proposing solutions or evaluating the information. Here are some good questions to ask during this stage:

- What is the current difficulty?
- How did we come to know that the difficulty exists?
- Who/what is involved?
- Why is it meaningful/urgent/important?
- What have the effects been so far?
- What, if any, elements of the difficulty require clarification?

At the end of this stage, the group should be able to compose a single sentence that summarizes the problem called a problem statement. Avoid wording in the problem statement or question that hints at potential solutions. A small group formed to investigate ethical violations of city officials could use the following problem statement: “Our state does not currently have a mechanism for citizens to report suspected ethical violations by city officials.”

Another example.

Poor: How can I find a podium? (This is poor because it indicates the solution is a podium in the problem statement. We need to ask what do we need the podium for? If it is to put my notes on, could there be another solution?)

Better: What can hold my notes? (Now a lot more solutions are available. A table, a stack of books, a student could hold my notes, turn the garbage can upside down, etc.)

Step 2: Analyze the Problem

During this step, a group should analyze the problem and the group’s relationship to the problem. Whereas the first step involved exploring the “what” related to the problem, this step focuses on the “why.” At this stage, group members can discuss the potential causes of the difficulty. Group members may also want to begin setting out an agenda or timeline for the group’s problem-solving process, looking forward to the other steps.

Here are two examples of questions that the group formed to address ethics violations might ask: Why doesn’t our city have an ethics reporting mechanism? Do cities of similar size have such a mechanism? Once the problem has been analyzed, the group can pose a problem question that will guide the group as it generates possible solutions. “How can citizens report suspected ethical violations of city officials and how will such reports be processed and addressed?” As you can see, the problem question is more complex than the problem statement, since the group has moved on to a more in-depth discussion of the problem during step 2.

Step 3: Generate Possible Solutions

During this step, group members generate possible solutions to the problem. This is where brainstorming techniques to enhance creativity may be useful to the group. Again, solutions should not be evaluated at this point, only proposed and clarified. The question should be what could we do to address this problem, not what should we do to address it. It is perfectly OK for a group member to question another person's idea by asking something like "What do you mean?" or "Could you explain your reasoning more?" Discussions at this stage may reveal a need to return to previous steps to better define or more fully analyze a problem. Since many problems are multifaceted, group members must generate solutions for each part of the problem separately, making sure to have multiple solutions for each part. Stopping the solution-generating process prematurely can lead to groupthink.

For the problem question previously posed, the group would need to generate solutions for all three parts of the problem included in the question. Possible solutions for the first part of the problem (How can citizens report ethical violations?) may include "online reporting system, e-mail, in-person, anonymously, on-the-record," and so on. Possible solutions for the second part of the problem (How will reports be processed?) may include "daily by a newly appointed ethics officer, weekly by a nonpartisan non-government employee," and so on. Possible solutions for the third part of the problem (How will reports be addressed?) may include "by a newly appointed ethics commission, by the accused's supervisor, by the city manager," and so on.



[Woman in black coat](#), by Christina Morillo, licensed under [Pexels License](#)

Step 4: Evaluate Solutions

During this step, solutions can be critically evaluated based on their credibility, completeness, and worth. Once the potential solutions have been narrowed based on more obvious differences in relevance and/or merit, the group should analyze each solution based on its potential effects—especially negative effects. Groups that are required to report the rationale for their decision or whose decisions may be subject to public scrutiny would be wise to make a set list of criteria for evaluating each solution. Additionally, solutions can be evaluated based on how well they fit with the group's charge and the abilities of the group. To do this, group members may ask, "Does this solution live up to the original purpose or mission of the group?" and "Can the solution actually be implemented with our current resources and connections?" and "How will this solution

be supported, funded, enforced, and assessed?” Conflict may emerge during this step of problem-solving, and group members will need to employ effective critical thinking and listening skills.

For example, to narrow the list of proposed solutions, group members may decide by majority vote, by weighing the pros and cons, or by discussing them until a consensus is reached. There are also more complex decision-making models like the “six hats method,” which we will discuss later. Once the final decision is reached, the group leader or facilitator should confirm that the group is in agreement. It may be beneficial to let the group break for a while or even to delay the final decision until a later meeting to allow people time to evaluate it outside of the group context.

Step 5: Implement and Assess the Solution



[Long exposure, single image](#), by [Tsvetoslav Hristov](#), licensed under [Unsplash license](#)

Implementing the solution requires some advanced planning, and it should not be rushed unless the group is operating under strict time restraints or delay may lead to some kind of harm. Although some solutions can be implemented immediately, others may take days, months, or years. As was noted earlier, it may be beneficial for groups to poll those who will be affected by the solution as to their opinion of it or even do a pilot test to observe the effectiveness of the solution and how people react to it. Before implementation, groups should also determine how and when they would assess the effectiveness of the solution by

asking, “How will we know if the solution is working or not?” Since solution assessment will vary based on whether or not the group is disbanded, groups should also consider the following questions: If the group disbands after implementation, who will be responsible for assessing the solution? If the solution fails, will the same group reconvene or will a new group be formed?

Certain elements of the solution may need to be delegated out to various people inside and outside the group. Group members may also be assigned to implement a particular part of the solution based on their role in the decision-making or because it connects to their area of expertise. Likewise, group members may be tasked with publicizing the solution or “selling” it to a particular group of stakeholders. Last, the group should consider its future. In some cases, the group will get to decide if it will stay together and continue working on other tasks or if it will disband. In other cases, outside forces determine the group’s fate.

Six Thinking Hats Method

Edward de Bono developed the **Six Thinking Hats** method of thinking in the late 1980s, and it has since become a regular feature in problem-solving and decision-making training in business and professional contexts (de Bono, 1985). The method's popularity lies in its ability to help people get out of habitual ways of thinking and to allow group members to play different roles and see a problem or decision from multiple points of view. The basic idea is that each of the six hats represents a different way of thinking, and when we figuratively switch hats, we switch the way we think. The hats and their style of thinking are as follows:

- **White hat.** Objective—focuses on seeking information such as data and facts and then neutrally processes that information.
- **Red hat.** Emotional—uses intuition, gut reactions, and feelings to judge information and suggestions.
- **Black hat.** Critical—focuses on potential risks, points out possibilities for failure, and evaluates information cautiously and defensively.
- **Yellow hat.** Positive—is optimistic about suggestions and future outcomes, gives constructive and positive feedback, points out benefits and advantages.
- **Green hat.** Creative—tries to generate new ideas and solutions, thinks “outside the box.”
- **Blue hat.** Process—uses metacommunication to organize and reflect on the thinking and communication taking place in the group, facilitates who wears what hat and when group members change hats.

Specific sequences or combinations of hats can be used to encourage strategic thinking. For example, the group leader may start off wearing the Blue Hat and suggest that the group start their decision-making process with some “White Hat thinking” to process through facts and other available information. During this stage, the group could also process through what other groups have done when faced with a similar problem. Then the leader could begin an evaluation sequence starting with two minutes of “Yellow Hat thinking” to identify potential positive outcomes, then “Black Hat thinking” to allow group members to express reservations about ideas and point out potential problems, then “Red Hat thinking” to get people’s gut reactions to the previous discussion, then “Green Hat thinking” to identify other possible solutions that are more tailored to the group’s situation or completely new approaches. At the end of a sequence, the Blue Hat would want to summarize what was said and begin a new sequence. To successfully use this method, the person wearing the Blue Hat should be familiar with different sequences and plan some of the thinking patterns ahead of time based on the problem and the group members. Each round of thinking should be limited to a certain time frame (two to five minutes) to keep the discussion moving.

1. This problem-solving method has been praised because it allows group members to “switch gears” in their thinking and allows for role-playing, which lets people express ideas more freely. How can this help

- enhance critical thinking? Which combination of hats do you think would be best for a critical thinking sequence?
2. What combinations of hats might be useful if the leader wanted to break the larger group up into pairs and why? For example, what kind of thinking would result from putting Yellow and Red together, Black and White together, or Red and White together, and so on?
 3. Based on your preferred ways of thinking and your personality, which hat would be the best fit for you? Which would be the most challenging? Why?

Reflective Thinking Process Exercise

Reflective Thinking Process Exercise (Text version)

What is the first and most important step in the Reflective Thinking Process?

1. Identify the problem
2. Brainstorm Solutions
3. Evaluate Solutions

Check your Answer:¹

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Notes

1. Identify the problem.

COMMUNICATION ANXIETY: THE FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Dynamic Presentations by Amanda Quibell

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In this chapter...

- [Why am I so nervous?](#)
- [Overcome Communication Apprehension by Hacking Your Brain](#)
- [Overcome Communication Apprehension by Hacking Your Body](#)

WHY AM I SO NERVOUS?

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you'll be able to

- describe some of the causes for the fear of public speaking
- identify some coping strategies to help build your confidence

Why do we get so nervous?

If you feel nervous when speaking in public, or even just *thinking* about speaking in public, you're not alone. In fact, public speaking is a common fear; some people are terrified just thinking about it.

Most of us can talk to our family and friends without fear, but when facing an audience – especially if it's people we don't know – we get nervous. Why?

Watch [The science of stage fright \(and how to overcome it\) on TED-ed \(4 mins\)](#)

Four things contribute to our public speaking fears:

1. Experiences
2. Expectations
3. Biology
4. Lack of practice



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1. Experiences

We tend to remember situations in which we have been hurt or suffered in some way; it's our brain's way of protecting us from being hurt again. When we think about presenting, we remember past experiences of presenting. If you didn't know how to present well, maybe you were boring or forgot what to say. Maybe people laughed at you, or you felt embarrassed and ashamed. Your brain will remember presenting as painful and embarrassing – something to avoid.

The good news is that as you create new, positive memories of presenting in public, they'll replace those earlier negative memories.

2. Expectations

We may have beliefs about what will happen when we speak in public. These are sometimes reinforced by past experiences, and can include the following:

I might...

- *Forget what to say*
- *Look nervous*
- *Be boring*
- *Not make sense*
- *Be shy*
- *Be the only bad presenter in the class*
- *Say the wrong thing*
- *Forget how to speak English*

What beliefs do you have about speaking in public?

3. Biology

When faced with a stressful situation, our brain activates the ***fight or flight*** response, an ancient mechanism designed to protect us from danger. When we go into fight or flight response, our body releases adrenaline, which can cause:

- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Increased heartbeat
- Sweating
- Stomach discomfort, dry throat
- Feeling like you need to pee
- Mind going blank
- Tunnel vision
- Muscles tense or tremble
- Feeling too hot or too cold
- Goosebumps
- Hunching
- Changed perception of time
- Difficulty sleeping the night before your presentation

The fight or flight response is useful if we're under attack and need to protect ourselves, but not if we're delivering a presentation! These reactions are the exact opposite of what helps us present well. But they *are* normal – even professional presenters experience them. And they don't mean that you're a bad speaker; it's just biology! Luckily there are lots of strategies to reduce or eliminate your fight or flight symptoms.

Take a moment to think about what happens to your body when you're feeling nervous. Imagine that you're about to present in front of a large audience. What physical symptoms do you notice?

4. Lack of practice

If we don't have a lot of public speaking experience, or haven't done it for a long time, it can be scary. And if we don't know how to manage our fears, it can become terrifying. One of the great benefits of taking this course is that you'll have a chance to present in a safe environment. We'll work on how to present well, how to manage the fear, and offer some opportunities to practice your skills. The more you present, the easier it gets. Promise!

Coping strategies

These practices help keep your nerves in check before, during and after your presentation.

Practice

Practice is the most effective coping strategy. When you know your content, you're more confident. And

because you're not struggling to remember the content, you can focus on delivery. We recommend that you practice any presentation at least ten times.

- Practice delivering & timing your speech: rehearse in front of family, friends, pets, a mirror
- Practice silently on transit or walking down the street
- **Record yourself**
- Practice until you don't need notes

Before your presentation

Calming techniques

- Take slow, deep breaths
- Meditate
- Visualize success
- Workout earlier in the day to regulate your hormones
- Substitute negative thoughts with positive ones
- Remind yourself that you're only presenting to a few classmates, not thousands of people
- Remind yourself that your audience wants you to succeed

Biology hacks

- Stay hydrated
- Use the bathroom
- Ensure you're cool / warm enough (wear layers or adjust thermostat)
- Adopt power poses, as described by [Dr Amy Cuddy in her famous TED Talk](#)

Preparation

- Create a presentation that uses *your* language (don't try to be someone you're not) Speak like you do in conversation; don't be formal or try to impress your audience with fancy words.
- Practice! (At least 10 times is best)
- Familiarize yourself with the setting/room ahead of time
- Familiarize yourself with the equipment ahead of time
- Dress comfortably & appropriately
- Bring water to drink
- Arrive early

During your presentation

- Remember to breathe. If you get anxious, pause and take a long slow breath in through your nose.
- Have water nearby (in a spill-proof container)
- Nobody knows exactly what you're planning to say, so if you stumble, just continue on
- If you feel overwhelmed, try to concentrate on *what* you're saying, not *how* you're saying it

When to seek help for anxiety

It's natural to experience some nervousness when speaking in public. But for some people, significant anxiety makes it really difficult to "press through the fear." If you're feeling distressed, overwhelmed, or have concerns about your wellbeing, please know that there are many resources available. You may want to start by speaking with your instructor, health care provider, or contacting the your college's Counseling Department.

Shame Waves

Read the article below or listen to the audio clip.

Shame Waves

Shame Waves – Article/Text

You just gave the best presentation ever. You were calm, confident and engaging. The audience loved you!

But now you're done. Flooded with adrenaline, your brain works quickly, evaluating your performance — your dreadful, awful performance. In high resolution, your brain replays the errors, the omissions, the failures. Moments ago you were proud, now you're embarrassed.

What happened?

You've been hit by a shame wave. It may feel like you're drowning in shame, but you can and will survive.

What's a shame wave?

A shame wave is a strong, sudden tidal wave of shame and embarrassment that slams into many people right after they do something in public, whether it's giving a presentation or speaking up in class. Shame waves attack beginners and experts.

Where do shame waves come from?

Humans are social creatures. We crave community. Community helps us survive and thrive.

But our community has to accept us or they might abandon us. Public actions – like giving a presentation – are risky. If the community doesn't like our performance, they might not want us. So our brains use embarrassment as a tool to stop us from doing things the community might not like.

Embarrassment keeps us safe, but too much can cause a shame wave.

Why are shame waves bad?

Although their intentions are good — to protect us — shame waves drown us in powerful negative messages. Shame Waves tell us “for our own good” that:

- You're not perfect
- Failure is bad
- Because you're not perfect, you're a failure

Those messages are evil. Failure is a normal, necessary part of learning. We do very few things perfectly the first time — almost everything you've learned took more than one attempt. If you refuse to do things you're not good at, you won't learn. And you need to be a lifelong learner to have a great life.

How do shame waves affect our confidence?

It's human nature to evaluate our own performance. This helps us learn and improve. But shame

waves are destructive. Not to be confused with useful feedback, which is gentle, timely and appropriate, shame waves are violent, inconsiderate and hateful.

- Shame Waves damage your self-confidence
- They also damage your learning-confidence — the belief that you can improve at something
- Shame waves can make you give up

Shame waves focus on the negative. Reviewing our performance, we tend to remember only mistakes and problems. Even if 99% was perfect, shame waves focus on the 1% that wasn't.

Try this simple perspective trick: Hold your hand at arm's length. How big is it? Now hold it right in front of your eyes. How big is it now? Huge, right? It's the same with shame waves; if we focus on the 1%, it feels like *everything* was terrible. Now we feel ashamed, embarrassed and hopeless.

Grab a strategy and enjoy the ride

We need coping strategies to support ourselves. Good coping strategies are like surfboards that help us ride shame waves to safety. Good strategies can decrease the number of shame waves that hit, and the amount of damage done.

Coping strategies can be simple, like taking a few slow breaths. They can be complex, like retraining our thoughts. Here are some useful coping strategies:

Coping strategies

1. Expect shame waves. They're normal; most people experience them. When it hits, just say to yourself, *There's my shame wave, right on schedule.*
2. Remind yourself that your brain's being mean but its intentions are good. Thank your brain and tell it to be nicer.
3. Expect to be imperfect, and to make mistakes. Focus on what you learned from the experience.
4. Think about next time: What will you do better next time?
5. Meditate. Do nothing except sit with the shame. Allow it to wash over you. Don't try to fix it. Just sit and feel shame's heat. Let it blaze and rage until it burns itself out.
6. Breathe. A long, deep, slow breath in through your nose, then out through your mouth. Relax.
7. Tell someone you trust about your shame wave. Talking can help weaken its power. And you'll probably discover that you're not alone.
8. Practice the 10-10-10 rule: How will you feel about your performance in 10 hours? 10 weeks?

10 years? Adjust as necessary.

You'll find that some of these strategies resonate with you and some don't. That's fine. Find what works, and make your own surfboard of strategies. Next time a shame wave hits, grab your coping strategies surfboard and ride to the Beach of Calm Self-Acceptance.

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Test your knowledge

Fears Quiz – Test your Knowledge (Text version)

1. True or false? Fears associated with public speaking are normal. They can stem from past experiences, beliefs about ourselves, our biology, and a lack of practice.
2. Complete the sentence by adding the following words in the correct place: equipment, practise, early, dress, setting:
In order to set yourself up for success in advance of a presentation, familiarize yourself with the (a)_____, such as where you and the audience will be situated, and the (b)_____, such as a microphone or presentation remote control. You should also arrive (c)_____, (d)_____ comfortably and appropriately, and (e)_____ ahead of time.
3. Some calming techniques that you can engage in before your presentation include:
 - a. Working out earlier in the day to regulate your hormones, visualizing success, and replacing negative thoughts with positive ones.
 - b. Working out after your presentation, visualizing a past time when you were nervous, and replacing positive thoughts with negative ones.
 - c. Taking quick, shallow breaths.
 - d. Drinking lots of tea or coffee

4. Fill in the missing words:

Some biology hacks when getting ready to deliver your presentation include: drinking water to ensure you're properly (a)_____, wearing layers or adjusting the room temperature to ensure you're comfortable, and adopting power (b)_____, as recommended by Dr. Amy Cuddy.

5. Complete the sentence by adding the following words in the correct place: talking, breathe, perspective, learned

Shame Waves are normal. Some coping strategies for dealing with them include: Focusing on what you (a)_____ from the experience, remembering to (b)_____ deeply, (c)_____ to someone you trust about the experience, and taking (d)_____ to remember that you may not feel this shame as intensely in the future.

Check your Answers:¹

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Notes

1. 1. a, 2. a) setting, b) equipment, c) early, d) dress, e) practise. 3. (a). 4. a) hydrated, b) poses. 5. a) learned, b) breathe, c) talking, d) perspective.

OVERCOME COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION BY HACKING YOUR BRAIN

*There are two types of speakers:
Those that are nervous and those that are liars.
Mark Twain*

Normal People Get Nervous

Most people will tell you the thought of making a speech makes them apprehensive. In fact, a poll by the National Communication Association found that only 24% of Americans are very comfortable giving a speech. You may be part of the 24%, or you may be like the rest of the population—uncomfortable at the thought of speaking in front of others. “According to most studies, people’s number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you’re better off in the casket than doing the eulogy.” This quote from actor and comedian Jerry Seinfeld is funny because it is true. Researchers at the University of Nebraska conducted research to see if indeed students feared public speaking to that extent, so they surveyed 2,543 college students. The answer was “yes.” Public speaking ranked up there with death as the most common fear.

So, there you have it. If the thought of a speech makes you feel apprehensive, you are Normal. Normal people have all kinds of physical reactions when delivering a speech or even thinking about delivering a speech:

- Sweaty palms
- Accelerated heart rate
- A knotted stomach
- Dry mouth
- A lump in the throat
- Shortness of breath



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Can you relate to any of these feelings? If you have any of these, you are not broken, you are not doomed for speech failure, quite the contrary. If you experience any of these, you are NORMAL.

At this point, you may be thinking pointing out your anxiety does not make you feel any better. Hang in there and keep reading. The goal of this chapter is threefold. It is to help you to realize that if you are anxious, apprehensive, or nervous about public speaking, then you are normal. It is to help you understand most people will have some physical responses to being anxious and it is how you think about these responses that make a difference. The biggest takeaway of all is for you to learn to be intentional with your thoughts and to change your mindset. In doing these things, you will prepare the path for future speaking success.

Time to Check Your Brain's Check Engine Light

*A man's life
is what his thoughts
make of it.
Marcus Aurelius*



“Audi B5 A4 Check Engine Light” by Stephen Mellentine, licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

There is a dashboard warning light in my car that lets me know something is wrong. When I take it to specialists, they plug in my car and “read the code” and they tell me exactly what the problem is. Let’s assume, your brain’s dashboard warning light is on and letting you know you may have a thinking problem. Let’s “read the code” to see what the issue is so we can fix it. You may have some faulty reasoning happening that is causing your speech anxiety. Time for a diagnostic. See how many of these relate to you.

All or Nothing Thinking:

All or nothing thinking assumes your self-meter has two options: all perfect or total failure. If you have ever given a speech and forgotten a part or misspoke a word and then declared the speech a disaster, you might have all or nothing thinking. A speech can be good- even great-and still contain speech mistakes. In fact, most speeches contain at least one mistake.

What’s the Fix for All Or Nothing Speaking? The fix for all or nothing thinking is to realize a perfect speech rarely exists. A great speech is one that communicates an idea to an audience. If you do that, you have

accomplished the goal. If you mess up, or should I say *when* you mess up (because normal people make mistakes), then all is not lost. Recognize that the speech can be good and contain mistakes. You might say, “Overall the speech was great, I just wish I would have had a stronger ending. I will write it out next time.”

Overgeneralization:

Overgeneralization is the belief that a single failure is a universal sign of failure. If you are on a diet and you eat a cookie and then declare yourself a diet failure, you have overgeneralized. If you *have* a failure, it doesn't mean you *are* a failure. If you have ever had a less than perfect speech moment, and then declared yourself a bad speaker, you have overgeneralized.

What's the Fix for Overgeneralization? The fix is to recognize that one mistake does not make *you* a mistake. One failure, does not make *you* a failure. If you make a mistake, recognize it and make a plan to correct it in the future. The most important thing of all is to realize you are not defined as a failure because you made a mistake.

Fortune Telling:

Have you ever told yourself, “I know this is going to be a disaster?” If you predict your speech will go badly, then you have a fortune-telling problem. The more you fortune tell your speech will be a disaster, the more you undermine your own success. By fortune-telling (also known as self-fulfilling prophecy), you are wishing you will fail and then you will make your own negative predictions come true. Some people even delight in their own misfortune, “See, I told you I wasn't cut out for public speaking.”

What's the Fix for Fortune Telling? The fix to the fortunetelling problem is to take control and to stop. Predicting your own failure is just your own way of not trying. If you want to predict something, predict that if you practice, you will get better. If you focus on the needs of the audience, you will connect with them. If you do vocal exercises, you will strengthen your voice. Throw the darn crystal ball away, it was negative, unreliable, and you have outgrown it now.

Reality Check

At one time or another, most of us have gotten caught up in our failures or we have created scenarios in our head about the terrible things that may happen. It is just plain silly the way we torture ourselves. Most of us get worked up and miss out on sleep worrying about things that never even happen. Sometimes you just have to have a reality check.

So, what if you say the wrong word and they laugh....
 Will they fire you—probably not.
 Will they walk out—unlikely.
 Will they hate you—not likely

Will your face turn red—maybe, but so what?
Is it really that awful? —no

One professional speaker commented no matter what happens in a speech that she can turn it into something good. She suggests if everyone walks out on her, she can still use that. Next time I speak, I can say, “Last time I gave this talk the whole room walked out on me.”

Change Takes Effort

Whether you are a seasoned speaker or just getting started, it is important to realize everyone’s mind and motivation need a tune-up from time to time. It is difficult to break out of faulty patterns of thinking and it is not enough to just recognize it, you have to do something about it. Motivational speaker, Mel Robbins, illustrates this in a talk to executives. After reminding them that they came to the conference to network and to make new connections, she asks each of them to raise a hand if they sat by someone they already know. Most people laughed and raised their hands because they know they are supposed to network and yet most of them are playing it safe and sitting with friends. They, like us, were motivated to change, and yet they fell back on old patterns of behavior. As a conference activity, Robbins then proceeded to make them change seats and sit by someone new. They looked uncomfortable, grumbled a bit, and then changed seats. She reminded them we want to change, but change is hard and change is uncomfortable.

It is one thing to be motivated to think about change and it is another thing to be motivated to actually make the change. Making the change causes discomfort and leads to resistance, even if you are the one telling yourself the do it. Change is uncomfortable, but growth is worth it.

What’s the point? The point is you likely recognize that there are areas you need to work on. You likely already know what you need to do. You are already motivated to think about improving (that is why you are reading this book or taking a speaking class). It is not enough to want to change, you have to act on it. To do the next step, you must recognize that change causes discomfort. You are going to have to be vigilant to begin making those changes. Change is uncomfortable, make a plan, and stick to it.

Choose Which Self to Wear to Your Speech

In the morning, I go into my closet and I look at all the clothes that I have to wear. I pick out which ones to put on for the day. I decide whether to dress like *casual Lynn* or *professional Lynn*. I make a decision on how to dress each day. In the same way, I decide which self to wear each day. I decide who to be each day. One of the most powerful things I learned about identity is that I don’t have one identity, I have many to pick from. Just like picking which outfit to wear for the day, I pick which “me” to be for the day.

Think about the “self-clothes” you wear every day. If you are like me, there are times when you have felt unsure of yourself, maybe you lowered your eyes when people looked at you, maybe you talked in a powerless

voice—on that day, you were wearing your shy self. On a different day, you felt like the expert, you were able to tell people how to accomplish a task, and you used your assertive voice—on that day, you were wearing your powerful self. Which was the real you? They both were. The people around you, the situation you were in, your mood at the moment, all contributed to which self you brought out for the day.

This is also true for which speaker you will be. You make the decision about which self you bring to your speech. You can bring the brave, outspoken “you” that has great things to say or you can bring the “you” that decides to play small.

A lot of growth can happen when you learn you are *not* an attribute, but rather you *act* out an attribute. You are *not* shy, you *act* shy. You are *not* bold, you *act* boldly. You are *not* nervous, you *act* nervous. Once you realize you are not going against your biology or against your personality to be a powerful, confident speaker, then you can give yourself permission to wear a powerful self to your speech. That “power self” outfit will look good on you, so try it on!

Consider This

I often have students play a game where they stand up in groups and each group talks at the exact same time as the other group with the goal of competing for the audience’s attention. In this game, students wave their arms, make direct eye contact, and raise their voices. They laugh and they have fun. I do this to let them know that they can speak loudly, use gestures, and have fun in front of an audience. I remind them they have just demonstrated to me they are capable of expressive movement and dynamic voice projection. Later when they tell me, they “just can’t project their voice” or they “just aren’t a person who gestures,” I remind them of the exercise where they demonstrated to me they can do both. I let them know they are capable of it; sometimes they decide to do it and other times they decide not to do it but they must own the fact that it is a choice they made.

Even after this activity, an occasional student will try to tell me, “I can’t project my voice” or “I’m just not assertive.” I never argue, I ask them if they have siblings. If they answer, “yes,” I ask them if they have ever yelled at their sibling to get out of their stuff. They usually laugh and say, “Oh, yes.” I then ask them to tell me of places they feel comfortable, and they act assertively. They tell me of a club they are in, a friend pack they hang out with, or a role where they feel confident. I remind them that clearly, they know how to project their voice because they have done it before. Clearly, they know how to be assertive because they have been assertive before. I remind them they know how to talk to others and be confident because they have acted confidently before. They have the ability; they just choose when to use that ability.

Now, I want you to think of a time you have chosen to define yourself as weak, shy, or unassertive. I want you to ask yourself why did you decide that for yourself? Think of at least three settings where you brought your “big self” to the situation. Think about a time, you have projected your voice. Think about a time you felt the power of your own words. You know you have the ability, what causes you to not want to bring it out?

We All Feel Like Imposters

Feel powerless or insecure? You are not alone. When interviewed, top executives, college professors, leaders of all kinds admit they often feel powerless. They often feel like they don't belong, they aren't smart enough, they are not good enough, and they don't speak clearly enough. And yet, they put on their assertive selves and act the part until they begin to fully feel the part. They decide just because they have feelings of smallness does not mean they should act small. They have the choice not to act on the powerlessness they feel. In fact, for most, it pushes them to try harder. These leaders decide even if they sometimes feel like an impostor, they can still act the part and be powerful. They can put on their "big self" and so can you.

What's the point? You decide how you are going to act in a speech. You control which you to wear for the day, you control whether you act powerful, and you control whether you bring your "big self" to the presentation. I hope you decide to try on the powerful you. You owe it to yourself to see what you can do. You might just decide it is a good fit.



["For this With Those with Imposter Syndrome"](#) by [Alan Levine](#), licensed under [CC BY](#)

Who Will You Decide to Be?

Do or Don't?

Don't Do This	Do This Instead
Awfulizing Me "What if I mess up? I always mess things up."	Overcomer Me "I'm tough and can take on any challenge." "It may not be easy, but I can do it."
Insecure Me "What if they don't like me? They will hate me."	Confident Me "I've got this because I have practiced and I know my stuff."
Hater Me "Speech is stupid. I can't believe I have to do this."	Powerful Me "I've got great things to say, and I know it will cause them to think."
Downer Me "I know I'm going to mess it all up. I always do. Why even try?"	Optimistic Me "I may not be perfect, but I have something important to share." "I've been given this opportunity to speak, I'm going to make the most of it."

*You are capable of being all these.
Which one will you pick on your speech day?*

What's the Worst That Could Happen?

Sometimes, you can create fears to keep yourself from fully trying. If that happens, the best thing you can do with your fear is to take it to its logical absurdity.

What if I mess up?

So what?

People will laugh at me!

So what?

They won't like me!

So what?

No one will be my friend.

Really, So what?

If no one in the class will be my friend, then I will be lonely.

So what?

No one will talk to me outside of class and I will be so lonesome I will drop out of college.

Are you sure? So, then what?

I will drop out of college, never have good relationships which means I will never get a job.

So what?

I will be homeless living under a bridge with a stray dog.

All that because you messed up on your speech in college. Really?

As I said, we take it to its absurdity. So, what if you mess up. Usually, the worst that can happen is you get a little embarrassed at the time and have a good story to tell for a lifetime.

Use the A.W.A.R.E Method to Beat Anxiety

If you feel anxiety is getting too much, do what nurses are trained to do and be aware. The **A.W.A.R.E.** method can help:

Accept that you feel anxious. Fighting it will not take away the anxiety.

Watch your anxiety. What changes are you noticing in your body, your thoughts, and your perception?

Act normal. Breathe normally and act as if you feel confident and calm. This will pass and your anxiety will fade away.

Repeat the three steps above until your anxiety reduces to an acceptable level.

Expect the best. Invest your time and energy in what can help you, don't worry about what might go wrong.

Day-Calder, M. (2017). Conquer your fear of public speaking. *Nursing Standard (2014+)*, 32(3), 37.

I was once given the advice to think of emotions like a river. Emotions flow into us and will flow through us and out of us as long as we don't try to dam them up.

Know That They Can't Tell How Nervous You Are

You know the feeling that goes through your mind: "I'm so nervous. I bet everyone can tell"? Well, guess

what—they can't. At least this is what research suggests. If you have felt like people could peer into your very soul and see your insecurity, you are not alone. The illusion of transparency is the tendency for people to overestimate the degree to which their personal mental state is known by others. Because our emotions feel so strong to us, we are sure that they “leak out” and that everyone can tell just how we feel. When researchers put it to the test, they found that observers just are not very good at picking up on a speaker's emotional state. The speakers thought the audience could sense their insecurity and could see their hands shaking and could hear their voice shaking, but the audience noticed very little or not at all. Researchers in an article titled, *The Illusion of Transparency and the Alleviation of Speech Anxiety*, suggest:

What's inside of you typically manifests itself too subtly to be detected by others. You should just relax and try to do your best. Know that if you become nervous, you'll probably be the only one to know.

The researchers found simply telling people the audience could not see through them made them less anxious as speakers. The bottom line is this: speaker anxiety is not very accurately detected by audiences. Simply knowing this can help set you free. Do not worry, they can't see through you. Now you know, you can let it go.

Know That You Are Likely Misinterpreting Cues

“I saw that guy in the back make an angry face, I know he hated my speech.” It is easy when you are nervous to look at the audience and the looks on their faces as hostile. I once got a note from a student who told me he thought I hated his speeches because I gave him mean looks. I thought about it long and hard because I really liked the student, and I really liked his speeches. Maybe it was because I had been wearing the wrong glasses and squinted a little, maybe it was because the room and windows created weird light streaks that made it hard to see his slides, maybe it was because I had a headache that day, or maybe it was because I just make weird facial expressions (my kids tell me this one is true). The problem is I liked his speeches and he thought I hated them.

I found an article in the *Psychophysiology Journal* that might explain what happened. In this study, researchers told participants that they would have to give a speech. While waiting for their turn to give the speech, participants looked at a series of facial expressions and were tested by an electroencephalogram. The researchers found that participants who thought they were fixing to give a speech were more likely to judge the faces they saw as angry.

Think about it. This implies that when you are ready to give a speech, you may see neutral faces as angry. The famous lawyer Gerry Spence wrote about something similar. Every time he spoke, he noticed one of the jurors would look stern and cross his arms across his chest. He just knew that juror was really opposed to his message. He was shocked when all the jurors voted in favor of his client. How could that be? What about the man with his arms crossed? Later, the juror said, his crossed arms weren't in opposition, he just had a big

belly, and it is a nice place to rest his arms. Be aware of the tendency to interpret other's nonverbals in a negative way.

You do not know what is going on in the minds of your audience so always assume the best.

Realize That Stress Can Be Helpful

Health psychologist Kelly McGonigal shares her surprising revelation—stress can be a good thing. In her TED Talk, *How to Make Stress Your Friend*, she reveals that when it comes to stress, a rapid heartbeat and fast breathing are not the problem. The problem is what we *believe* those physical reactions mean. It is how we label the stress that matters most. Think about it. Your heart pounds and your breath quickens in moments of joy. Your heart pounds and your breath quickens before acts of great courage. Your heart pounds and your breath quickens in anticipation of special events. A pounding heart and quickened breath can be a good thing. When you interpret those physical symptoms as something good, it opens your blood vessels and sends extra oxygen to your brain and you feel energized and prepared. When you label that fast heartbeat and rapid breathing as helpful, you feel more confident, less anxious, and less stressed out. McGonigal suggests it is when you interpret these reactions as bad that it constricts your blood vessels leading to health issues.

Football players and other athletes often do things to get pumped before running out on the field. These players believe an adrenaline rush means they are going to play well. They think of adrenaline as a gift that means they are charged up. They believe the adrenaline will help them run faster and be more alert. If you are a speaker and you experience an adrenaline rush, be like these players and think of it as a sign your body is awake, alert, and ready to go. Just remember that most people experience some version of butterflies before they speak. If you are nervous, you are normal. Good speakers channel energy into making a good speech. Good speakers know you do not want to get rid of the butterflies, you just want them to fly in formation.

So, what does that mean for you? It means your pounding heart and heavy breathing have prepared you for action.

Watch [How to make stress your friend | Kelly McGonigal on YouTube \(15 mins\)](#)

The Surprising Side Effect of Stress

Ready for the bonus feature?

Now you have watched the video, you know there is another great side effect to stress—you become more social. McGonigal suggests that when you are stressed, not only do you release adrenaline, but you also release oxytocin. It is the release of oxytocin that makes you want to spend time encouraging people and being around people. All these years, I have joked that my public speaking students have bonded so fiercely because they bonded through pain, and now I know it is literally true. Since they were together in times of high excitement during speeches, they felt closer and more bonded (much like a sports team).

McGonigal also suggests that an oxytocin reaction is a form of self-healing. When you have an oxytocin reaction, you tend to want to seek and give support. All of this wonderful oxytocin protects, regenerates, and strengthens your heart.

What does this mean for you? It means if you feel anxious about an upcoming speech, call a friend or get a hug from your mom. That feeling you have makes you want to tell someone how you feel is your body's way of helping you to be successful and healthy. Your body knows what it needs, it doesn't need to run from speech, it needs to connect with people who care about you. In your anxiety, you should encourage others. In doing so, you help yourself along the way. Your body knows what to do- listen.

Let Fear Propel You

It is normal to have physical reactions when thinking about public speaking and it is how we frame these feelings that makes all the difference. Many famous speakers tell of wrestling with fear and Gerry Spence, lawyer and author of *How to Argue and Win Every Time and Win Your Case*, is one of them. I will let him describe his battle in his own words.

“In the courtroom, I sometimes carry on a silent conversation with myself about my fear, while the jurors look on wondering, as they must, what occupies this strange man who stands silently before them looking down at his feet. My conversation with myself most often sounds like this:

“How are you feeling, Gerry?” I ask.

“The jury is watching, waiting for me to begin my argument,” I reply. “I can't just stand here saying nothing.”

“I asked you, how are you feeling?”

“You know how I feel.

“What is the feeling?”

“You know what the feeling is.”

“Are you afraid to say it?”

“All right. I'm afraid.”

“Well, you should be. Big stakes. The prosecutor wants to destroy your client. He wants to destroy you.”

“I don't want to think about it. Not now. Not standing here.”

It's all right to be afraid. You should be afraid. Go ahead. Feel it.

“But the jury's watching.”

“They can wait a few seconds more.

Fear is energy.

If you feel your fear, you can also feel its power, and you can change its power to your power.”

Suddenly, I look up at the waiting jury. I hear myself address them in a clear, quiet voice, “Ladies and gentlemen of the jury.” Suddenly, I am vaguely aware that something is happening to my fear. I have looked it in the eye. I have stared it down. It retreats like a whimpering cur that is now afraid to face me! The pain of it recedes. I feel a new power well up. And my argument begins...

I have learned not to be ashamed of my fear, but to embrace it. One cannot be brave without it, for is not our bravery merely the facing of our fear?”

Can you see a pattern emerge with these things? Fear is not the problem, it is how we allow fear to cripple us or give us the power that matters.



Photo by [Alysha Rosly](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Believe That with Practice, You Can Improve

When you think about speaking are you tempted to believe, “Some people are just born good speakers” or “I just wasn’t made for this public speaking stuff.” If that is you, you may have what Stanford researcher Carol Dweck calls a “fixed mindset.” It does not have to be that way, Dweck found when people left their options open and believed that they could improve, they did. One way to keep your mind open is to add the word “yet” to the end of the sentence. It’s easy. Let’s try it: “I haven’t mastered this...yet. I haven’t learned to gesture without thinking about it...yet.”

Another way you can help yourself have a growth mindset is to pick a few growth mindset quotes and place them where you can see them every day. Look at them, read them out loud, and think about

where you want to be. Let a growth mindset become your new habit.

Here are a few of my favorite quotes:

- It’s not always about being the best. It’s about being better than you were yesterday. –Jigoro Kano
- No matter how many mistakes you make or how slow your progress, you are still way ahead of everyone who isn’t trying. –Tony Robbins
- Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it. –Charles Swindoll
- Courage is like a muscle. We strengthen it when we use it. –Ruth Gordon
- Sometimes what we call “failure” is really just that necessary struggle called learning. –Louis Armstrong
- May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears. –Nelson Mandela
- A comfort zone is a beautiful place but nothing ever grows there. –John Assaraf
- You won’t always be motivated; you will have to learn to be disciplined. –Author unknown
- Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will. –Suzy Kassem
- You have not failed unless you have quit trying. –Gordon B. Hinckley

Change the Way You Think About Things

Whatever you do, do not think about the pink elephant. Stop!

Don't think about the pink elephant with cute pink ears. Do not think about an elephant with a hot pink tail. How are you doing? If you are like most people, not too well.

Now, try this. Think about a green monkey. Go ahead. Picture its green curly tail and its fluffy green fur. So, here's the question, when you were thinking of the green monkey, did your image of the pink elephant go away? For most people, it did.

What's the point? The point is before a speech, most people tell themselves, "I won't be nervous, I won't be nervous, I won't think of the pink elephant." Do you see where I'm headed with all of this? Telling yourself not to be nervous rarely helps. The more you say, "I won't be nervous," the more you feel nervous.

So how do you stop thinking of the pink elephant? By thinking of the green monkey of course. Apply this to speaking. Instead of saying, "I won't be nervous" or "I won't forget what to say," say things like, "This speech is going to be great! I can do this." or "My audience will love the part where I..." Speech teacher, Donn King calls this harnessing your green monkey, and researchers call it cognitive restructuring. You will restructure the way you think about things.

Conquer your fear with positive self-talk. Tell yourself you will be relaxed, articulate, and confident...and you will be.



Photo by [Pawel Czerwinski](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Cognitive Restructuring

Don't say (Pink Elephant)

- I'm afraid my voice will crack.
- I'll mess up and say the wrong words.
- I'm so nervous.
- I hate doing speeches.

Do say (Green Monkey)

- I can do this.
- The audience will like my topic.

- I am confident.
- I know my stuff.
- I am smart and capable.
- I will speak with power and authority.

I often use the green monkey analogy when making presentations to groups. I say, “When you think about the green monkey, the pink elephant goes away. Except for some of you, some of you imagine the green monkey riding the pink elephant (the audience always laughs). You are the special ones who do things differently.” I said this in a special presentation to Panamanian Engineering students and their director Michael Rau sent me a picture and a note that said, “This is me.”

This made my day and I keep it on my desk as a reminder—we all do things differently. Sometimes the green monkey (positive thinking) can erase the pink elephant (negative self-talk). For others, the self-doubt may still be there but the monkey (positive thinking) eventually learns to drive the fear to work towards great things. Each of us finds different ways to believe in ourselves and harness our fears. Each of us is working to find our way, so find what works for you.



Thanks to Michael Rau for the use of his illustration. “[Green Monkey Pink Elephant](#)” by Michael Rau, licensed under CC BY

Focus On What You Want More Of

If you think, I am energized.

If you think, I am going to speak confidently.

If you think, I am going to share important things and they will want to listen

Then, you’ll get more of those feelings.

Think about things you actually want to increase.

Plan on Recovering Well

I Hope You Mess Up At Least Once—I Really Mean It!

I hope you mess up so you can get it over your unrealistic expectation of perfection.

I love hearing stories of how people messed up in speeches. My favorite one is of a mega-church pastor who

attempted to say ‘the church is a living organism’ but he accidentally said another much more embarrassing “O” word. Guess what? He is still preaching.

I love showing videos of where Obama says there are 52 states and I laugh at how Bush says “Americans are working to put food on their family.” Guess what? They still managed to get things done.

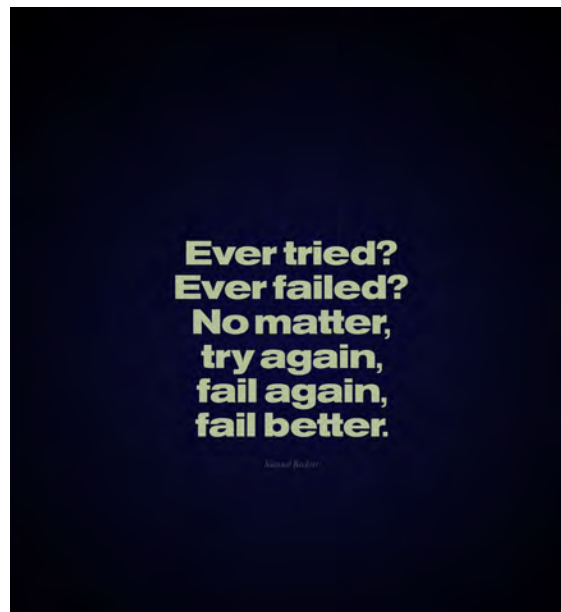
I love to see the video of where the local TV anchor’s tooth falls out during a broadcast. Guess what – he is still the anchor.

Being human and making mistakes makes you human; how you deal with those mistakes can make you more approachable. One of my first jobs was as a cashier at a convenience store. Whenever I made a mistake, I would lower my eyes and look ashamed and repeatedly tell the customer how sorry I was. One day, my boss came up to me and said I needed to find a better strategy for when I messed up. He said by repeatedly apologizing, I was making it a bigger deal than it was. The next time, I messed up, I looked at the customer and said, “This very special hamburger is only sixty-five dollars and twenty cents.” The customer laughed and made a remark about how it had better be a darn good burger. I assured him it was a great hamburger while I fixed my mistake. He left smiling.

What’s the point? The point is that mistakes will not kill you. Mistakes give you good stories to tell. I hope you mess up at least once so when you are sitting around with friends who are willing to listen to your stories that you can tell them of your most embarrassing speech blunder. I hope everyone can have a good laugh. And laughter after all...is good for you.

Besides, perfect people are boring. Robert Glover, psychotherapist, and author says, “In general people are not drawn to perfection in others. People are drawn to shared interests, shared problems, and an individual’s life energy. Humans connect with humans. Hiding one’s humanity and trying to project an image of perfection makes a person vague, slippery, lifeless, and interesting.”

Just remember the audience doesn’t expect perfection. They don’t judge that you made a mistake, but rather how you recover from it. When you do mess up, don’t make a big deal of it. Most of the time, you are better off not even mentioning it at all. If you are quick on your feet, you might say one or two funny words but then go on. You have great things to say, don’t let a little bump in the road slow you down. Practice your speech and plan on being perfect, but if that doesn’t work out, plan on recovering well. Try again. Fail better.



“[Persistence \(lock\)](#)” by [Brett Jordan](#), licensed under [CC BY](#)

If you pretend you didn't make a mistake, chances are the audience won't notice, and certainly won't dwell on it. Interrupting your speech by apologizing or panicking will make your mistake more noticeable and will throw you off.
Jennifer Conner
University of Arkansas Speech Student

Realize the Audience is On Your Side

Chris Anderson of TED Talks gives the following wisdom:

Acknowledging nervousness can also create engagement. Showing your vulnerability, whether through nerves or tone of voice, is one of the most powerful ways to win over an audience, provided it is authentic. Susan Cain, who wrote a book about introverts and spoke at our 2012 conference, was terrified about giving her talk. You could feel her fragility onstage, and it created this dynamic where the audience was rooting for her—everybody wanted to hug her afterward. The fact that we knew she was fighting to keep herself up there made it beautiful, and it was the most popular talk that year.

I share this example for a couple of reasons. One, notice you can hear her nervousness and yet you get so carried away with her message you forget about it quickly. Two, many of you may think of yourself as an

introvert who is just not the “public speaking” type, and yet, here she is speaking powerfully and giving examples of other introverts who speak powerfully.

Watch [The power of introverts \(19 mins\) on TED](#)

Key Takeaways

Remember this!

- Most people get nervous at the thought of public speaking. If you are nervous, you are normal.
- It is not the physical reaction of stress that is the problem, it is how you think about it. Think of the adrenaline rush as excitement. The way you feel is your body getting you ready to succeed.
- You have permission to be powerful. Have a growth mindset and allow yourself to try.
- Decide what you have to say is more important than any discomfort you have.
- Focus on what the audience needs to hear. Move your focus from what the audience needs to hear more than your need you have to be comfortable.
- By now, you should have identified you have some ways of thinking that may be holding you back. You are armed with the knowledge that you can choose which self to bring to your speech. Now, it is time to try it out.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Overcome Communication Apprehension by Hacking Your Brain](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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OVERCOME COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION BY HACKING YOUR BODY

You will never be more aware of your body than when giving a speech. Things like eye contact and gesturing, suddenly feel unnatural. The good news is there are many ways to harness your fear and turn it into power. There are many thought experiments you can do and many ways to “hack your body” to deal with the anxiety that comes from giving a speech. In this chapter, we will talk a little about thought and a lot about action.

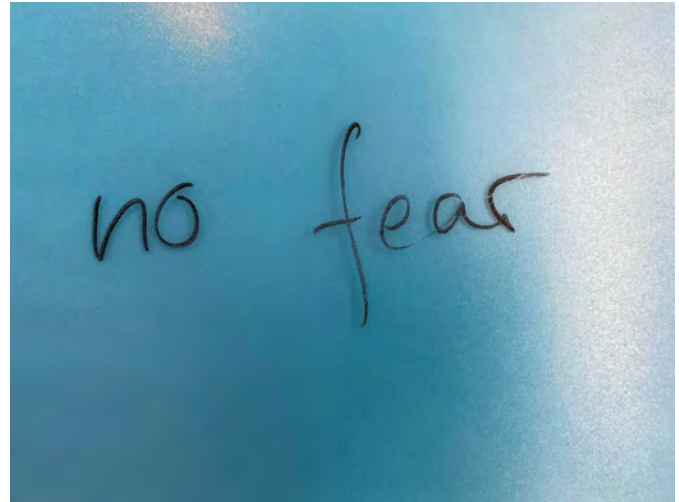


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Visualize Yourself Giving Your Speech

Visualize yourself giving your speech. Imagine yourself rising from your chair and walking towards the podium. Imagine delivering your first few words with power. Imagine your audience smiling and nodding. Imagine using your visuals effectively. Imagine thunderous applause at the end and imagine confidently walking back to your chair.

Researchers who study communication apprehension in public speaking reported that 80% of college students who used positive visualization strategies were able to reduce their level of apprehension. When students visualized giving a speech, they could reduce negative thinking and lower their communication anxiety. Not only that, but students who visualized giving their speech had better gestures and fewer “ums.”

Visualization, it is easy, it is free, and it works. Try it!

Watch [Visualization and mental rehearsal \(6 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Talk About Yourself in Positive Ways

It’s time to start talking nice to yourself. In the book, *Communicating from the Inside Out*, the authors noted the thoughts you have about yourself trigger up to 100 times more brain activity than random thoughts. In addition, when you talk out loud to yourself, your brain activity increases 1,000-fold. Did you catch that? When you talk about yourself, you activate your brain in a powerful way. When you hear your own voice talk

about you, you activate your brain even more, because not you have involved the listening center. It makes sense when you think about it. When I say, “I’ve got this,” I activated the part of my brain that had the thought, I activated the part of my brain associated with speech, and I activated the part of the brain associated with listening. That is a lot of brainpower given to one sentence. When you say things, good or bad, you hear yourself loud and clear. It is as if you sat in the car and cranked the volume up. When you do that, make sure the “song” you are playing to yourself is a good one.

The lesson here is this—be careful what you tell yourself because you are listening more than you know. Take charge of your thoughts and replace any negative thoughts with positive ones. Talk nice.... Your brain is listening.

Say Positive Things About Public Speaking

Your brain communicates with the firing of neurons. These neurons are like an interstate system in your brain. The more often a neural route is used, the larger it becomes. When you take the same road over and over in your thoughts, the messages transmit faster and faster. If the road is used repeatedly, then those thoughts become automatic. Think of it like the familiar road back to your house, you can drive there without even thinking about it—it’s automatic. That’s why when you practice — playing the piano, driving a car, or putting a golf ball, it becomes easier. Eventually, it is like you are on autopilot.

If you think positive thoughts over and over, then those positive thoughts become automatic. If you think negative thoughts over and over, those thoughts become automatic. That is why you have to beware of any negative thoughts you have about public speaking because if you keep thinking negative thoughts, you will make the pathway so large and strong it eventually becomes your default setting. Once those thoughts are on autopilot, they will keep playing over and over until you do something to consciously stop them.

To stop the automatic negative thoughts concerning public speaking, you need to consciously take control. You need to (1) recognize that negative thoughts are a choice and you can choose to think positive thoughts, (2) say positive things out loud and often and, (3) use visualization techniques to visualize yourself being successful at presentations. Repeat this often so these pathways become automatic.

Say “I Am Excited”

Never say, “I am nervous;” instead say, “I am excited.” When you feel nervous acknowledge it. Acknowledge that you are having a physical reaction and then take control of the interpretation. Think, “I can feel my heart beating fast. I’m nervous because I’m about to do something of consequence. It is normal for me to feel like this. I am going to interpret this feeling as excitement. I am excited.”

Give a Talk, Instead of a Speech

Instead of saying, “I have a speech to give on Monday”, say, “I am giving a talk on Monday.” A speech is fear-inducing. A talk is something simple that you do every day. Think about it, they are called TED Talks, not TED Speeches.

Exercise, Laugh and Breathe to Reduce the Effect of Cortisol

Cortisol is the stress hormone released when you are anxious, upset, or scared. Since public speaking can be a source of stress, it benefits you to work on ways to reduce the cortisol reactions. Changing how you think about stress helps, but you also need to “burn off” stress.

Exercising before and after a speech can be a powerful way to help your body reduce the effects of cortisol. A Psychology Today article, *Cortisol: Why “the Stress Hormone” is Public Enemy Number One*, suggests several ways to lower your cortisol levels.

1. Physical activity: exercise, walk, do yoga.
2. Meditation and deep breathing.
3. Spend time with friends.
4. Laughter.
5. Listen to some of your favorite music.

Get started on your public speaking playlist today! After that, go hang out with friends. Take a walk together.

Tips from Toastmaster’s International

- **Breathe out.** Take slow deep breaths in and then release your breath from the bottom of your abdomen to get the maximum benefits of release and relaxation.
- **Get rest.** Try to get an adequate amount of sleep prior to your speech to ensure optimal mental alertness.
- **Fuel your mental engine.** Eat a light meal at least 20 minutes prior to your speech.

Release the Tension in Your Body

How can you make your body work for you, you ask? You can stop many of your nervous reactions by releasing the tension in your muscles.

- Roll your shoulders, loosen your arms.
- Close your eyes and notice any tight muscles. When you notice a tight muscle, first tense it– then relax it.
- Sit with your palms open and facing up on your lap.
- Consciously try to slow down your breathing.
- Make funny faces to relax your cheeks and facial muscles.
- Notice if your neck and facial muscles are tense. If they are, make a point to relax them. (See video below)

In this video, family therapist, Emma McAdam illustrates a quick way to release stress. She suggests stress is like an angry toddler that won't be ignored and has to be acknowledged.

Watch [Quick stress release: Anxiety reduction technique: Anxiety skills #19 \(3 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Fake Confidence

When you get nervous, your body responds in very direct ways. Your breathing gets short and your muscles begin to tense up. Here's the good news! Your body and your mind work in a feedback loop. Let me give you an example: If I am mad, I make a mad face and if I make a mad face, I feel mad. Now that you know there is a feedback loop, you can break into it. In the example I just gave you, I could break the mad feedback loop by smiling. If I smile long enough and add a "happy thought," then my body tells my mind that I am happy.

The same is true with what happens when you experience communication apprehension. When you begin to feel nervous, your muscles tighten, and your breathing becomes shallow. The more your body acts nervous, the more your mind believes you are nervous. The good news is you have the power to break into the cycle. You can stop or slow down the physical reaction of nervousness.

The Facial Feedback Hypothesis states that when you make a facial expression, it can influence the emotion that you are feeling. For example, when you force yourself to smile, you begin to enjoy the moment more. The more you smile, the more you may alter your own perception of the situation. As a speaker, when you fake confidence with your body and face, you may actually begin to feel more confident. Amy Cuddy says, "Fake it until you become it." Watch this quick video to explain more about the facial feedback effect.

Watch [Facial feedback effect – Intro to Psychology \(1 min\) on YouTube](#)



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Stand like Wonder Woman

Stand like Wonder Woman (or Superman) with your legs spread and your hands on your hips. Now hold that pose for two minutes. Do you feel powerful yet? Amy Cuddy, Harvard Researcher, had test subjects' power pose (tall stance open arms, open torso) for as little as two minutes before subjecting them to a stressful job interview. Those who stood in a power pose reported feeling more confident and less nervous.

But wait, there's more. When they asked the job interviewers what they thought of the interviewees, those conducting the interviews preferred those who had power posed before the job interviewer. The effect not only influenced the speakers, but also the listeners.

When observers view you acting confidently, they treat you like you are confident which guess what....makes you feel more confident. (Dominus, 2017).

Act confident to feel confident.

Pretend To Be Someone Else

Are you still feeling a little unsure about yourself? No worries—just pretend like you are an actor playing the part of someone who is confident. Think about a confident speaker you know. When you are mentally preparing for your speech, imagine you *are* that person: How would *they* walk, how would *they* talk, how would *they* gesture? When I make a professional presentation, I often think about my former boss who is a powerful communicator. I ask myself, how would he enter the room and shake hands? How would he walk to the podium? How would he move around during the speech? I steal his confidence to get started. When you start your speech, imagine you are that powerful person. Use their confidence going into the speech. I'm always amazed at how much confidence I gain by starting my speech as someone else. As I continue to speak that confidence that I borrowed slowly becomes mine.

Gesture to Help Release Nervous Energy

I love the movie clip from Talladega Nights where the race car driver, Ricky Bobby, is being interviewed and he keeps making his hands float up awkwardly. After struggling with his hands a while, he finally blurts out, "What do I do with my hands?" I am always amazed at how I don't even think about my hands most days,

but when I get up to give a speech, suddenly, I am aware they exist, and I have no idea what to do with them. If you are like me and like most speakers, you struggle with your hands during presentations.

Nonverbal researchers did a study where they had people describe what they did that day. When the participants told the story using their hands, they added more details to their story, spoke more fluidly, and were able to think better. Gestures seemed to help the speaker to recall information and to speak more fluidly. Did you know that even people who are blind from birth, gesture? It seems to serve the purpose of helping the speaker to think of words and maintain a flow in the speech.

Gesturing doesn't just help the listener; it helps the speaker. But what does this mean for you? It means you are meant to gesture. It suggests that when you gesture, you will be able to think of ideas more clearly and thus speak with better fluidity. In addition, gestures can help you to release nervous energy. When you gesture, you can relieve cognitive stress, you can relieve nervous energy, and which makes you appear more confident.

Gestures also help the audience listen and understand. Studies show that speakers who gesture are seen as more persuasive, more likable, and as having more leadership potential. In a major study of the most popular TED Talks, the researchers discovered that the more gestures, the more views, and likes for the speech.

Gesturing—good for the speaker, good to relieve stress, and good for the audience!

Quick Tips with Your Hands

Make the OK sign with one hand. The act of touching your fingertips together relieves stress. This is a good trick to try when you feel a little anxious because it really is going to be “OK.”

Sweaty palms? Have an ice-cold water bottle that you hold in your hand to reduce the temperature of your hands.

Memorize Your Opening and Closing

Opening and closing a speech are the times when speakers tend to get the most nervous. For that reason, you should memorize the first few sentences and the last few sentences of your speech. When you start off powerfully, you feel powerful, and the audience expects you to be powerful. Carefully write out the first few words. Practice those over and over until you can say them with confidence and power.

When you begin to wind down your speech, your audience is preparing to clap. They don't want to clap too soon or too late, so they are on high alert. Having a planned out closing, not only helps you own the last point, but it also gives them a definitive notion of when to clap. If you are like most of us, you might get a little extra nervous near the end. That's why you should memorize your ending. By memorizing the closing,

you are helping to relieve that tension and finish in a way that demonstrates your confidence and knowledge.

Practice until it feels comfortable

Practice at least five times

The best way to practice speaking is to practice speaking. It may sound obvious, but it is true. Make sure you practice your speech at least 5-10 times from start to finish.



Photo by [Paolo Bendandi](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Practice getting funky

After you have practiced your speech with your notes, I suggest you go someplace comfortable and practice your speech without note cards. Don't worry if you don't know all the details—just wing it! I like to call this “Getting funky.” Do something a little crazy like sing your speech, do your speech in a wrestler's voice, rap your speech, or dance around while saying your speech.

Relax, have fun, get funky. This will help you associate speech with being relaxed and having fun. For “funky” speech practice, it is less important to get the words right and it is more important to relax your body, put a smile on your face, and have fun. After doing this exercise, go back and do your speech with notes and in a serious tone. You will be amazed at how much more relaxed you feel.

Practice to a live audience

It is one thing to practice to a mirror, it is another to practice to a living thing. Find a friendly face, a roommate, a friend, or a dog, and practice your speech to a live audience member. Practicing with a set of watching eyes makes a big difference.

Practice by recording yourself

Record yourself giving your speech. Sit back and watch your video recording and make notes of areas where you need to make adjustments.

Practice by visualizing your speech

Sit in your chair and imagine yourself giving your speech. Imagine your confidence as you walk to the podium. Imagine your strong opening, image the audience smiling at you. Imagine their nods of approval as you give your powerful ending.

*We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence is not an act
but a habit.
Aristotle*

Write yourself encouraging notes

On top of your speech notes, put positive messages to yourself. Write “I’ve got this” in bright colors on the top of the page. Add a little cartoon character that makes you smile. Put a picture of your loved one making a funny face, a picture of your dog, a cartoon picture that makes you happy. One TED Talk speaker said she wrote on her notes, “This Matters, I’ve got this!”

I still get nervous on the first day of class, so I draw a smiley face on my notes and the phrase, “I love being a teacher.”



Photo by [Max van den Oetelaar](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Breathe: Belly Breathing

One way to manage stress is to do deep breathing. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach. Take a deep breath in through your nose. Feel the breath go in. Let the breath completely fill up your lungs—inhale for 15 seconds. You should feel the hand that is on your stomach rise. Now, open your mouth and let the air out slowly over 15 seconds. Repeat this. Each time try to fill up your lungs fully. Taking as few as 3

belly breaths can increase your oxygen allowing you to relax.

Watch [Deep breathing exercises for beginners \(4 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Breathe: The nostril switch

Put your finger on the side of your nose and push the nostril closed.

Breathe in through the nose and out through your mouth.

Now, push the other nostril closed.

Breathe in through the nose and out through your mouth.

Do this until you have taken 3 breaths on each side.

Now, take 3 big breaths in through the mouth and out through the nose with both nostrils open.

This should deepen your breathing and relieve some of the stress.

Most importantly—Don't just read about deep breathing— DO IT!

*Taking a deep breath, faking that I'm confident,
and focusing on the topic helped me manage my anxiety.
After a few seconds, I would forget about the anxiety
and really get into what I was speaking about!*
Tara Johnson
Advanced Public Speaking Student, University of Arkansas

Think of Giving a Speech as a Conversation with Friends

*Your goal is not to be Winston Churchill or Nelson Mandela. It's to be you.
If you're a scientist, be a scientist; don't try to be an activist.
If you're an artist, be an artist; don't try to be an academic.
If you're just an ordinary person, don't try to fake some big intellectual style; just be you.
You don't have to raise a crowd to its feet with a thunderous oration.
Conversational sharing can work just as well.
In fact, for most audiences, it's a lot better.
If you know how to talk to a group of friends over dinner,
then you know enough to speak publicly.
— Chris J. Anderson, Curator TED Talks*

Key Takeaways

- Visualize yourself being successful at speaking.
- Talk about public speaking in positive ways. Say, "I'm excited!" instead of "I'm nervous."

- Exercise, laugh or meditate to reduce the cortisol reaction.
- Do exercises to release tension. Beware of tension and relax your muscles.
- Pretend to be confident, borrow someone else confidence if needed. Fake confidence and it will become you.
- Memorize your opening and closing.
- Write yourself positive notes.
- Practice, practice, practice.

Additional Resources

Sources of Anxiety and Ways to Overcome

1. **Situational** — When talking to friends, we may not be nervous but if asked to say the same thing as a speech, we get nervous. The solution is to think of a presentation as a conversation rather than a performance.
2. **Audience** –Sometimes we are nervous because of who is in the audience. The solution is to visualize your speech and the audience’s positive reaction.
3. **Goal** –We may get anxious when we think about the goal of the speech. Often times we have a future goal that we are worried about. The solution is to focus on the moment—exercise, play a video game, do a tongue twister.

Watch [No Freaking Speaking: Managing Public Speaking Anxiety \(11 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Developing Self Confidence

Lessons from soccer coach, Dr. Ivan Joseph on how to develop self-confidence.

- Practice and keep practicing. Repetition is important for learning a skill.
- Self-talk. Be aware of the things you say to yourself.
- Get away from the people who will tear you down.
- Catch yourself doing good and record it.

Watch [The Skill of Self Confidence \(13 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Video source: TEDx Talks. (2012, January 13). *The skill of self confidence – Dr. Ivan Joseph* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/w-HYZv6HzAs>

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STRUCTURING YOUR SPEECH

Dynamic Presentations by Amanda Quibell

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Please visit the web version of [*Dynamic Presentations*](#) to access the complete book, watch videos or complete interactive. You may also use the links provided to access video content on the web.

This section covers information that will help you to structure your speeches:

- [Opening a speech: Get Their Attention From The Start!](#)
- [Outlining](#)
- [Organizing a speech and Harnessing the Power of Three](#)
- [Transitions: Bridging Ideas for a Seamless Presentation](#)
- [Closing a Speech: End with Power and Let Them Know It is Time to Clap](#)

OPENING A SPEECH: GET THEIR ATTENTION FROM THE START!

Get the audience's attention, or the rest of your speech is a waste. I mean it! Most people spend the majority of their speech preparation time working on the body of their speech and then they tack on an opening and a closing last minute.

The opening and closing deserve the most attention. Why? If you don't get the audience's attention and get them to pay attention to you instead of... the thoughts in their heads, their grocery lists, their neighbors, their social media...then all the rest of your brilliant content is wasted because they will never hear it. Lisa Marshall of Toastmasters International stresses the opening words are so important that "I spend 10 times more time developing and practicing the opener than any other part of the speech."

Look at the description of Person A and Person B and tell me which person you like more.

Person A

envious, stubborn, critical, impulsive, industrious, and intelligent

Person B

intelligent, industrious, impulsive, critical, stubborn, and envious

If you are like most people, you have a preference for Person B. This illustrates a study by Solomon Ashe. He had subjects rate these two people using a string of descriptive words. Now look back at the descriptions. Look closely and you will notice they are the same words in a different order. Most people put the most emphasis on the first three words in determining how they will create the person. Like Ashe's subjects, your audience will be evaluating those first three words. Let's bring it back around to speechmaking. The first sentence out of your mouth is crucial and the first three words are especially important.

People form opinions quickly. To prove this, researchers showed subjects either a 20-minute clip of a job applicant or a 20-30 second clip of a job applicant. They were asked to rate the person on likeability and self-assurance. People were able to form an opinion in under thirty seconds. Not only that but they were able to form the same opinions from a 30-second clip as a 20-minute exposure.

The Battle for Attention

Remember that every piece of content in our modern era is part of an attention war. It's fighting against thousands of other claims on people's time and energy. This is true even when you're standing on a stage in front of a seated audience. They have deadly distracters in their pockets called smartphones, which they can use to summon to their eyes a thousand outside alternatives. Once emails and texts make their claim, your talk may be doomed. And then

there's that lurking demon of modern life, fatigue. All these are lethal enemies. You never want to provide someone with an excuse to zone out. You have to be a savvy general directing this war's outcome. Starting strong is one of your most important weapons.

Chris Anderson, TED Talks, The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking.

“People don’t pay attention to boring things,” according to John Medina, author of *Brain Rules*, “You’ve got 30 seconds before they start asking the question, ‘Am I going to pay attention to you or not?’” It is important to get your audience’s attention right away. In this chapter, I will share with you several ways to win the war for attention and to start your speech right. I will show you the basic opening and closing structure of speeches and give you many examples of what that looks like. A speech, like an airplane, needs a good take-off and a good landing. Now it’s time to prepare to have a strong take-off and learn everything that goes into a speech introduction. This chapter is full of examples from a variety of talks. I included quotes from those introductions, but I also included links to each of those talks hoping you will be interested enough to want to listen.

Ways to Start a Speech

Chris Anderson likens this to battle. “First there is the 10-second war: can you do something in your first moments on stage to ensure people’s eager attention while you set up your talk topic? Second is the 1-minute war: can you then use that first minute to ensure that they’re committed to coming on the full talk journey with you?”

When thinking about your speech, spend a lot of time thinking about how to win the battle for their attention. Your introduction should make your audience want to put down their phones and listen. Your introduction should be so compelling they stop their wandering minds and turn their thoughts to you and you alone. Your introduction should start with three strong words where they form a strong opinion of you and your speech. Let me share how to accomplish this.

Story

Capturing the audience through the story is one of the most powerful ways to start a speech. A story engages the brain in powerful ways and causes the audience’s brains to sync with the speakers. A well-told story will allow the audience to “see” things in their mind’s eye and to join the speaker’s emotions.

Watch [3 things I learned when my plane crashed \(5 mins\) by Ric Elias on TED](#) for how he

begins his speech with a powerful story. Particularly notice his first four words, “Imagine a big explosion.”

The pilot lines up the plane with the Hudson River. That’s usually not the route. He turns off the engines. Now, imagine being in a plane with no sound. And then he says three words. The most unemotional three words I’ve ever heard. He says, “Brace for impact.”

Source: Elias, R. (2011). *3 things I learned when my plane crashed* [Video]. TED. https://www.ted.com/talks/ric_elias_3_things_i_learned_while_my_plane_crashed

Consider these other examples and notice how the speaker uses a story.

More powerful introductions using story:

I love you, I believe in you and it’s going to be OK. The three things that I needed to hear three years ago when I felt more abandoned than ever. I remember that day as if it happen this morning. It was Sunday and I had just woken up early at a brisk 12:30 in the afternoon.

[Ryan Brooks, Honesty, courage, and the importance of brushing your teeth.](#)

When I was nine years old I went off to summer camp for the first time. And my mother packed me a suitcase full of books, which to me seemed like a perfectly natural thing to do. Because in my family, reading was the primary group activity. And this might sound antisocial to you, but for us, it was really just a different way of being social. You have the animal warmth of your family sitting right next to you, but you are also free to go roaming around the adventureland inside your own mind. And I had this idea that camp was going to be just like this, but better.

[Susan Cain, The Power of Introverts.](#)

I grew up to study the brain because I have a brother who has been diagnosed with a brain disorder: schizophrenia.

[Jill Bolte Taylor, My Stroke of Insight.](#)

A few years ago, I got one of those spam emails. I’m not quite sure how, but it turned up in my inbox, and it was from a guy called Solomon Odonkoh.

[James Veitch This is What Happens When You Reply to Spam Email.](#)

Eleven years ago, while giving birth to my first child, I hemorrhaged and was transfused with seven pints of blood. Four years later, I found out that I had been infected with the AIDS virus and had unknowingly passed it to my daughter, Ariel, through my breast milk, and my son, Jake, in utero.

[Elizabeth Glaser, Address to the 1992 Democratic National Convention.](#)

Good stories immediately set the stage and introduce you to the place and to the people. Doing this helps your brain can form a structure where the story takes place. It helps you see the story unfold in your mind. If you need help starting a story, Vanessa Van Edwards suggests these prompts:

- Once upon a time.

- I'm here for a reason, and it's an interesting story.
- The best thing that ever happened to me was.

There is an entire [chapter on the Power of Story that can be found here](#).

*Humor is a rubber sword –
it allows you to make a point without drawing blood.
– Mary Hirsch*

Humor

When Family Guy's [Seth MacFarlane spoke at Harvard Commencement](#) in the rain, he started with “There’s nowhere I would rather be on a day like this than around all this electoral equipment.” People laughed, people smiled, and the speech was off to a strong start. Humor works because it gives the audience a hit of the feel-good hormone dopamine. That is ... if you are funny. If you decide to use humor, make sure you are funny. Test your humor on honest friends. In addition, the humor you use should fit your personality and your audience. Be warned, some groups would find humor inappropriate, do your research.

Watch [This country isn't just carbon neutral – it's carbon negative \(19 mins\) on TED](#) for how Tshering Tobgay begins his speech with humor.

From the video transcript: [Tshering Tobgay, This Country Isn't Just Carbon Neutral-Its Carbon Negative](#).

In case you are wondering, no, I'm not wearing a dress, and no, I'm not saying what I'm wearing underneath. (Laughter) This is a go. This is my national dress. This is how all men dress in Bhutan. That is how our women dress. Like our women, we men get to wear pretty bright colors, but unlike our women, we get to show off our legs. Our national dress is unique, but this is not the only thing that's unique about my country. Our promise to remain carbon neutral is also unique, and this is what I'd like to speak about today, our promise to remain carbon neutral.

Source: Tobgay, T. (date). *This country isn't just carbon neutral – it's carbon negative* [Video]. TED.

<https://www.ted.com/talks/>

[tshering_tobgay_this_country_isn_t_just_carbon_neutral_it_s_carbon_negative](https://www.ted.com/talks/tshering_tobgay_this_country_isn_t_just_carbon_neutral_it_s_carbon_negative)

More powerful introductions using humor

I didn't rebel as a teenager. I started late and was still going at it the summer I turned thirty. I just became an American citizen, I divorced my husband, I got a big tattoo of a bat on my arm, and I joined a New York City punk band.

[Danusia Trevino, Guilty](#)

I need to make a confession at the outset here. A little over 20 years ago, I did something that I regret, something that I'm not particularly proud of. Something that, in many ways, I wish no one would ever know, but that here I feel kind of obliged to reveal. In the late 1980s, in a moment of youthful indiscretion, I went to law school. [Dan Pink, The Puzzle of Motivation.](#)

It is really interesting to be a woman and to get to 45 and to not be married yet and to not have kids, especially when you have pushed out your fifth kid on television.

[Tracee Ellis Ross, 2017 Glamour Woman of the Year.](#)

I am not drunk...but the doctor who delivered me was.” (reference the shake she has due to a botched medical procedure at birth causing her cerebral palsey).

[Maysoon Zayid, I've Got 99 Problems and Cerebral Palsey is Not One of Them.](#)

Salutation followed by humor

Oh boy, thank you so much, thank you so much. Thank you, President Cowan, Mrs. President Cowen; distinguished guests, undistinguished guests, you know who you are, honored faculty and creepy Spanish teacher. And thank you to all the graduating Class of 2009, I realize most of you are hungover and have splitting headaches and haven't slept since Fat Tuesday, but you can't graduate 'til I finish, so listen up. When I was asked to make the commencement speech, I immediately said yes. Then I went to look up what commencement meant which would have been easy if I had a dictionary, but most of the books in our house are Portia's, and they're all written in Australian. So I had to break the word down myself, to find out the meaning. Commencement: common, and cement, common cement. You commonly see cement on sidewalks. Sidewalks have cracks, and if you step on a crack, you break your mother's back. So there's that. But I'm honored that you've asked me here to speak at your common cement

[Ellen DeGenres, Commencement Speech at Tulane.](#)

Well, thank you. Thank you Mr. President, First Lady, King Abdullah of Jordan, Norm, distinguished guests. Please join me in praying that I don't say something we'll all regret. That was for the FCC. If you're wondering what I'm doing here, at a prayer breakfast, well so am I. I'm certainly not here as a man of the cloth, unless that cloth is — is leather.

[Bono at the 54th annual National Prayer Breakfast.](#)

Interesting or Startling Fact

Starting your speech by sharing a little-known fact, can be powerful. For this to fully work, you need to have the audience's attention from the very first word. Read on for how these speakers started strong.

Powerful introductions using facts

Sadly, in the next 18 minutes when I do our chat, four Americans that are alive will be dead from the food that they eat.

[Jamie Oliver, Teach Every Child About Food.](#)

So I want to start by offering you a free, no-tech life hack, and all it requires of you is this: that you change your posture for two minutes.

[Amy Cuddy, Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are.](#)

Okay, now I don't want to alarm anybody in this room, but it's just come to my attention that the person to your right is a liar. (Laughter) Also, the person to your left is a liar. Also the person sitting in your very seats is a liar. We're all liars. What I'm going to do today is I'm going to show you what the research says about why we're all liars, how you can become a lie spotter and why you might want to go the extra mile and go from lie spotting to truth seeking, and ultimately to trust building.

[Pamela Meyer, How to Spot a Liar.](#)

You will live 7.5 minutes longer than you would have otherwise, just because you watched this talk.

[Jane McGonigal, The Game That Can Give You Ten Extra Years of Life.](#)

There are 900,000 divorces in the United States of America every year. Fewer than 10% of them ever talked to anybody about their relationship. So why would you need a science? Well, we need a science to develop effective treatment and understanding of how to make love work. Why? Why should we care about having great relationships? Well, it turns out that in the past 50 years, a field called social epidemiology has emerged, and it shows that great friendships, great love relationships between lovers and parents and children lead to greater health – mental health as well as physical health – greater wealth, greater resilience, faster recovery from illness, greater longevity – if you want to live 10 to 15 years longer, work on your relationships, not just your exercise – and more successful children as well. [John Gottman, The Science of Love.](#)

This room may appear to be holding 600 people but there is actually so many more because within each of us there is a multiple of personalities.

[Elizabeth Lesser, Take the Other to Lunch.](#)

Use a Prop

Using a physical object can draw the audience's attention. Make sure you plan the timing of the prop, and you practice with it. It is important that it is large enough for the audience to see and they can see it well enough that they are not frustrated. Depending on your speech, it may be appropriate to put it away, so it is not distracting.

Powerful introductions using props

Darren Tay walks onto the stage and stares at the audience. He pulls a pair of underwear out of his pocket and puts them on over his suit. "Hey loser how do you like your new school uniform. I think it looks great on you. Those were the words of my high school bully Greg Upperfield. Now if you are all wondering if the underwear that Greg used was clean, I had the same questions.

[Darren Tay, Outsmart, Outlast. Toastmasters 2016 World Champion of Public Speaking.](#)

Mohammed Qahtani walks onstage, puts a cigarette in his mouth ... then looks up as if noticing the audience and says, “What?” As the audience laughs, he continues. “Oh, you all think smoking kills? Ha-ha, let me tell you something. Do you know that the amount of people dying from diabetes are three times as many [as the] people dying from smoking? Yet if I pulled out a Snickers bar, nobody would say anything.” He goes on to say, his facts are made up and his real topic is about how words have power. [Mohammed Qahtani, Toastmasters 2015 World Champion of Public Speaking](#)

JA Gamach blows a train whistle and then starts his speech as if he were a conductor, “All aboard! It’s a bright sunny day and you are taking a train. You are wearing a pair of sandals you proudly made yourself. As you board the train one of your sandals slips off and falls beside the track. (J.A. loses one sandal that falls down the platform.) You try to retrieve it. Too late. The train starts to pull away. What would you have done? I would have cursed my bad luck, mad at losing a sandal.

[JA Gamache, Toastmasters 2007 World Championship.](#)

Use a Quotation

Rules for using quotes

- Be sure to use the quote purposefully and not just as placeholders.
- Quotes can just take up valuable space where you could put content unless they are not properly used.
- Let the quote be more important than the author. When using a quote at the opening, say the quote first and then the author. When using a quote at the end of a speech, say the author first and then the quote.
- Keep it short and sweet. Use a quote that gets to the point quickly.
- If you must use long quotes—put them on your slide.
- If you project a quote, read it to the audience. Never expect them to read it while you talk about something else. Never say stupid things like, “You can read, I’ll let you read this for yourselves” or “Your adults, I’ll let you process this.”
- Check the authorship and authenticity of the quote. There are so many quotes on the internet that are misattributed and misquoted. For example, who wrote the quote: “They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel”?
- Do not go for the overused quote or your audience is prone to dismiss it. Instead of quoting an overused “I have a dream quote” do as Jim Key, the 2003 Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking did and pick an equally great but lesser-used Martin Luther King Quote: “The time is always right to do what is right!”

Watch Nate Stauffer at a Moth Grand Slam as he uses poetry to start and carry his story.

Watch [Depression, the secret we share \(10 mins\) on TED](#) for how Andrew Solomon opens with a quote to make us think about depression.

Video source: Solomon, A. (n.d.). *Depression, the secret we share*. [Video]. TED. https://www.ted.com/talks/andrew_solomon_depression_the_secret_we_share/details?language=en

Reference the Occasion

Ceremonial speeches often call for acknowledgement of those in attendance or a mention of the occasion. Here is how Martin Luther King Junior set up his famous speech.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation. Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

[Martin Luther King Junior, I Have a Dream.](#)

Get the Audience Involved

Having the audience stand, raise their hand, or even nod in encouragement can cause them to focus on your message. This can be particularly helpful if the audience has been sitting for a while. Let me show you a few examples of how that works.

Ask a Question

You can involve the audience from the start by asking them a question.

Watch the first few minutes of Amy Purdy's speech and how she starts with a question, "[If your life were a book and you were the author, how would you want your story to go?](#)"

More powerful introductions using a question

I'm here today to talk about a disturbing question, which has an equally disturbing answer. My topic is the secret of domestic violence and the question I'm going to tackle is the one everyone always asks. Why would she stay? Why would anyone stay with a man who beats her?

[Why Domestic Violence Victims Don't Leave- Leslie Morgan Steiner](#)

Here's a question we need to rethink together: What should be the role of money and markets in our societies? Today, there are very few things that money can't buy.

If you're sentenced to a jail term in Santa Barbara, California, you should know that if you don't like the standard accommodations, you can buy a prison cell upgrade. It's true. For how much, do you think? What would you guess? Five hundred dollars? It's not the Ritz-Carlton. It's a jail! Eighty-two dollars a night. Eighty-two dollars a night.

[Michael Sandel, Why We Shouldn't Trust Markets with Our Civic Life.](#)

How do you explain when things don't go as we assume? Or better, how do you explain when others are able to achieve things that seem to defy all of the assumptions? For example: Why is Apple so innovative? Year after year, after year, after year, they're more innovative than all their competition.

[Simon Sinek, How Great Leaders Inspire Action.](#)

Can you remember a moment when a brilliant idea flashed into your head?

[Darren LaCroix, Ouch! World Champion of Public Speaking.](#)

Have the Audience Participate

If you ask a question you want the audience to answer, be sure to give them time to respond. If they raise their hands, be sure to acknowledge their response. You might have the answer by standing, by raising their hands, by speaking to their neighbor. You might call on one member of the audience to answer for the group.

If you ask a question you want the audience to answer, don't let your presentation slide give away the answer. For example, one speaker had a slide behind him that said, "Lesson 1: Don't Worry About IQ." He has the audience raise their hand if they want to improve their grades then he asks, "So can I get a show of hands, how many would say IQ is going to be the most important to get those marks to go up?" Very few people responded because the answer was "written on the wall" literally.

Watch [Body language, the power is in the palm of your hands – Allan Pease \(14 mins\) on YouTube](#) as Allan Pease engages the audience.

From the video transcript: [Allan Pease, Body Language, the Power is in the Palm of Your Hands:](#)

Everybody hold your right hand in front like this in a handshaking position. Uncross your legs. Relaxed position. Right hand in front. When I say the word, "Now" here's what we're going to do. I am going to ask you to turn to someone besides you, shake hands as if you're meeting for the first time, and keep pumping till I ask you to stop. Then you'll stop and freeze it and we're going to analyze what's happening. You got that? You don't have time to think about this. Do it now. Pick anybody and pump. Pump, everybody. Freeze it. Hold it. Stop. Hold it. Freeze it. Keep your hands locked. Keep them locked. The person whose hand is most on top is saying "I'll be the boss for the rest of the day."

Source: TEDx Talks. (2013, November 17). *Body language, the power is in the palm of your hands – Allan Pease* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/ZZZ7k8cMA-4?t=16>

More powerful introductions using audience participation

I have a confession to make. But first, I want you to make a little confession to me. In the past year, I want you to just raise your hand if you've experienced relatively little stress?

[Kelly McGonigal, How to Make Stress Your Friend.](#)

So I'd like to start, if I may, by asking you some questions.

If you've ever lost someone you truly loved, ever had your heartbroken, ever struggled through an acrimonious divorce, or being the victim of infidelity, please stand up.

If standing up isn't accessible to you, you can put your hand up. Please stay standing and keep your hand up there.

If you've ever lived through a natural disaster, being bullied or made redundant, stand on up. If you've ever had a miscarriage, if you've ever had an abortion or struggled through infertility, please stand up.

Finally, if you or anyone you love has had to cope with mental illness, dementia, some form of physical impairment or cope with suicide, please stand up.

Look around you. Adversity doesn't discriminate. If you are alive, you are going to have to, or you've already had to, deal with some tough times Thank you, everyone. Take a seat.

[Lucy Hone: The Three Secrets of Resilient People.](#)

Advice from Moth Storytelling Club: Have a great first line that sets up the stakes and grabs attention

No: "So I was thinking about climbing this mountain. But then I watched a little TV and made a snack and took a nap and my mom called and vented about her psoriasis then I did a little laundry (a whites load) (I lost another sock, darn it!) and then I thought about it again and decided I'd climb the mountain the next morning."

Yes: "The mountain loomed before me. I had my hunting knife, some trail mix and snow boots. I had to make it to the little cabin and start a fire before sundown or freeze to death for sure."

Arouse Suspense or Curiosity

Watch [Don't regret regret \(17 mins\) on TED](#) for how Kathryn Schulz creates curiosity by showing

us Johnny Depp’s tattoo and then talks about her tattoo of regret. We hang on to her every word wondering, “Where is all this going and how bad can her tattoo really be?”

From the video transcript: [Kathryn Schulz, Don’t Regret, Regret.](#)

So that’s Johnny Depp, of course. And that’s Johnny Depp’s shoulder. And that’s Johnny Depp’s famous shoulder tattoo. Some of you might know that, in 1990, Depp got engaged to Winona Ryder, and he had tattooed on his right shoulder “Winona forever.” And then three years later — which in fairness, kind of is forever by Hollywood standards — they broke up, and Johnny went and got a little bit of repair work done. And now his shoulder says, “Wino forever.”

So like Johnny Depp, and like 25 percent of Americans between the ages of 16 and 50, I have a tattoo. I first started thinking about getting it in my mid-20s, but I deliberately waited a really long time. Because we all know people who have gotten tattoos when they were 17 or 19 or 23 and regretted it by the time they were 30. That didn’t happen to me. I got my tattoo when I was 29, and I regretted it instantly. And by “regretted it,” I mean that I stepped outside of the tattoo place — this is just a couple miles from here down on the Lower East Side — and I had a massive emotional meltdown in broad daylight on the corner of East Broadway and Canal Street. (Laughter) Which is a great place to do it because nobody cares. (Laughter) And then I went home that night, and I had an even larger emotional meltdown, which I’ll say more about in a minute.

Source: Schultz, K. (2011). *Don’t regret regret* [Video]. TED. https://www.ted.com/talks/kathryn_schulz_don_t_regret_regret/

Saying unexpected things or challenging assumptions can get a speech started off right.

A herd of wildebeests, a shoal of fish, a flock of birds. Many animals gather in large groups that are among the most wonderful spectacles in the natural world. But why do these groups form? The common answers include things like seeking safety in numbers or hunting in packs or gathering to mate or breed, and all of these explanations, while often true, make a huge assumption about animal behavior, that the animals are in control of their own actions, that they are in charge of their bodies. And that is often not the case.

[Ed Yong, Zombie Roaches and Other Parasite Tales. TED Talk](#)

Keys to Success

Memorize your first sentence so you can deliver it with impact.

Memorize your whole speech opening if possible.

Make sure your first three words have an impact.

Typical Patterns for Speech Openings

- Get the audience's attention—called a hook or a grabber.
- Establish rapport and tell the audience why you care about the topic of why you are credible to speak on the topic.
- Introduce the speech thesis/preview/good idea.
- Tell the audience why they should care about this topic.
- Give a transition statement to the body of the speech.

Step Two: Credibility

First, you hook the audience with your powerful grabber, then you tell them why you are credible to speak on the topic and why the topic is important. If they know your credentials, you would not need to tell them your credibility but you may still want to tell them why you are interested in the topic. Here are a few examples of how some speakers included credibility.

Tell Why You Are Credible

I'm a doctor, but I kind of slipped sideways into research, and now I'm an epidemiologist.

[Ben Goldacre, Battling Bad Science.](#)

I started studying resilience research a decade ago at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. It was an amazing time to be there because the professors who trained me had just picked up the contract to train all 1.1 million American soldiers to be as mentally fit as they always have been physically fit. [Lucy Hone: The Three Secrets of Resilient People.](#)

What I'm going to do is to just give a few notes, and this is from a book I'm preparing called "Letters to a Young Scientist." I'd thought it'd be appropriate to present it, on the basis that I have had extensive experience in teaching, counseling scientists across a broad array of fields. And you might like to hear some of the principles that I've developed in doing that teaching and counseling.

[EO Wilson: Advice to a Young Scientist.](#)

Step Three: Tell Why it is Important

Early on in your speech, you should tell the audience why they should care. You should connect the speech to things they care about. This is where you answer, so what, who cares?

You know, I didn't set out to be a parenting expert. In fact, I'm not very interested in parenting, per se. It's just that there's a certain style of parenting these days that is kind of messing up kids, impeding their chances to develop.

[Julie Lythcott-Haims, How to Raise Successful Kids – Without Over-Parenting](#)

Step Four: Tell the Purpose of the Talk (aka Preview/Thesis)

“If you don't know what you want to achieve in your presentation your audience never will.” – Harvey Diamond, author

Tell the audience your purpose, clearly give them an overview of the main points. MIT professor, Patrick Winston says one of the best things to add to your speech is an empowerment promise. You want to tell people what they will know at the end of your speech that they didn't know at the beginning. It's their reason for being here. His empowerment promise was, “Today you will see some examples of what you can put in your armory of speaking techniques and it will be the case that one of those examples—some heuristic, some technique, maybe only one will be the one that will get you the job. By the end of the next 60 minutes, you will have been exposed to a lot of ideas, some of which you will incorporate into your own repertoire, and they will ensure that you get the maximum opportunity to have your ideas valued and accepted by the people you speak with.” Notice that this statement told you what to expect and why it mattered.

Here are examples of how various speakers accomplished this.

For years, I've been telling people, stress makes you sick. It increases the risk of everything from the common cold to cardiovascular disease. Basically, I've turned stress into the enemy. But I have changed my mind about stress, and today, I want to change yours.

[Kelly McGonigal, How to Make Stress Your Friend.](#)

We've been sold the lie that disability is a Bad Thing, capital B, capital T. It's a bad thing, and to live with a disability makes you exceptional. It's not a bad thing, and it doesn't make you exceptional.

[Stella Young, I'm Not Your Inspiration, Thank You Very Much](#)

What I'm going to show you is all of the main things, all of the main features of my discipline, evidence-based medicine. And I will talk you through all of these and demonstrate how they work, exclusively using examples of people getting stuff wrong.

[Ben Goldacre, Battling Bad Science.](#)

I would like to think that we (Arab women) poor, oppressed women actually have some useful, certainly hard-earned lessons to share, lessons that might turn out useful for anyone wishing to thrive in the modern

world. Here are three of mine.

[Leila Hoteit, Three Lessons on Success from an Arab businesswoman](#)

We are often terrified and fascinated by the power hackers now have. They scare us. But the choices they make have dramatic outcomes that influence us all. So I am here today because I think we need hackers, and in fact, they just might be the immune system for the information age. Sometimes they make us sick, but they also find those hidden threats in our world, and they make us fix it.

[Keren Elazari. Hackers: The Internet's Immune System](#)

Try This — Inspired by TED Master Class

After you write your thesis, send it to three people with the question, “Based on what you read here, what do you think my speech will be about?”

Putting It All Together

At this point, you know you need to have a grabber, a preview, a credibility statement, and a so-what-who-cares statement. Let’s take a look at one of the top TED talks of all time by Jamie Oliver. This speech is a good illustration of everything we’ve been talking about so far and how all this works together.

Watch [Teach every child about food \(22 mins\) on TED](#)

Table 1: Teach Every Child About Food by Jamie Oliver Analyzed

Part of speech	Illustration
Get the audience’s attention — called a hook or a grabber.	Sadly, in the next 18 minutes when I do our chat, four Americans that are alive will be dead through the food that they eat.
Establish rapport and tell the audience why you care about the topic or why you are credible to speak on the topic.	My name’s Jamie Oliver. I’m 34 years old. I’m from Essex in England and for the last seven years, I’ve worked fairly tirelessly to save lives in my own way. I’m not a doctor; I’m a chef, I don’t have expensive equipment or medicine. I use information, education.
Tell the audience why they should care about this topic.	I profoundly believe that the power of food has a primal place in our homes that binds us to the best bits of life. We have an awful, awful reality right now. America, you’re at the top of your game. This is one of the most unhealthy countries in the world.
Introduce the speech thesis/preview/good idea.	I came here to start a food revolution that I so profoundly believe in. We need it. The time is now. We’re in a tipping-point moment.
Give a transition statement to the body of the speech.	I’ve been doing this for seven years. I’ve been trying in America for seven years. Now is the time when it’s ripe — ripe for the picking. I went to the eye of the storm. I went to West Virginia, the most unhealthy state in America. Or it was last year. We’ve got a new one this year, but we’ll work on that next season.

Never Start a Speech This Way

So we’ve talked about hooking the audience, telling why you are credible, telling them why they should care, and giving them a preview of your talk, now let’s talk about what *not* to say or do. There are some things that speakers say to hurt their credibility and diminish the chances the audience will listen, be sure to avoid these.

“Everybody close your eyes.”

I don’t want to close my eyes; it makes me feel awkward and exposed to be in a group of people with my eyes closed. Because of that, I keep my eyes open. The problem is when I keep my eyes open, I feel like some sort of horrible nonconformist rebel. I feel awkward with my eyes closed and I feel guilty if they are open. Either way, I just feel bad. Besides, half of the time when speakers tell audience members to close their eyes, they forget to tell us when we can open them. If you are wanting me to imagine a story, just tell me to imagine it, don’t make me close my eyes (rant over).

“Can everybody hear me?”

You should plan your opening to be intentional and with power. “Can everybody hear me” is a weak and uncertain statement and this is not the first impression you want to leave. Do a microphone check before the audience members arrive and have someone stand in different corners of the room to make sure you can be heard. Don’t waste your valuable speech time with questions that you should already know the answer to.

“How long do I have to speak?”

You should know that before you begin. Even if the presentations for the day are running over and you are the last speaker, you should ask the MC before you begin. Always plan your first words with power.

“Can you read this?”

You should make your slides big, really big. Test out your slides in advance of your speech, walk all around the room and make sure you can read them. Have a friend check them out as well. You should know they are big enough because you planned for it and tested it.

“Turn off your cell phones and laptops.”

People really hate having things taken away, not to mention that your audience may want to take notes on their devices. Chances are you are speaking to adults, let them determine if it is appropriate to have out their technology.

“I’m sorry, I’m losing my voice.”

“I’m stopped up.”

“I’m under the weather.”

Stop apologizing! Stop making excuses! While these lines may be true, they just come off as excuses and can make the audience either feel like you don’t want to be there, or they just feel sorry for you.

“I’m so nervous right now.”

Talking about your nervousness will make you more nervous and will make them look for signs of your nervousness. Just start your speech.

“So, Um, Ok.”

Do not start with hesitation. Plan the first words, memorize the first words, practice the first words. Do not start with “Ok, so um, now I’d like...” Plan strong and start strong.

Do Not Discuss Your Business with People Watching...Really! I Mean It!

Many of us are giving and listening to presentations in an online format. I have attended numerous presentations this year through Zoom where I have to sit and watch while the organizers engage in personal small talk or deal with the details of the presentation.

This is how the speech I recently attended began.”Donna, you are going to share your screen, right?”

“Yes. I have my PowerPoint ready to go. Will you push “record” when I give the signal?”

“Sure. Where did you say that button is again? Do you think we should wait five more minutes, I think we had more who were coming? Dave, what was the total we were expecting?”

“Yeah, we had 116 sign up, but the reminders went out late so this may be all we have. We can give them a few more minutes to log on.”

“Donna, How is your dog? Is she still struggling with her cone since her spay surgery? My dog never would wear the cone –she tore her stitches out and broke her wound open. It was terrible. Well, it looks like it is about time to begin, thank you everyone for coming.”

If you are organizing an event online, hosting a speech online, giving a presentation online–please keep it professional. Most platforms will allow you to keep the audience in a waiting room until it is time to start. If you have a business to deal with, keep the audience out until you have everything ready to go. Once the audience is in the meeting, you should engage the audience in group-type small talk or you should just start the presentation. In professional settings, you should start the meeting on time. Why punish those who showed up on time to wait for those who aren’t there yet?

A Conversation Over Coffee with Bill Rogers

I asked my long-time friend, Bill Rogers, to write an excerpt to add to the book. I met Bill when he was the Chief Development Officer for a hospital in Northwest Arkansas and I met him again when he was reinventing himself as a college student getting a Master’s Degree in the theater. He would love to share a symbolic cup of coffee with you and give you advice about public speaking.

Perfect morning for a walk, isn’t it? Join me for a cup of coffee? Wonderful. Find us a table and I’ll get our coffee.

There you go; just like you like it. There's nothing like a great cup of coffee on the patio of your neighborhood coffee shop, is there?

Now that you're settled in your favorite chair, take a sip, and let that glorious caffeine kick in and do its stuff. Okay, let's talk.

So, you were asking me about public speaking.

Well, let's see. Where do we begin?

One of the first pieces of advice I ever received was to imagine that every member of your audience is sitting there in their underwear! Yeah, right. That never worked for me. I tried it once with a local civic group of community leaders both male and female. If the intent of that tidbit is to make you relax, it certainly didn't work for me. It just made me more self-conscious...and more nervous. I not only got distracted, but I also lost my train of thought, I started sweating, and, of course, imagined myself standing there without clothes. Needless to say, that speech was a disaster and I've never used it again. I suggest you don't either.

In the early days, I also relied very heavily on my typed-up speech. Now, there's nothing wrong with that unless you find yourself reading it word for word as I did. Nothing is more boring nor puts an audience to sleep quicker than a speaker with their nose down reading a speech. There's no connection and connection with your audience is key.

As you know, I love theatre and I've done a bit of acting over the years. Early on, I learned that the quicker I learned my lines, the more I could play, experiment, and shape my character. It relaxed me and gave me enormous freedom. It led me to find a mantra for myself: "With discipline comes freedom." This freedom will allow you to improvise as your audience or situation dictates while still conveying the core message of your presentation. That discipline and its resulting freedom apply to public speaking of any kind and, I think, will serve you well.

Another old adage we've all heard is Aristotle's advice. You know the one. No? Well, roughly, it's to tell your audience what you're going to say, say it, and then tell them what you just said. That's the basic formula for public speaking. And it works as a good place to start.

However, effective speaking is much more and, to me, it starts with a story or even a simple sentence.

You know the feeling you get when you read the first sentence of a good book and it just reaches out and grabs you? That should be your goal with every presentation. One sentence to capture your audience's attention. Something that causes them to lean forward. Something that sparks their imagination.

It doesn't have to be all that profound either. It can be something very simple. A personal story that

relates to your topic. A relevant fact or statistic that defines or illustrates the issue or subject matter at hand.

A couple of classics come to mind. The first is Alice Walker's, "The Color of Purple."

"You better not tell nobody but God."

And the second one is from my favorite novel, "To Kill A Mockingbird," by Harper Lee.

"When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm broken at the elbow."

Both sentences hook you immediately. A few simple words speak volumes. After reading or hearing those words, you naturally lean in. You want to learn more. You want to find out what happens next. Every effective speech or presentation does the same thing.

Of course, make sure that the first and last thing you say to your audience is both relevant and appropriate. I share this out of an abundance of caution. I once worked for an internationally recognized and well-respected children's research hospital and I was given the privilege to speak at a national educational convention. The room was filled wall to wall with teachers. I thought I'd be cute and add a little levity. I opened my presentation with this line, "You know, I've had nightmares like this..." Instead of the roars of laughter, I was expecting, a wave of silence ensued. Not only was the line not funny, but it was also wholly inappropriate and I immediately lost my audience. Not my best day. Learn from my mistakes.

Finally, let's touch on the importance of approaching a speech as a conversation. You and I are sitting here enjoying our coffee and having a friendly, relaxed conversation. Strive for that every chance you get. You may not always have that luxury. Some speeches and presentations simply demand formality. But even in those cases, you can usually make it somewhat conversational. I always try to write my speeches in a conversational style. Like I'm talking to a friend...or trying to make a new one.

So, to recap: tell a story, learn your lines, hook your audience with a simple sentence, close with a question or call to action, use repetition, keep it conversational, treat your audience as a friend, and give yourself permission to relax.

Above all, be yourself. Allow yourself to be as relaxed as you are with those closest to you. If you're relaxed, if you try to think of your audience as a friend, then, in most cases, they too will relax and they will root for you. Even if they disagree with what you are telling them, they will respect you and they will listen.

How about another cup?

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- The most important part of your speech is the introduction because if you don't get their attention, they are not listening to the rest of what you have to say.
- To get attention, tell a story, use humor, share a quote, tell a startling fact, show a prop, ask a question, reference the occasion.
- In addition to the grabber, a good introduction should establish rapport and tell the audience why you are credible.
- An introduction often includes a “so what who cares statement” to tell the audience why this should matter to them.
- The thesis/preview should be clear enough that someone could read just that sentence or couple of sentences and know what the speech is about

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from [Opening a Speech: Get Their Attention from the Start!](#) In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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OUTLINING

Why Outlining Is Important for a Speech

For your presented speech to be as effective as possible, organize your information into logical patterns that your audience can understand. This especially applies if you already know much about your topic. Take careful steps to include pertinent information that your audience might not know and to explain relationships that might not be evident to them. Using a standard outline format helps you to make decisions about your main

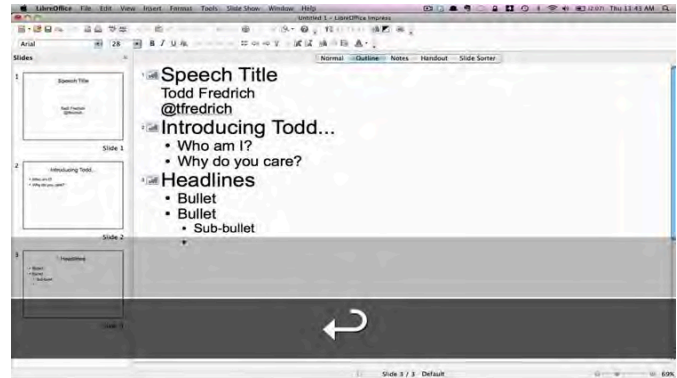
points, about choosing information to support those points, and about crafting the appropriate language to use. Without an outline, your message is liable to lose logical integrity. It might even deteriorate into a bullet-point list with no apparent cohesiveness,—except for the topic—leaving your audience relieved when your speech is finally over.

In this chapter, we discuss three outline types: a working outline, a full-sentence outline, and a speaking outline. For working outlines and full-sentence outlines, write in complete sentences; for speaking outlines, write in phrases. We'll give detailed outline examples later in the chapter, but for this first section, we'll discuss general outlining principles.

An Outline Tests Your Specific Purpose's Clarity

A full-sentence outline lays a strong foundation. It compels you to have one clear and **specific purpose** and helps to frame a clear, concrete thesis statement. An outline helps you to exclude irrelevant information that does not directly focus on your thesis, and it reduces the research you must do because you will clearly identify the supporting evidence you need. And when presenting, an outline helps you remember your speech's central message.

Also, a solid full-sentence outline helps your audience understand and remember your message because they will be able to follow your reasoning. Creating an outline is a task too often perceived as busywork, unnecessary, time consuming, and restrictive. However, students who carefully write a full-sentence outline characteristically give powerful presentations with excellent messages.



Create an outline for your presentation in software such as LibreOffice using bullet points. Screenshot from [Using Outlines to Create a Presentation Video](#) by [strategicains](#) reused under [CC BY](#)

An Outline Tests Your Content's Scope

A clear, concrete thesis statement acts as your outline's compass. **Explicate** each main point, then, test your content's scope by comparing each main point to the thesis statement. If you find a poor match, you will know you've wandered outside your thesis statement's scope, as you will see in the example below.

Specific Purpose: To inform property owners about the *economics* of wind farms generating electrical energy.

1. Your first main point: modern windmills require a very small land base, making real estate cost's low. This is directly related to the *economics* thesis. Now, supply information to support your **claim** that only a small land base is needed.
2. Your second main point: you might be tempted to claim that windmills don't pollute in the ways other sources do. However, you will quickly note that this claim is unrelated to the *economics* thesis, so stay within this scope. A better second main point: once windmills are in place, they require virtually no maintenance. This claim is related to the *economics* thesis. Now, supply information to support this claim.
3. Your third point: windmill-generated electrical energy is more profitable compared to other sources—many audience members will want to know this. This point is clearly related to the economics thesis, and you will easily find information from **authoritative sources** to support this claim.

When you write in outline form, it is much easier to test your content's scope because you can visually locate specific information very easily and then check it against your thesis statement.

An Outline Tests Your Main Points' Logical Patterns

You have many topic choices, therefore, there are many ways to logically organize your content. In the example above, we simply list three main points that are important economics to consider about wind farms. You can also arrange a speech's main points into a logical pattern. We discuss these patterns in the Organizing the Speech Body section. Whatever logical pattern you use, if you examine your thesis statement and then look at your outline's three main points, you will see the logical way in which they relate.

An Outline Tests Your Supporting Ideas' Relevance

When you create an outline, you clearly see that you need supporting **evidence** for each main point. For instance, your first main point claims that windmills require less land than other utilities. Therefore, provide supporting evidence about the acreage windmills require and the acreage other energy-generating sites require, such as nuclear power plants or hydroelectric generators. Use expert sources in economics, economic

development, or engineering to support your claims. You can even include an expert's opinion, but not an ordinary person's opinion. The expert opinion provides stronger support for your point.

Similarly, the second point claims that once a windmill is in place, there is virtually no maintenance cost. To support this claim, provide annual windmill-maintenance costs and compare these to the alternative energy-generating sites' annual maintenance costs. If you compare nuclear power plants to support your first main point, compare nuclear power plants again to be consistent. It becomes very clear, then, that the third main point about windmill-generated energy's profitability needs authoritative references to compare it to nuclear power-generated energy's profitability. In this third main point, use just a few well-selected statistics from authoritative sources to support your claims, and compare them to the other energy sources you've cited.

An Outline Tests Your Speech's Balance and Proportion

Writing a full-sentence outline is visually valuable. You immediately see whether each main point's importance is approximately equal. Does each main point have the same number of supporting points? If you find that your first main point has eight supporting points while the others only have three each, you have two choices: either choose the best three from the eight supporting points or strengthen the authoritative support for your other two main points. Remember, use the best supporting evidence you can find even if it means conducting more research.

An Outline Serves as Your Speaking Notes

In addition to writing a full-sentence outline to prepare your speech, create a shortened outline to use as speaking notes to ensure a strong delivery. If you were to use the full-sentence outline when delivering your speech, you would be reading too much, which limits your ability to give eye contact and use gestures, and it hurts your audience connection. For this reason, write a short-phrase outline on 4 × 6 notecards to use when you deliver your speech.



parallelism, by Tom706, licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/)

Within the speech-writing process, there exists commonly agreed upon principles for creating an outline. The following are important factors to consider when creating a logical and coherent outline:

Singularity

For clarity, make sure your thesis statement expresses one single idea. Use this single idea optimally as a guide to build your outline. The same holds true for your three main points: each must express one clear single idea. If many different ideas are required to build a complete message, present them in separate sentences using transitions such as “at the same time,” “alternately,” “in response to that event,” or some other transition that clarifies the relationship

between two separate ideas. As a reminder, for your audience’s sake, maintain clarity.

Uniformity

A full-sentence outline readily shows whether you are giving equal time to each three main points. For example, are you providing each three main points with corresponding supporting evidence? Also, are you showing each main point’s direct relationship to the thesis statement?

Consistency

Framing a thesis statement with one clear single idea will help you maintain consistency throughout your speech. Beyond the usual grammatical subject-verb agreement requirements, maintain a consistent approach. For instance, unless your speech has a chronological structure that begins in the past and ends in the future, choose a consistent tense, past or present, to use throughout the speech. Similarly, choose a language and use it consistently, for example, use humanity instead of mankind or humans, and use that term throughout.

Adequacy

To ensure your audience understands your speech, do not assume that what is obvious to you is also obvious to your audience. Pay attention to using adequate language in two ways: how you define terms and how you support your main points. And use concrete language as much as you can. For instance, if you use the word community, you’re using an abstract term that can mean many things. So, define for your audience what you mean by community. And when you use evidence to support your main points, use the right kind and the

right weight. For instance, if you make a substantial claim, such as all printed news sources will be obsolete within ten years, you must use expert sources to support that claim.

Parallelism

Parallelism refers to the idea that the three main points follow the same structure or use the same language. Parallelism also allows you to check for inconsistencies and self-contradictory statements. For instance, does anything within your second main point contradict anything in your first main point? Examining your content's parallelism strengthens your message's clarity.

What are the three types of outlines?

Outlines are designed to evolve throughout your speech-preparation process, so in this section, we discuss the three types—a working outline, a full-sentence outline, and a speaking outline—and how you progress from each. Also, we discuss how using speaking-outline notecards help you as a speaker.

Working Outline

Use a working outline to develop your speech. This is the outline you use to lay out your speech's basic structure, so it changes many times before it is complete. A great strategy to begin your working outline is to type out labels for each element. Later, fill in the content. The following are the outline labels that you must have:

Working Outline Labels

Your Name

Topic

General Purpose

Specific Purpose

Main Ideas

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Introduction/Grabber

Thesis Statement**Preview****Transition****Main Point I**

1. **supporting point**
2. **supporting point**

Transition**Main Point II**

1. **supporting point**
2. **supporting point**

Transition**Main Point III**

1. **supporting point**
2. **supporting point**

Transition**Conclusion****References**

Also, a working outline allows you to work out your message's kinks. For instance, let's say you've made the claim that coal mining is a hazardous occupation, but you cannot find authoritative supporting evidence. Now, you must re-examine that main point to assess its validity. You might have to change that main point to be able to support it. If you do so, however, you must make sure that the new main point is a logical part of the thesis statement, the three main points, and the conclusion sequence. Don't think of your working outline as a rough copy, but as a careful step in developing your message. It will take time to develop, but is well worth it as it lays your speech's entire foundation. Here is a working outline example:

Name: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

Topic: Smart dust

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform college science students about smart dust’s potential.

Main Ideas:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust can be used by the military—no. No—smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations. (That’s better because it is clearer and precise).
3. Smart dust could also have daily life applications.

Introduction: (Grabber) (fill in later)

Thesis Statement: Thus far, researchers hypothesize that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking hospital patients, to early natural-disaster warnings, to defending against bioterrorism.

Preview: Today, I’m going to explain what smart dust is and the various near-future smart dust applications. To help us understand the small of it all, I will first examine what smart dust is and how it works. I will then examine some smart-dust military applications. And I’ll end by discussing some smart dust-nonmilitary applications.

Transition: (fill in later)

Main Point I: Dr. Kris Pister, a robotics lab professor at the University of California, Berkeley, originally conceived the smart-dust idea in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

Transition: (fill in later)

Main Point II: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, smart-dust military uses have been widely theorized and examined.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

Transition: (fill in later)

Main Point III: According to the smart-dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

Transition: (fill in later)

Conclusion: (Bring your message full circle and create a psychologically satisfying closure.)

This working outline stage turns out to be a good place to go back and examine whether all the main points are directly related to the thesis statement and to each other. If so, your message has a strong potential for a unified focus. But if one main-point relationship is weak, this is the time to strengthen it. It will be more difficult to strengthen it later, for two reasons: first, the sheer amount of text on your pages will make the visual task more difficult, and second, it becomes increasingly difficult to change things in which you have invested much time and thought.

You can see that this working outline lays a strong foundation for the rest of your message. Its organization is visually apparent. Once you are confident in your basic message's internal unity, begin filling in the supporting points in descending detail—that is, from the general main points, to the particular supporting points, and then to greater detail. The outline makes it visually apparent where information fits and allows you to assess your supporting points to be sure they're authoritative and directly relevant to the main points they must support.

Now, let's discuss transitions. Sometimes, and not surprisingly, transitions seem troublesome to write because we often omit them in informal conversations. Our conversation partners understand what we mean because of our gestures and vocal strategies. And even when we do include transitions, we don't generally identify them as transitions. But in a speech, we must use effective transitions as a gateway from one main point to the next. The listener needs to know when a speaker is moving from one main point to the next.

In the next outline type—the full-sentence outline, take a look at the transitions and see how they make the listener aware of when you shift focus to the next main point.

Full-Sentence Outline

Write a full-sentence outline in full sentences only. There are several reasons why a full-sentence outline

is important. First, this outline type includes a full plan of everything you intend to say to your audience so that you will not have to struggle with wordings or examples. Second, this outline type provides a clear idea of how much time it will take to present your speech. Third, a full-sentence outline showcases your ethical responsibility to your audience by detailing how fundamentally well-prepared you are. This is how a full-sentence outline looks:

Name: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

Topic: Smart dust

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform college science students about smart-dust's potential.

Main Ideas:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations.
3. Smart dust could also have daily life applications.

Introduction/Grabber: In 2002, famed science-fiction writer Michael Crichton released his book *Prey*, which was about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue. The nanomachines were solar powered, self-sufficient, and intelligent. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it took over and killed its prey in its need for new resources. This nanotechnology-sophistication level is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction. In 2000, Kahn, Katz, and Pister, three electrical engineering and computer science professors at the University of California, Berkeley, hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks* that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS; robots; or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration. By 2004, *Fortune Magazine* listed “smart dust” as the first in their “Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On.”

Thesis Statement: Thus far, researchers hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking hospital patients, to early natural-disaster warnings, to bioterrorism defense.

Preview: Today, I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various near-future smart dust applications. To help us understand the small of it all, I'll first discuss what smart dust is and how it works. I'll then discuss some smart-dust military applications. And I'll end by discussing some smart-dust nonmilitary applications.

Transition: To help us understand smart dust, I'll begin by first examining what smart dust is.

Main Point I: Dr. Kris Pister, a robotics lab professor at the University of California, Berkeley, originally conceived the smart-dust idea in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. According to a 2001 article by Bret Warneke, Matt Last, Brian Liebowitz, and Kris Pister titled “Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer” published in *Computer*, Pister’s goal was to build a device that contained a built-in sensor, a communication device, and a small computer that could be integrated into a one-cubic-millimeter package.
2. For comparison purposes, Doug Steel, in a 2005 white paper titled “Smart Dust” written for C. T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston, noted that a single rice grain’s volume is five-cubic millimeters.
 1. Each individual dust piece, called a mote, would then have the ability to interact with other motes and supercomputers.
 2. As Steve Lohr wrote in the January 30, 2010, edition of the *New York Times* in an article titled “Smart Dust? Not Quite, But We’re Getting There,” smart dust could eventually consist of “Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways.”

Transition: Now that we know what smart dust is, let’s switch gears and talk about some the smart-dust military applications.

Main Point II: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, smart-dust military uses have been widely theorized and examined.

1. According to the smart dust website, smart dust could eventually be used for “battlefield surveillance, treaty monitoring, transportation monitoring, scud hunting” and other clear military applications.
 1. Probably, the number one smart-dust benefit in the military environment is its surveillance abilities.
 1. Major Scott Dickson, in a Blue Horizons paper written for the US Air Force Center for Strategy and Technology’s Air War College, sees smart dust as helping the military in battlespace awareness, homeland security, and identifying weapons of mass destruction.
 2. Furthermore, Major Dickson also believes it may be possible to create smart dust that has the

ability to defeat communications-jamming equipment created by foreign governments, which could help the US military not only communicate among itself, but could also increase communications with civilians in military combat zones.

2. According to a 2010 article written by Jessica Griggs in *New Scientist*, one of the first smart-dust benefits could be an early defense warning for space storms and other debris that could be catastrophic.

Transition: Now that we've explored some of smart-dust's military benefits, let's switch gears and see how smart dust may be able to impact our daily lives.

Main Point III: According to the smart-dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. Everything from pasting smart-dust particles to our finger tips to create a virtual computer keyboard, to inventory control, to product quality control have been discussed as possible smart-dust applications.
 1. Steve Lohr, in his 2010 *New York Times* article, wrote, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil."
2. Medically, according to the smart dust website, smart dust could help disabled individuals interface with computers.
 1. Theoretically, we could all be injected with smart dust, which detects adverse body changes instantly and relays information to our physicians.
 2. Smart dust could detect microscopic center-cell formations or alert us when we've been infected by a bacterium or virus, which could speed up treatment and prolong all our lives.

Transition: Today, we've explored what smart dust is, how the US military could use smart dust, and how smart dust could impact all our lives in the near future.

Conclusion: While smart dust is quickly transferring from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that smart dust's full potential will probably not occur until 2025. Smart dust is definitely in our near future, but swarms of smart-dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton's 2002 novel, *Prey*, isn't reality. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries related to smart dust. Even Dr. Kris Pister's smart-dust project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy. Pister responds to

these critiques by saying, “As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were greater than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn’t be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy.”

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When you prepare your full-sentence outline carefully, it may take as much as one- and one-half hours to complete the outline’s first part from your name at the top through the introduction. When you’ve completed that part, take a break and do something else. When you return to the outline, complete your draft in another one- and one-half hours. After that, you only need to do a detailed check for completeness, accuracy, relevance, balance, omitted words, and consistency. If you find errors, instead of being frustrated, be glad you can catch these errors *before* you stand up in front of your audience.

You will notice that the various speech parts, for instance, the transitions and main points, are labeled. There are compelling reasons for these labels. First, as you develop your message, you will sometimes find it

necessary to go back and look at your wording in another part of the outline. Your labels help you find particular passages easily. Second, the labels work as a checklist so that you can make sure you've included everything you intended. Third, the labels help you prepare your speaking outline.

You'll also notice the full references at the outline's end. They match the citations within the outline. Sometimes, while preparing a speech, a speaker finds it important to go back to an original source to be sure the message will be accurate. If you type in your references as you develop your speech rather than afterward, they will be a convenience to you if they are complete and accurate.

Don't think of the references as busywork or drudgery. Although they're more time consuming than text, they are good practice for the more advanced academic work you will do in the immediate future.

Speaking Outline and The Advantages of Using Presentation Notes

Your full-sentence outline prepares you to present a clear and well-organized message, but your speaking outline will include far less detail. Resist the temptation to use your full-sentence outline as your speaking outline. The temptation is real for at least two reasons. First, once you feel that you've carefully crafted every word sequence in your speech, you might not want to sacrifice quality when you shift to vocal presentation. Second, if you feel anxious about how well you will do in front of an audience, you may want to use your full-sentence outline as a safety net. In our experience, however, if you have your full-sentence outline with you, you will end up reading rather than speaking to your audience. Remember, do not read, instead, use carefully prepared notecards.

Your speech will probably have five main components: introduction, main point one, main point two, main point three, and the conclusion. Therefore, we recommend using five notecards—one for each component.

How will five notecards suffice in helping you produce a complete, rich delivery? Why can't you use the full-sentence outline you labored so hard to write? First, your full-sentence outline will make it appear that you don't know your speech's content. Second, the temptation to read the speech directly from the full-sentence outline is nearly overwhelming; even if you resist this temptation, you will find yourself struggling to remember the words on the page rather than speaking extemporaneously. Third, paper is noisier and more awkward than cards. Fourth, it's easier to lose your place using the full outline. Finally, cards just look better. Carefully prepared cards, together with practice, will help you more than you might think.

Use 4 × 6 cards. The smaller 3 × 5 cards are too small to provide space for visually organized notes. Number your cards, and write on one side only. Numbering is helpful if you happen to drop your cards, and writing on one side only means that while you are speaking, the audience is not distracted by your handwritten notes and reminders to yourself. Make sure that each card contains only key words and key phrases, but not full sentences.

Some speeches will include direct or extended quotations from expert sources. These quotations might be

highly technical or difficult to memorize, but they must be presented correctly. This is a circumstance in which you include a sixth card in your notecard sequence. This is the one time you may read fully from a card. If your quotation is important, and the exact wording is crucial, your audience will understand that.

How are notecards sufficient? When they are carefully written and then you practice your speech using them, *they* will reveal that they work. If, during practice, you find that one card doesn't work well enough, you can rewrite that card. Using carefully prepared, sparingly worded cards help you resist the temptation to rely on overhead transparencies or PowerPoint slides to get you through the presentation as well. Although they will never provide your exact full-sentence outline word sequence, they'll keep you organized during your speech. The trick to selecting your cards' phrases and quotations is to identify the labels that will trigger a recall sequence. For instance, if the phrase "more science fact" triggers connections between Crichton's science fiction events in the novel *Prey* versus real science developments, that card phrase will support you through a fairly extended part of your introduction.

Ultimately, you must discover what works for you and then select those words that best jog your recall. Having identified what works, make a preliminary five-card set written on one side only, and practice with them. Revise and refine them as you would an outline.

The following is a hypothetical card set for the smart-dust speech:

[Notecards Transcript \[Word\]](#)

Card 1

Introduction:

2002, Prey, swarm nanomachines feed on living tissue.

Kahn, Katz, and Pister, U C Berkeley engineering and computer sci. profs. hyp.

Microelectromechanical (MEMS) devices could detect light, temp, or vib.

Thesis Statement:

Researchers hyp that s.d. could track patients, warn of natural disaster, act as defense against bioterrorism.

Prev.:

What smart dust is and how it works, military aps, nonmilitary aps.

Transition:

To help understand, first, what smart dust is.

Card 2

1. Dr. Kris Pister, prof robotics lab UC Berkeley conceived the idea in 1998 in a proj. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. 2001 article by Bret Warneke et al titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" publ. in Computer, Pister wanted sensors, comm. devices, and computer in a cubic millimeter package.

2. Doug Steel of CT Bauer College of Bus at Houston noted grain of rice = 5 cm.

1. Each mote could interact w/ others.

2. (see extended quotation)

Quotation:

Steve Lohr, NYT Jan 30 2005, "Smart Dust? Not Quite, but We're Getting There." Smart dust could eventually consist of "Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."

Card 3

II. Orig conceptualized under DARPA, military uses theor. and examined.

1. Smart Dust website, battlefield surveill., treaty monitor, transp. monitor, + scud hunting.

1. benefit, surveill.

1. Maj. Scott Dickson, Blue Horizons Paper for Ctr for Strat and Tech for USAF air war college, sees s.d. as help for battlespace awareness, homeland security, and WMD ID.

2. Maj. Scott Dickson, Blue Horizons Paper for Ctr for Strat and Tech for USAF air war college, sees s.d. as help for battlespace awareness, homeland security, and WMD ID.

2. 2010 article Jessica Griggs New Scientist, early defense, storms and debris.

Transition:

Switch gears to daily lives.

Card 4

III. s.d. project website: s.d. could become common in daily life.

1. Pasting particles for virtual computer keyboard to inventory control poss.

1. Steve Lohr, 2010, NYT, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil."

2. Medically, according to SD project website, help disabled.

1. interface w/ computers.

2. injected, cd. relay info to docs and detect body changes instantly.

1. cancer cells, bacteria or virus, speed up treatment, and so on.

Transition:

We expl. what SD is, how SD could be used militarily, and how SD could impact our lives.

*Card 5**Conclusion:*

Transf fiction to fact, experts agree potential 2025. Michael Crichton's *Prey* isn't reality, but in developing SD as fact, there are ethical considerations.

Pister: privacy.

Quotation:

Dr. Kris Pister: "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."

Notecard 5, by Brian Powell, licensed under [CC0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Creating and using a card set similar to the examples will help you condense and deliver an impressive set of specialized information. But, what if you lose your place during a speech? With a card set, it will take less time to find your place than with a full-sentence outline. You will not be rustling paper, and because your cards are written on one side only, you can keep them in order without flipping them back and forth to check both sides. What if you go blank? Take a few seconds to recall what you've said and how it leads to your next points. There may be several seconds of silence in the middle of your speech, and it may seem like minutes to you, but you can regain your footing most easily with a small well-prepared card set. Under no circumstances should you ever attempt to put your entire speech on cards in little tiny writing. You will end up reading word sequences to your audience instead of delivering a memorable message!

Check your Understanding – Outlining

Check your Understanding – Outlining (Text version)

1. Jerry is beginning to prepare his speech and has constructed a brief outline that sketches out his thesis and main points, but he does not yet have fully developed transitions or a conclusion. Which type of outline has Jerry constructed?
 - a. Transition outline
 - b. Working outline

2. Elisa has prepared her speaking outline on six notecards, so she believes she is finished preparing for her speech. You tell her that simply preparing the speaking outline is not enough; she needs to practice using her notecards as well. Why is this the case?
 - a. Elisa must get used to how the notecards feel in her hand.
 - b. Elisa must make sure the information on her cards work as a memory cue for her.

Check your answers:¹

Activity Source: “[Chapter 14: Outlining](#)” In *Public Speaking* by Sarah Billington and Shirene McKay, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#).

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Notes

1. 1.(a), 2(b)

ORGANIZING A SPEECH AND HARNESSING THE POWER OF THREE

*A designer knows he or she has achieved perfection,
not when there is nothing left to add,
but when there is nothing left to take away.
– Nolan Haims, Presentation Coach
also attributed to Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

When it comes to speeches there are many formulas for how to present. Once you pick your topic, it is helpful to decide which formula works for you and use it from the start. Sure, you could wing it, but when you run into trouble, you will most likely find yourself seeking out a formula, so it just makes sense to start with an organization plan.

Staples of Most Speeches

We're all familiar with the basic pattern.

Dale Carnegie wrote, "Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you just told them." By this, he didn't mean being senselessly repetitive, but rather he wanted speakers to set up the framework for their speech, tell the audience the main points, and then recap the points.

The basic formula for most speeches follows this pattern:

Grabber/Hook: A statement to get the audience's attention.

Preview/Big Idea/Thesis statement. This statement is an overview of what the speech is about.

Credibility Statement: Why should the audience listen to you talk about this? Why are you credible on this topic?

Many, but not all speeches, need this.

So-What-Who-Cares Statement: A statement telling your audience why this topic suits this audience and this occasion.

This can be achieved as a statement, or it can be sprinkled throughout.

Transitions / Signposts: Statements that move the audience from one idea to the next.

Body of Speech: Main points of your speech with transitions between main ideas.

Review: Summary of the speech.

Closure/Cincher: A series of statements that provide closure.

Audiences Will Listen According to Their Understanding

of Your Credibility

One important thing to think about when building your speech is how you will build your credibility with the audience. If an audience doesn't think you are credible, they will listen with suspicion, or they won't listen at all. In speechmaking, there are three types of credibility—initial, derived, and terminal. Initial credibility is the credibility you have before you start to speak. It comes from any preexisting knowledge they have about you as a speaker, it comes from the way you are introduced, and it comes from the way your presentation was advertised. Next, there is derived credibility—credibility stemming from what you say during your speech, how you present yourself during the speech, and how you manage visuals during the speech. Finally, there is terminal credibility—credibility that you have at the end of the speech. Terminal credibility stems from what they think of how you managed yourself and your topic.

We live in a world where many speakers are “googled”, and their credibility is examined before they ever come in contact with their audience. When I train new teachers, I always have them google their names and see what comes up. To make a strong point, I have them open up their social media with someone else in the room. Once they have their profile pulled up, I ask them to hand their phone to the person next to them. I ask, “If a student looks at your public profiles and your social media, what will they think of you as a teacher?” New teachers are often shocked to think of students looking them up but that is the reality. Whether you are a student, a teacher, or a business professional, you need to be aware that people are looking online and using what they find there to determine your initial credibility.

(Now is a good time to pause and “google” your name and look into your social media to think about your credibility).

So, what makes up your credibility? According to communication researchers McCroskey and Teven, credibility is one part competence, one part trustworthiness, and one part goodwill. Competence is how much an audience member perceives you to be knowledgeable and an expert on the topic. You can boost your competence by using research, by having clear, organized ideas, and by clearly, articulating your ideas. Audiences are quick to form opinions and they are constantly evaluating your honesty and trustworthiness. If an audience deems you untrustworthy, every word out of your mouth will be seen as suspect. Finally, the audience evaluates your caring and goodwill. An audience wants to feel like you have their best intentions in mind. Audiences place a high priority on goodwill.

There are several ways to build your credibility with the audience. You can have someone introduce you who tells the audience why you are speaking on the subject. You can find ways to connect with the audience, so they trust you. The more a speaker shows that they understand and recognize the audience's feelings, the closer the audience will feel towards the speaker. Demonstrating enthusiasm and passion, managing content respectfully, and showing an awareness of situational factors all can enhance credibility.

Mind the Gap

When mapping out your speech, you should always mind the GAP—goal, audience, and parameters. Always remember what the goal of the speech is, who the audience will be, and what parameters are set by the location, the time limit, and the setting.

Rules for Effective Communication

Frank Lunz, political advisor, and author of *Words that Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear*, advises politicians of these key components to be an effective communicator.

1. **Simplicity:** Keep the language appropriate for the audience. It is usually better to assume they do not know and explain all terms than it is to leave them with words they don't understand.
2. **Brevity:** People have limited attention spans so be aware of the speech time. It is better to have fewer points than to have too many points.
3. **Credibility:** People will listen to you to the degree of trust that they have in you.
4. **Consistency:** Make sure what you say agrees with other things you have said. In other words, people look to the context of your life and other messages to interpret what you are saying. It is not uncommon for audience members to “google” a speaker before, during, and after a speech to see if they are trustworthy and consistent with what they say in their speech and in other places.
5. **Novelty:** Find ways to grab attention and stand out.
6. **Sound and texture:** Creative use of words will help attract and hold the audience's attention.
7. **Aspiration:** Help the audience reflect on how your message taps into them and their goals and dreams. Help them to see more and be more.
8. **Visualization:** Paint vivid pictures with your words to help the audience visualize the story or the outcome.
9. **Questioning:** Turn some statements into questions to engage the audience.
10. **Context and Relevance:** Tell the audience why your speech should matter to them.

Organizing Your Ideas

Nancy Duarte, speech coach was asked, “What's the best way to start creating a presentation?” Her reply was as follows:

My best advice is to not start in PowerPoint. Presentation tools force you to think through information linearly,

and you really need to start by thinking of the whole instead of the individual lines. I encourage people to use 3×5 note cards or sticky notes — write one idea per note. I tape mine up on the wall and then study them. Then I arrange them and rearrange them — just work and work until the structure feels sound.

Finding the Organizational Structure That is Right for You

*To help your travelers understand
what is needed to achieve your vision,
articulate where you need them
to move from and where you need them to move to.
Then make everything in your speech support that transformation.*

— Nancy Duarte,
Illuminate: Ignite Change Through Speeches,
Stories, Ceremonies, and Symbols

In a study published in *Speech Monographs*, researchers found that audiences who listened to an unorganized speech were more likely to lose interest. It makes sense that if the speaker is jumping around that we quit trying to follow the message. It also makes sense that their study found that it was harder for audiences to recall the speech information from a disorganized speech. Finally, it is no surprise that disorganized speakers were judged less persuasive and less credible. To maximize the effectiveness of your speech, to make your speech more memorable, and to be seen as more credible, you should use an organized speech pattern.

There are many different formulas for how to organize your speech and I am including a list of the most common structures for you to consider. As a useful activity, you might want to go down the list and figure out how your speech could fit into each of the patterns before you settle on the one that works for you.

When I think about compelling presentations, I think about taking an audience on a journey. A successful talk is a little miracle—people see the world differently afterward.

If you frame the talk as a journey, the biggest decisions are figuring out where to start and where to end. To find the right place to start, consider what people in the audience already know about your subject—and how much they care about it. If you assume they have more knowledge or interest than they do, or if you start using jargon or get too technical, you'll lose them. The most engaging speakers do a superb job of very quickly introducing the topic, explaining why they care so deeply about it, and convincing the audience members that they should, too.

The biggest problem I see in first drafts of presentations is that they try to cover too much ground. You can't summarize an entire career in a single talk. If you try to cram in everything you know, you won't have time to include key details, and your talk will disappear into abstract language that may make sense if your listeners are familiar with the subject matter but will be completely opaque if they're new to it. You need specific examples to flesh out your ideas. So limit the scope of your talk to that which can be explained, and brought to life with examples, in the available time.

A successful talk is a little miracle—people see the world differently afterward.

Chris Anderson, TED Talk Curator

Informative Speech Patterns

Chronological:

You would format your speech in the order things occurred. First this, then that.

In this talk, America Ferrera describes her step-by-step process of trying to get a role as a Latina in the United States. She takes us on a chronological journey as she wrestles with identity.

Watch [My identity is a superpower – not an obstacle \(14 mins\) on TED](#)

As you watch this speech notice how she opens with a story of her as a little girl dancing in the den singing and dreaming. At the end of her speech, she loops back to the nine-year-old girl and ends with power as she expertly points to the audience to bring them in as she delivers a well-thought-out last line:

If I could go back and say anything to that nine-year-old, dancing in the den, dreaming her dreams, I would say, my identity is not my obstacle. My identity is my superpower. Because the truth is, I am what the world looks like. You are what the world looks like. Collectively, we are what the world actually looks like. And in order for our systems to reflect that, they don't have to create a new reality. They just have to stop resisting the one we already live in.

Compare and Contrast:

You would compare things and point out how they are similar and how they are different.

In this talk, Julie Hogan informs the audience about the concept of cultural humility by comparing and contrasting a Muslim burka and academic regalia.

Watch [The tale of two robes – Julie Hogan \(12 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Cause and Effect:

You would discuss what caused something and what was the overall effect.

In this talk, Caleb Stewart informs his audience of the benefits of reading. He tells all the effects that reading has had on his life.

Watch [4-year-old gives motivational speech about importance of reading \(2 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Problem Solution:

State the problem, tell us why it is a problem, offer us a solution to the problem.

Many of the best talks have a narrative structure that loosely follows a detective story. The speaker starts out by presenting a problem and then describes the search for a solution. There's an "aha" moment, and the audience's perspective shifts in a meaningful way.

If a talk fails, it's almost always because the speaker didn't frame it correctly, misjudged the audience's level of interest, or neglected to tell a story. Even if the topic is important, random pontification without narrative is always deeply unsatisfying. There's no progression, and you don't feel that you're learning.

Chris Anderson, TED Talk Curator

In this speech, Bart Knols tells us about the problem with mosquitoes (spoiler alert, it is malaria) and then he informs us of three innovative ways to kill mosquitoes. As you watch, notice how he uses a variety of props—a bed, a box of mosquitos, the slideshow, his boxer shorts to keep his audience engaged. His points are so clear that when his talk is over, you could remember the three main solutions and repeat them to a friend.

Watch [3 new was to kill mosquitoes \(10 mins\) on TED](#)

Spatial Organization:

Show us a map and move across the map and show us where things are located. This works for more than a map, it could be a blueprint, a piece of art, an object.

Topical Organization:

You would inform us of a topic and how this topic is broken down into subtopics.

Tucker and LeHew in, *Exploring Public Speaking*, offer this activity and insight:

One of the authors frequently does the following exercise in class. She has all the students take some object from their pocket, purse, or backpack and place it on a table at the front of the room. (It's

interesting what gets put on the table!). Then she has the students gather around and look at the items and “group them”—put them into categories, with each group having at least two items and all items being put in some group. Afterward, she gets the different grouping schema and discusses them. Of course, most of the groups are “correct,” even if just based on color. However, she then asks, “If you had to communicate to a classmate who is absent what is on the table, which schema or grouping pattern would you use?” The point is that grouping can be done on the basis of many characteristics or patterns, but some are clearer and better for communicating.

Less is More

Writer Richard Bach says, “Great writing is all about the power of the deleted word.” Many speakers try to do too much in a speech. They have so much information that they either speak too quickly or explain too briefly. It is better to have fewer points than you can illustrate in numerous ways. After you write your speech, go back, and try to condense. Try to find ways to be more specific and clearer.

*It's a simple equation. Overstuffed equals under-explained.
The wrong way to condense your talk
is to include all the things that you think you need to say,
and simply cut them all back to make them a lot shorter.
There's a drastic consequence
when you rush through multiple topics in summary form.*
Chris Anderson, TED Talk Curator

To make sure the audience gets your point. Tell them what you are going to say, say it, tell them what you've said. When you make a point, say the point, illustrate the point with a fact or story, and then tell them how the point applies.

Getting Advanced: The Rule of Three

*If you have an important point to make,
don't try to be subtle or clever.*

*Use a pile driver.
Hit the point once.
Then come back and hit it again.
Then hit it a third time—a tremendous whack.
-Winston S. Churchill*

Omne Trium Perfectum means everything that comes in threes is perfect. Humans love threes. In our culture, three provides a sense of the whole—it feels complete. The rule of threes suggests ideas presented in threes are easier to remember, more interesting, and more enjoyable. The three could mean have three main points, or the three could mean you have three items to a sentence. It could also mean explaining something in three different ways.

Hendiatis: Three successive words used to express one idea

Friends, Romans, countrymen. William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar
Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. US Declaration of Independence.

Tricolon: Three parallel words or phrases

Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation – not because of the height of our skyscrapers, or the power of our military, or the size of our economy.

Barack Obama, Keynote speech to Democratic National Convention

Homes have been lost; jobs shed; businesses shuttered.

Barack Obama, Inaugural Address

You learn that duty, honor, and country are not simply words, but guideposts. They dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be.

Michelle Obama, West Point Banquet

Parallel construction: Repeated phrases

Anaphora: The repeat of exact words at the beginning

A sandal of hope when you reach out.

A sandal of joy when you listen to your heart.

A sandal of courage when you dare to care.

J.A. Gamache, Toastmasters

We can not dedicate

We can not consecrate

We can not hallow — this ground
Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address

It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you'd have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months.

It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family.

It means to say your goodbyes.

Steve Jobs, Stanford Commencement Speech

These men are our fathers, grandfathers and even great-grandfathers.

These men have been and will be part of our lives in ways that go far beyond the Tokyo Raid.

These men are the crews that have made sure our families' lives were on the right path.

Speech on the Doolittle reunion

This was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal.

This was the moment when we ended a war, and secured our nation, and restored our image as the last, best hope on Earth.

This was the moment, this was the time when we came together to remake this great nation so that it may always reflect our very best selves and our highest ideals.

Barack Obama Democratic Nomination Victory Speech – Change We Can Believe In

Epiphora: Repeat the words at the end.

There is no Southern **problem**.

There is no Northern **problem**.

There is only an American **problem**.

President Lydon B. Johnson

This is not, however, **just America's fight**.

And what is at stake is not just America's freedom.

This is the world's **fight**.

This is civilization's **fight**.

This is the fight of all who believe in

progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.

President George Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress Following 9/11 Attacks

Have Three Points to Your Speech

Have three main parts to your speech and make sure they are clear.

Now I want to share with you three things I learned about myself that day. I learned that it all changes in an instant. We have this bucket list, we have these things we want to do in life, and I thought about all the people I wanted to reach out to that I didn't, all the fences I wanted to mend, all the experiences I wanted to have and I never did. As I thought about that later on, I came up with a saying, which is, "I collect bad wines." Because if the wine is ready and the person is there, I'm opening it. I no longer want to postpone anything in life. And that urgency, that purpose, has really changed my life.

The second thing I learned that day — and this is as we clear the George Washington Bridge, which was by not a lot — I thought about, wow, I really feel one real regret. I've lived a good life. In my own humanity and mistakes, I've tried to get better at everything I tried. But in my humanity, I also allow my ego to get in. And I regretted the time I wasted on things that did not matter with people that matter. And I thought about my relationship with my wife, with my friends, with people. And after, as I reflected on that, I decided to eliminate negative energy from my life. It's not perfect, but it's a lot better. I've not had a fight with my wife in two years. It feels great. I no longer try to be right; I choose to be happy.

The third thing I learned — and this is as your mental clock starts going, “15, 14, 13.” You can see the water coming. I'm saying, “Please blow up.” I don't want this thing to break in 20 pieces like you've seen in those documentaries. And as we're coming down, I had a sense of, wow, dying is not scary. It's almost like we've been preparing for it our whole lives. But it was very sad. I didn't want to go; I love my life. And that sadness really framed in one thought, which is, I only wish for one thing. I only wish I could see my kids grow up.

[Ric Elias, Three Things I Learned While My Plane Crashed.](#)

Alan Alda's Three Ways to Make Yourself Understood

Some of you may know Alan Alda from the hugely popular show, *Mash*. Others of you may know him as the host of *Scientific American Frontiers*. What many people don't know was he was a visiting professor at Stony Brook University and the founder of the Universities' Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science. He created that center as a place to train scientists on how to clearly communicate with the public.

In this video, he explains the rule of threes.

- Make no more than three points.
- Explain difficult ideas in three different ways.
- Find a subtle way to make an important point three times.

Watch [Alan Alda's 3 key ways to making yourself understood \(2 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- A speaker should pick a speech pattern that fits the goal, audience, and parameters of the speech.
- Following a standard speech pattern helps the speaker be more organized.
- Organized speakers are easier to listen to, are perceived as more credible.
- Using the rule of threes can make your speech easier to listen to and more memorable.

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TRANSITIONS: BRIDGING IDEAS FOR A SEAMLESS PRESENTATION

*Good transitions
can make a speech more important to the audience
because they feel they are being taken
to a positive conclusion
without having to travel a bumpy road.
– Joe Griffith*

Transitions

The difference between a novice speaker and an advanced speaker is in how they bridge the gap between ideas. Learning to use transitions effectively will help take your speaking to the advanced level. Transitions can be one word, a phrase, or a full sentence.

The audience is dying to know the relationship between ideas. Their brains are hard-wired for that. It's more important when you are speaking than when you are writing because the listeners can't go back – they have to get it when it happens. If the brain is bored, or gets tired because it's overwhelmed, or gets confused – it can't stay in that place, so it daydreams, creating its own interest.

Speech Coach Max Dixon, Westside Toastmasters.

So, let's get started. I have included various transition types for you to consider. These do little good if you read them and do not use them. This list works best if you read it now and then revisit it every time you write a speech.

Beginning

- Let's begin with...
- First, I'd like to share with you...
- Now that you're aware of the overview, let's begin with...
- Our first stop is...
- I will first cover...
- My first point covers...

- To get started, let's look at...

The Order of Things

- After that...
- Next...
- Second thing...
- Our next stop is...
- Let me tell you about your next step.

Steve Jobs Commencement to Stanford University

Watch [Steve Jobs' 2005 Stanford Commencement Address \(15 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Steve Jobs clearly previews his main points, “Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That’s it. No big deal. Just three stories.” He flows smoothly between points with clear transitions.

- “The first story is about connecting the dots.”
- “My second story is about love and loss.”
- “My third story is about death.”

Source: Stanford. (2008, March 7). *Steve Jobs' 2005 Stanford Commencement Address* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/UF8uR6Z6KLc>

Between Similar Points

- In the same way...
- In addition...
- Likewise...
- Similarly...

Between Disagreeing Points

- Conversely...
- Despite this...
- The flip side of the issue...
- However...
- On the contrary...
- On the other hand...
- However ...
- On the other side ...
- Yet, we cannot ignore ...
- The opposing argument ...
- If we examine the opposite side, we see ...

Introduce an example

- This is best illustrated by an example...
- For instance...
- Take the case of...
- For example...
- To understand this...
- Let me illustrate this by...

Introduce Research

- To make the point...
- As illustrated by...
- For instance...
- Case in point...
- To solidify this point...
- As researched by...

Cause and effect

- Therefore...
- Thus...
- Consequently...

- As a result...
- This is significant because...
- Hence...
- Resulting in...
- For that reason ...
- The effect is...

Elaboration

- Also...
- Besides...
- What's more...
- In addition/additionally...
- Moreover...
- Furthermore...

Transition to a Demonstration

- Let me show you how this works...
- Let me demonstrate this...
- Now that we've covered the theory, let's see it in action ...
- Next, I'd like to let you see this for yourselves...

Introducing Your Visual

- As you can see from this chart...
- I'd like you to notice that...
- The table indicates...

Questions as Transitions

- Now that you know the problem, what do you think will solve it?
- What do you think will solve this crisis?

Vocabulary

Connective:

A word or phrase that connects the ideas of a speech and indicates the relationship between them.

Transitions:

A word or phrase that indicates when a speaker had finished one thought and it moving on to another.

Internal preview:

A statement in the body of the speech that tells the audience what the speaker is going to discuss next.

Internal summary:

A statement in the body of the speech that summarizes the speaker's preceding point or points.

Signpost:

A very brief statement that indicates where a speaker is in the speech or that focuses attention on key ideas.

From the *Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen Lucas



Photo by [Karine Avetisyan](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Thoughts from a Former Student

One thing I learned in class that made me a better speechwriter was to pay attention to the

transitions. In our outlines, there was space for our main points, but also our transitions between them. At the beginning of the semester, I thought this was a waste of time planning out my transition for a speech and that I would just wing it the day of, but I soon realized how important they were. Transitions are like the finishing touches that make everything fall together in a speech.

You may have some interesting points or facts to give to your audience, but without transitions, you have nothing to connect your points and create a narrative. An audience is much more interested in a talk if there is a continuing idea or theme, and transitions help create this. I found this out by watching the other students in my class as they learned to use transitions as well. I loved the speeches that were clearly organized and had a common idea with transitions.

Zoe Lawless, Honors Public Speaking, University of Arkansas

Movement as Transition

Many people don't think about movement as a type of transition, but it can be a very powerful way to help your audience transition between ideas.

- Setting out a visual or putting it away signals a change in ideas.
- Some speakers will imagine a baseball diamond laid out on the floor and move to each base throughout the speech. Their opening comment is at home plate. Point one is delivered on first, point two on second, and point three on third. They stand back on their home plate to deliver the final closing statements.
- One speaker that I met said he always has a special place that is his big idea place. He may move around during his speech but when he wants the audience to know it is an important point, he stands in the big idea place.

Silence as a Transition

John Chappellear, speech consultant, suggests that the use of silence can be powerful. It is powerful, but it is not easy. Being able to stand silently in front of a large audience for 15-45 seconds requires practice. Sometimes you can use silence as a way to let the audience catch up and think deeply about what you just said.

Transitioning Between Slides

- As the next slide shows...
- As you can see...
- Next, I will show you...

Transitioning to Visuals

- As you can see from this chart...
- I'd like to direct your attention to...
- This diagram compares...
- Now, I'd like to illustrate this with...

Signaling the End is Near

- In conclusion...
- To sum it up...
- Lastly...
- In a nutshell...
- To recap...
- I'd like to leave you with...
- Finally, I'd like to say...
- The takeaway from all of this is...
- In conclusion...
- To summarise...

Moving to the Next Speaker

- I told you about the most credible theories about climate change, now John will share with you some examples of what you can do.
- I'm going to turn it over to Malachi, who will take you through the next few points.
- Next, Angie will come up and talk about...
- To help us understand this topic better, we have Beatrice, who will talk us through...
- Look to the next speaker and motion towards them as they walk to the podium, Twila will tell you more...

Problems with Transitions

These are some of the most common problems with transitions:

- Not planning out transitions and just “winging it.”
- Using fancy phrases inconsistent with the rest of the speech.
- Saying, “I have five points” and then having only four or miscounting the points.
- Overusing the same transitional phrase.
- Long pauses before transitions as the speaker tries to figure out what to say next.

Tricks on Smoothly Presenting Transitions

Now you have a list of ideas to use when you write your next speech, let’s talk about how to use transitions effectively. Speakers typically struggle as they end one point and seek to move to the next idea. This usually happens because of poor planning, not enough practice, and poor note management. Let’s talk about these one at a time. First, poor planning happens because a speaker does not put enough time and effort into writing the speech. Second, not enough practice happened because even when a speech is practiced, it is practiced with regards to getting through the main points and not about moving smoothly between points. Finally, poor note management. Let me give you some tricks.

- Make your notes large-larger than you think you need.
- Give ample space between main ideas so you can look down and see the gap and know another point is coming.
- On your notecards, make each main idea a different color.
- I usually have a “T” in a circle to remind me that this is a transition statement.
- Practice your speech twice by just reading the transition statements and the next sentence.
- The night before your speech, visualize how you will manage the transitions.

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- Using transitions will help your speech flow smoothly.
- Practice using your transitions.
- Plan transitions for impact.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Transitions: Bridging Ideas for a Seamless Presentation](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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CLOSING A SPEECH: END WITH POWER AND LET THEM KNOW IT IS TIME TO CLAP

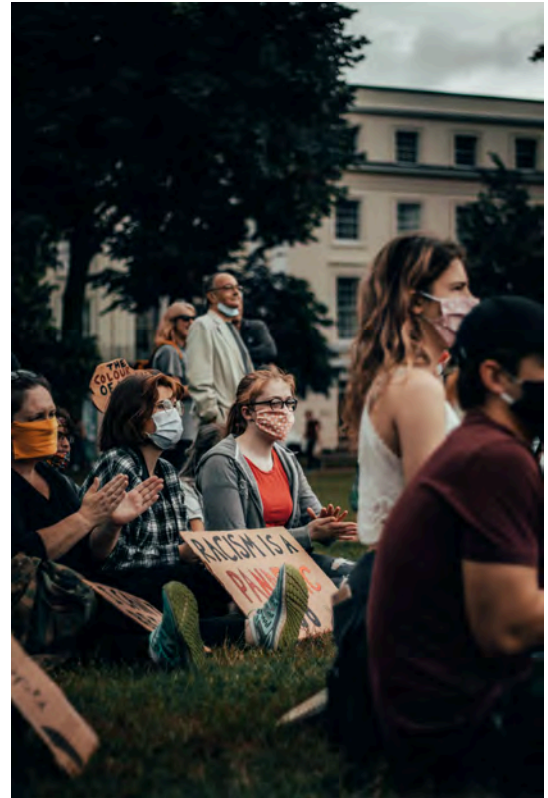


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Open Your Speech With a Bang

Close It With a Slam-Dunk

Westside Toastmasters

“Great is the art of beginning, but greater is the art of ending,” according to poet Henry Wadsworth

Longfellow. The first few words of your speech make the audience want to listen and the last few sentences help them decide what they feel about you and your topic.

Most of this chapter is dedicated to showing you good examples of different types of speech closings. Let's get started by talking about the purpose of the closing.

A Strong Closing Does Many Things

1. **Summarizes the points.** By restating your points your audience is more likely to remember them.
2. **Tells the audience when to clap.** Let's face it, it is so awkward when you are done with your speech, and no one claps. Being clear the end is near, relieves the audience of the pressure of wondering if they are clapping at the right time.
3. **Provides resolution.** Your speech should give the audience a sense of resolve or a sense of being challenged.

The Formula for Closing Most Speeches

- Transition statement to ending.
- Review the main points—repeat the thesis.
- If it is a persuasive speech, tell the audience what you want them to do or think.
- Provide a closing statement.

Restate the Thesis

Tell them what you are going to say, say it, tell them what you have said. This speech pattern is useful in most types of speeches because it helps the speaker to remember your key points. As you build your closing, make sure you restate the thesis. A good rule of thumb is to write it in such a way that if the audience were asked to restate the main points, their answer would match closely with your thesis.

Example

Watch as Stella Young gives her thesis and then restates her thesis at the end of the speech as she wraps up.

The thesis of the talk in the introduction:

We've been sold the lie that disability is a Bad Thing, capital B, capital T. It's a bad thing, and to live

with a disability makes you exceptional. It's not a bad thing, and it doesn't make you exceptional.

Restates the thesis of the talk at the closing:

Disability doesn't make you exceptional but questioning what you think you know about it does.

Watch [Stella Young, I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much \(9 mins\) on YouTube](#)

This next example is from a student's speech. It is easy to pull out one sentence that clearly summarizes the main points of her speech. Following her summary, she winds the speech down into a thoughtful conclusion and ends with three powerful words.

Now is the time to separate the war on drugs from the war on addiction. Today you've heard the problems, impacts, and solutions of criminalizing addictions. Bruce Callis is 50 years old now. And he is still struggling with his addiction. While you all are sitting out there listening to this, I'm living with it. Bruce Callis is my father and for my entire life, I have watched our misguided system destroy him. The irony here is that we live in a society where we are told to recycle. We recycle paper, aluminum, and electronics. But why don't we ever consider recycling them most precious thing on Earth—**the human life.**

Student Tunnette Powell, Winner of the 2012 Interstate Oratorical Association Contest.

Closing Phrases

After you restate your thesis, you should carefully deliver your closing phrases. Your closing should provide a resolution to your speech and/or it should challenge the audience. *Frantically Speaking* writer Hrideep Barot suggests “a conclusion is like tying a bow or ribbon to a box of your key ideas that your audience will be taking along with them.”

A speech closing is not just about the words you say, but it is also the way you say it. Change the pace near the end of your speech. Let your tone alone should signal the end is near. It is about deliberate voice control, don't let your voice weakly away.

In the next section, I will cover these ways to end your speech:

- End with powerful words
- End with a quote
- End with a graphic
- End with parallel construction
- End on a positive note
- End with a challenge
- End with a question
- End with inspiration
- End with well-wishing

- End with humor
- End with a call to action
- End with a feeling of resolve
- End with a prop

The best way to teach you about advanced closings is to show not tell. For this section, I will briefly explain each type of closing and then provide a video. Each video is queued so you can play the video and watch the closing statement. I included a transcript under each video if you want to follow along. It will be most beneficial for you to watch the clip and not just read the text. By watching, you will have a chance to hear the subtle changes in the speaker's voice as they deliver their closing statements.

End with Powerful Words

As you design your closing, look at the last three to five words and examine them to see if they are strong words. Oftentimes, you can rearrange a sentence to end with a powerful word. (I have the video cued to play just the closing)

Watch [What really matters at the end of life \(19 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how BJ Miller ends with a powerful thought and a powerful word.

Parts of me died early on, and that's something we can all say one way or another. I got to redesign my life around this fact, and I tell you it has been a liberation to realize you can always find a shock of beauty or meaning in what life you have left, like that snowball lasting for a perfect moment, all the while melting away. If we love such moments ferociously, then maybe we can learn to live well — not in spite of death, but because of it. **Let death be what takes us, not lack of imagination.**

Source: Miller, B. J. (2015). *BJ Miller – What really matters at the end of life* [Video]. TED.
https://www.ted.com/talks/bj_miller_what_really_matters_at_the_end_of_life

End by Circling Back to the Opening

Another type of ending is to circle back to what you said in the beginning. You can revisit a quote, share the end to an illustration that was begun in the beginning, or you can put away a prop you got out in the beginning.

Watch [Life begins at the end of your comfort zone – Yubing Zhang \(10 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how Zubing Zhang begins and ends with the same quote to circle back around to the main idea.

She starts by telling a story of bungee jumping off the world’s highest platform and how she saw a sign with a quote that says, “Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone.” After telling her own story about pushing her emotional limits, she circles back around at the end by saying, “As the words said high on the bungee platform, “Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone.”

Source: TEDx Talks. (2015, June 8). *Life begins at the end of your comfort zone – Yubing Zhang* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/cmN4xOGkxGo>

End With Quote

If you end your speech with a quote, attend to the following.

1. Always say the author of the quote before the quote for example, “I want to leave you with a leadership quote ‘What you do has far greater impact than what you say,’ Steven Covey.” The problem with this ending is that “Stephen Covey” are the last two words of the speech and that is boring. Consider instead this ending. “I think Robin Sharma said it best ‘Leadership is not about a title or a designation. It’s about impact, influence, and inspiration.’” In this arrangement, the last three words are powerful—*influence and inspiration*.
2. Provided context for the quote before or after. Make sure the quote is meaningful and not just an easy way to end.

Watch [How to escape education’s death valley \(19 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how Sir Ken Robinson ends with a quote. Notice how he says the author and then the quote.

Also, notice how he then ties his speech to the quote with a final few sentences and ends with the powerful word—“*revolution*” and how he uses a strong vocal emphasis as he says his last word. (I have the video cued to play just the closing)

There’s a wonderful quote from Benjamin Franklin. “There are three sorts of people in the world: Those who are immovable, people who don’t get it, or don’t want to do anything about it; there are people who are movable, people who see the need for change and are prepared to listen to it; and there are people who move, people who make things happen.” And if we can encourage more people, that will

be a movement. And if the movement is strong enough, that's, in the best sense of the word, a revolution. **And that's what we need.**

Source: TED. (2013, May 10). *How to escape education's death valley – Sir Ken Robinson* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/wX78iKhInsc>

End with a Graphic

You might want to use a visual to make your final point. Bringing in a picture, graphic, or object, reengages the audience to pay attention to your final ideas.

Watch [The paradox of choice \(19 mins\) on TED](#) for how Barry Schwartz uses the magic words “so to conclude” and then he creatively uses a picture of a fishbowl to narrow in on his point. Notice how his final word is spoken with urgency as he says “disaster.”

So, to conclude. (He shows a picture of fish in a fishbowl) He says, “You can be anything you want to be — no limits.” You're supposed to read this cartoon and, being a sophisticated person, say, “Ah! What does this fish know? Nothing is possible in this fishbowl.” Impoverished imagination, a myopic view of the world —that's the way I read it at first. The more I thought about it, however, the more I came to the view that this fish knows something. Because the truth of the matter is, if you shatter the fishbowl so that everything is possible, you don't have freedom. You have paralysis. If you shatter this fishbowl so that everything is possible, you decrease satisfaction. You increase paralysis, and you decrease satisfaction. Everybody needs a fishbowl. This one is almost certainly too limited —perhaps even for the fish, certainly for us. But the absence of some metaphorical fishbowl is a recipe for misery and, I suspect, disaster.

Source: Schwartz, B. (2005). *The paradox of choice* [Video]. TED. https://www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_the_paradox_of_choice

End with Parallel Construction

Parallel construction is a series of repeated phrases. It can be a powerful tool to use in a persuasive speech as it creates a feeling of importance.

Watch [Malala Yousafzai addresses United Nations Youth Assembly \(18 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how Malala Yousafzai ends with a series of parallel statements to build momentum. Notice how her pace perfectly matches her words and you feel her strength when she ends with “education first.” (Video is cued to play just the closing)

Dear brothers and sisters, we must not forget that millions of people are suffering from poverty, injustice, and ignorance. We must not forget that millions of children are out of schools. We must not forget that our sisters and brothers are waiting for a bright peaceful future. So let us wage a global struggle against illiteracy, poverty, and terrorism, and let us pick up our books and pens. They are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one pen, and one book can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education First.

The parallel statements she repeats (underlined above) are: “we must not forget”, “let us”, and “one”

Source: United Nations. (2013, July 12). *Malala Yousafzai addresses United Nations Youth Assembly* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/3rNhZu3ttIU>

End on a Positive Note

Audiences are constantly evaluating a speaker to determine their attitude and motivation. As you consider your speech closing, ask yourself what type of impression do you want to leave? Do you want to leave them with depression or hope? Sadness or promise? Most of the time, audiences will receive messages that end positively better than speeches that end negatively.

In this speech sample, Hans Rosling showed the audience some hard statistics and he even pointed fingers at the audience as part of the problem. To help them hear his main point, he wisely ends on a positive note.

Watch [DON'T PANIC — Hans Rosling showing the facts about population \(60 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how Hans Rosling ends this thought-provoking talk on a positive note.

Now, when thinking about where all this leaves us, I have just one little humble advice for you, besides everything else, look at the data. Look at the facts about the world and you will see where we are today and how we can move forwards with all these billions on our wonderful planet. The challenge of extreme poverty has been greatly reduced and it's for the first time in history within our power to end it for good. The challenge of population growth is, in fact, already being solved, the number of children has stopped growing. And for the challenge for climate change, we can still avoid the worst, but that requires the richest, as soon as possible, find a way to use their set their use of resources and energy at a level that, step by step, can be shared by 10 billion or 11 billion by the end of this century. I've never

called myself an optimist, but I do say I'm a possibilist and I also say the **world is much better than many of you think.**

Source: Gapminder Foundation. (2014, December 15). *Don't panic — Hans Rosling showing the facts about population* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/FACK2knC08E>

End with a Challenge

Leave the audience with a doable personal challenge. Help them mentally make sense of all the information that you shared by helping them know how to file it away and how to use it.

Watch [Why you think you're ugly – Melissa Butler \(8 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how Melissa Butler ends with a challenge.

So, I challenge each of you, when you go home today, look at yourself in the mirror, see all of you, look at all of your greatness that you embody, accept it, and love it. And finally, when you leave the house tomorrow, try to **extend that same love and acceptance to someone who doesn't look like you.**

Source: TEDx Talks. (2018, October 17). *Why you think you're ugly – Melissa Butler* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/imCBztkgus>

[Watch Darren LaCroix gives his Winning Speech at NSA \(10 mins\) on YouTube](#) as Darren LaCroix literally falls face down to anchor the point that when we fall, we “fall forward.” (I have the video cued to play just the closing)



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/dynamicpresentations/?p=202#oembed-15>

Darren LaCroix talks about taking risks and falling down and getting back up, he literally and purposefully falls down during his speech and ends this way:

What's your next step... take it. I didn't want to look back at my life and say you know I never did try that comedy thing, but I died debt-free. All of us are headed toward that goal we are going to teach a point where we get stuck and our feet are like in cement and we can't move but we're so afraid of that ouch

but we forget that if we lean forward and take a risk—(He falls face down) and we fall on our face. When we get up, notice, you still made progress. So please, with me, go ahead and fall. **But fall forward.**

Source: LaCroix, D. (2010, June 23). *Darren LaCroix gives his Winning Speech at NSA* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/FUDCzblLV-0&t=512s>

End with a Question

Asking a question at the end is one way to reengage the audience. It helps them think about what your topic might mean for them.

Watch [Can we create new senses for humans? – David Eagleman \(21 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how David Eagleman reminds us about why his topic is important and then ends with a question. Notice how he pauses before his final question and how he changes the pace of his speech for the final sentence. (I have the video cued to play just the closing)

So I think there's really no end to the possibilities on the horizon for human expansion. Just imagine an astronaut being able to feel the overall health of the International Space Station, or, for that matter, having you feel the invisible states of your own health, like your blood sugar and the state of your microbiome, or having 360-degree vision or seeing in infrared or ultraviolet. So the key is this: As we move into the future, we're going to increasingly be able to choose our own peripheral devices. We no longer have to wait for Mother Nature's sensory gifts on her timescales, but instead, like any good parent, she's given us the tools that we need to go out and define our own trajectory. **So the question now is, how do you want to go out and experience your universe?**

Source: TED. (2015, March 18). *Can we create new senses for humans? – David Eagleman* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/4c1lqFXHvqI>

Watch [How language shapes the way we think \(14 mins\) on TED](#) for how Lera Boroditsky ends with a personal note and a powerful final question.

I want to leave you with this final thought. I've told you about how speakers of different languages think differently, but of course, that's not about how people elsewhere think. It's about how you think. It's how the language that you speak shapes the way that you think. And that gives you the

opportunity to ask, “Why do I think the way that I do?” “How could I think differently?” And also, **“What thoughts do I wish to create?”**

Source: Boroditsky, L. (2017). *How language shapes the way we think* [Video]. TED. https://www.ted.com/talks/lera_boroditsky_how_language_shapes_the_way_we_think

End with Inspiration

*“Inspiring your audience
is all about helping them
see their own vision, not yours.”*

ANONYMOUS

You may want to end your speech with inspiring and encouraging words. Pick words that resonate with most of your audience and deliver them in such a way that your audience feels your lift in emotion.

Watch [The danger of a single story – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie \(19 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie ends with an inspiring final note and a powerful last few words “regain a kind of paradise”. (I have the video cued to play just the closing)

Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

The American writer Alice Walker wrote this about her Southern relatives who had moved to the North. She introduced them to a book about the Southern life that they had left behind. “They sat around, reading the book themselves, listening to me read the book, and a kind of paradise was regained.”

I would like to end with this thought: That when we reject the single-story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, **we regain a kind of paradise.**

Source: TED. (2009, October 7). *The danger of a single story – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/D9Ihs241zeg&t=1056s>

Watch [The puzzle of motivation – Dan Pink \(19 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how Dan Pink ends with an inspiring final note. (I have the video cued to play just the closing)

Let me wrap up. There is a mismatch between what science knows and what business does. Here is what science knows. One: Those 20th century rewards, those motivators we think are a natural part of business, do work, but only in a surprisingly narrow band of circumstances. Two: Those if-then rewards often destroy creativity. Three: The secret to high performance isn't rewards and punishments, but that unseen intrinsic drive– the drive to do things for their own sake. The drive to do things cause they matter.

And here's the best part. We already know this. The science confirms what we know in our hearts. So, if we repair this mismatch between what science knows and what business does, if we bring our motivation, notions of motivation into the 21st century, if we get past this lazy, dangerous, ideology of carrots and sticks, we can strengthen our businesses, we can solve a lot of those candle problems, and maybe, maybe —**we can change the world. I rest my case.**

Source: TED. (2009, August 25). *The puzzle of motivation – Dan Pink* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/rrkrvAUbU9Y&t=1042s>

End with Well Wishing

There are several types of closings where the speaker wished the audience well.

The Benediction Close: May God bless and keep you....

The Presidential Close: God bless you and may God bless the USA

The Congratulatory Close: I congratulate you on your accomplishment and wish you continued success.

End with Humor

You can end on a fun lighthearted note. It is important to always run your humor by a variety of people to make sure you are funny, and your humor is appropriate.

Watch [Valedictorian reveals he's autistic during speech \(13 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how Andrew Dunham uses humor throughout his speech and ends with a funny one-liner.

(I have the video cued to play just the closing)

I wish you all the best as we begin this journey on our paths and I sincerely hope and pray that your time and success have proven to be as memorable and spiritually rewarding as mine. If not, there's always summer school.

Source: Dunham, J. (2019, May 16). *Valedictorian reveals he's autistic during speech* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/GtPGrLoU5Uk&t=680s>

End with a Call to Action

If you are delivering a persuasive speech, let the audience know exactly what you want them to do.

End with a Feeling of Resolve

Paul Harvey made famous the line “And now you know...the rest of the story.” Your closing should allow us to know the rest of the story or to know how a situation was resolved.

Watch [The three secrets of resilient people – Lucy Hone \(16 mins\) on YouTube](#) for how Lucy Hone ends this tough but inspiring talk with a feeling of resolve. (I have the video cued to play just the closing)

If you ever find yourself in a situation where you think there’s no way I’m coming back from this, I urge you to lean into these strategies and think again. I won’t pretend that thinking this way is easy and it doesn’t remove all the pain. But if I’ve learned anything over the last five years, it is that thinking this way really does help. More than anything it has shown me that it is possible to live and grieve at the same time. **And for that I will be always grateful.**

Source: TEDx Talks. (2019, September 25). *The three secrets of resilient people – Lucy Hone* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/9-5SMpg7Q0k?t=913>

End with a Prop

Nancy Duarte says you should give your audience, SOMETHING THEY will ALWAYS REMEMBER–S.T.A.R. One way to do that is with an action or statement that will have the audience talking about it for a long time. President Obama did it with a mic drop.

Watch [President Obama complete remarks at 2016 White House Correspondents’ Dinner \(C-SPAN\) \(33 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Memorize Your Conclusion

Know your ending so well you can say it without looking at your notes. The audience is deciding what they think about you and your topic so end strong by having a plan, sticking with your plan, using strong eye contact, and a clear strong voice.

End on Time

Audiences stop listening when the time is up. If you go over, they will start checking their watches, looking at the door, or just mentally check out.

Do not diminish the effect of a great speech
with a bloated,
aimless conclusion.
Dan Rothwell.



Photo by [Jose Aragones](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Never End a Speech This Way

So, we've talked about ending with power, now let's talk about ways not to end your talk– be sure to avoid these.

“Times about up.”

Don’t end with any references to time. It is like a giant stop sign saying, “stop listening.” Don’t highlight that you ran over time or that it is almost time for lunch. You want them to think about your speech, not the clock.

“Any Questions?”

You want them to feel a sense of closure for your speech. End with something powerful and let them applaud. After the applause, you can offer to answer questions. Similarly, projecting your last slide with the words, “Any Questions” is a weak ending.

“Let Me Add This Point I Missed”

If you forget something in the body of your speech, it is usually best to leave it out. Most of the time you are the only one who will miss it.

“Thank You to the Team”

There is a time to thank the organizers and those who helped you but it is not at the end of your speech. Your focus should be on your audience and what they need and what they need to hear is your idea. Send a thank you letter to the team if you want them to feel your appreciation.

“I’m Sorry”

“Sorry again for the technology issue,” “I apologize for going over time,” “I regret I have no answer to this.” These are all negative phrases. Keep to your topic that is what they need to hear and stay focused.

“I’ll Close with this Video”

No, you should close with talking about the big idea.

Rambling

If you don't have a plan at the end, you will ramble. "Steer clear of meandering endings they kill a story," according to the Moth Storytelling website. "Your last line should be clear in your head before you start. Yes, bring the audience along with you as you contemplate what transpires in your story, but remember, you are driving the story, and must know the final destination. Keep your hands on the wheel!"

To Thank or Not to Thank, That is the Question

There is a debate amongst speech professionals, speech teachers, and speech coaches about whether or not you should thank the audience. Here are their main arguments.

Why You Should *Not* Say Thank You

1. You want to end with powerful words. "Thank you" are not strong words.
2. The recency effect suggests they will remember the last words you spoke. You want them to remember more than just "thank you."
3. It is not a very creative way to end.
4. It can be a sign of a lazy speaker, "I have no idea how to end this, I've run out of good things to say so I'll say 'Thank you' so you will clap now."

Why You Should Say Thank You

1. It has come to be the expected ending in many settings. Violating their expectations can cause them to have a negative reaction.
2. It clearly signals you are finished so the audience knows when to clap. This relieves the pressure from both you and the audience.
3. It expresses gratitude.

I will leave it up to you to decide what works for you. As for me, I plan on trying to find more creative ways to end other than just saying "thank you."

Maximizing the Primacy Recency Effect

If I were to read you a list of thirty things on my grocery list and then asked you to list all that you can remember, chances are you would remember the first times on the list and the last items on the list (and any ones you found interesting from the middle). When people engage in listening, they tend to remember the first and last things they hear, it is called the primacy-recency effect. This is just one more reason that your introduction and conclusion should be so well planned out. It is those first words and last words that the audience is going to remember.

The primacy recency effect influences, not only what people pay attention to in a speech, but also which speech we pay the most attention to in a series of speeches. For example, if there is a lineup of six speakers, the first and last speakers tend to get the most attention.

As a speaker, you can use this information to your advantage by volunteering to go first or last. If you are giving a long presentation, you can break it up by allowing the audience to move around or talk to a neighbor. When you come back from break, you have re-engaged that primacy effect and moved them back to a high state of attention.

Do You Have Everything You Need for a Strong Closing?

- Have I signaled my speech is coming to an end with my words or my voice?
- Have I restated my main points?
- If I am persuading my audience, do they know what I want them to do or think?
- Have I written the last three to five words in such a way that I end with powerful words?
- Have I memorized my closing?

Getting Off the Platform is Part of Your Closing

Plan on making a strong exit. Whether you are stepping off a stage or simply going to your seat, you should consider that the audience is watching you.

I have had students who finished their speech and then walked over to the trashcan and in a large, exaggerated movement, they threw their notecards in the trash. In our minds, we threw their message away with those cards. I've seen speakers, sit in their chairs and then announce, "I can't believe my hands were shaking so much." I've sat there and thought, "I didn't notice." I then realized that the comments they made influenced my perception of them and my perception of their topic.

You said your last word and the audience is applauding, now what? Look at your audience and smile and nod in appreciation before walking off the stage. If you will be answering questions, wait until after the applause stops to begin your question and answering period.

When practicing your speech, it is a good idea to start from your chair, walk up to a spot and then give your speech, and then walk back to your chair and sit down. Your "speech" impression begins and ends from your chair.

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- A speech closing should include a review of the main points and a purposeful closing sentence.
- Persuasive speech endings should tell the audience specifically what they should do or think about.
- The recency effect suggests that people remember the most recent things they have heard which is one reason the closing is so important.
- Change the pace of your speech and the tone of your voice to signal the end of the speech.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Closing a Speech: End with Power and Let Them Know It is Time to Clap](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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PRESENTATION PRIORITIES: AUDIENCE, VOICE, DELIVERY, AND VISUALS

Dynamic Presentations by Amanda Quibell

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Please visit the web version of [Dynamic Presentations](#) to access the complete book, watch videos or complete interactive. You may also use the links provided to access video content on the web.

With every presentation, you should make a priority of

- [Your Voice is the Most Important Part of Your Speech](#)
- [Engage Your Audience: Don't Spit Random Words at Generic People](#)
- [Delivery Advice: Managing Eye Contact, Movement, and Gestures](#)
- [Don't Ruin a Great Presentation with Terrible Slides](#)

YOUR VOICE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR SPEECH

Why Your Voice is the Most Important Instrument

The most important part of your delivery has to be your voice. You are not an actor in a silent film, a mime in a skit, nor a person giving lessons on lip reading. You are a presenter giving a speech. If your audience can't hear you or understand your words, then you have failed. Like any other skill, strengthening your voice takes practice, but it is time well spent. This chapter gives you reasons for why you should develop your voice and includes activities and videos to help you improve your voice.

How to Speak so that people want to listen

Watch [How to speak so that people want to listen – Julian Treasure \(10 mins\) on YouTube](#) for examples of each of these.

Vocal Qualities

Vocal Qualities – Text Version

Register

Definition: Refers to the pitch range of your voice, from high to low.

Example: When speaking up in your nose, the pitch is higher, while speaking from your chest gives a lower, more authoritative tone (Treasure, 2014).

Timbre

Definition: Describes how your voice feels or its texture.

Example: People prefer voices that are rich, smooth, and warm, “like hot chocolate”; training with a voice coach can help improve timbre (Treasure, 2014).

Prosody

Definition: The sing-song or melody in your speech that adds meaning.

Example: Monotonic speech, lacking prosody, can be challenging to listen to. Repetitive prosody, or uptalk, where every sentence sounds like a question, restricts effective communication (Treasure, 2014).

Pace

Definition: Refers to the speed of your speech.

Example: Speaking quickly can convey excitement, while slowing down emphasizes certain points; silence, used strategically, can be a powerful communicative tool (Treasure, 2014).

Pitch

Definition: The highness or lowness of your voice.

Example: Changing pitch can alter the meaning of a sentence, such as asking “Where did you leave my keys?” with a higher pitch for curiosity or a lower pitch for frustration (Treasure, 2014).

Volume

Definition: The loudness or quietness of your voice.

Example: Using loud volume can express excitement, while lowering your volume can capture attention; constant broadcasting is discouraged for considerate communication (Treasure, 2014).

Source: Vocal Qualities H5P by Amanda Quibell is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0

Working on your voice is important! If you have an attractive voice, people tend to attribute other positive characteristics to you. Research highlights that those with attractive voices are believed to be warmer, more

likable, and more honest (Shang & Liu, 2022). Those with confident voices are believed to be more dominant and are perceived to be higher achievers (Fagan, 2019). Strengthening your voice can help you with your speech, but it can also help you in other parts of your life. A strong voice will help you in your job interview, in meetings, and in interpersonal relationships.

This chapter is mostly made of exercises for you to try to strengthen your voice. Reading the activities will not help you, doing the activities will. As with all skills, you won't necessarily improve with one try, it takes practice!

Warm Up Your Voice

Do a Five-Minute Vocal Warm-Up

1. Loosen up and shush: Loosen up your upper body, take a deep belly breath and then say shhhh
2. Tongue Trills: Descending and ascending
3. Hum it Up: Hum up and hum down
4. Chant: Meem, Mime, Mohm, Moom
5. Pronounce: Ma, Pa, Ta

Watch [5 vocal warm up exercises before meetings, speeches and presentations \(9 mins\) on YouTube](#) to learn how to warm up your voice using these five steps.

Work on Clearly Articulating Words

Articulation refers to the clarity of the sounds you produce. The opposite of articulation is mumbling. Try putting a pencil in your mouth horizontally and then read your textbook out loud working on keeping your lips off of your teeth to exaggerate the sounds.

Watch [The best exercise for articulation \(1 min\) on YouTube](#)

Articulation Practice

Another way to work on articulation is to do the practice drills. Here are some suggestions from *Communication in the Real World*.

- Say “Red Rover” ten times, overenunciating each *r*.
- Say “Wilbur” ten times, overenunciating the *w* and *r*.
- Say “Bumblebee” ten times, enunciating each *b*.
- Say “Red-letter, yellow-letter” five times, making sure to distinctly pronounce each word.
- Say “Selfish shellfish” five times, making sure to distinctly pronounce each word.
- Say “Unique New York” five times, enunciating the *q* and *k*. (To really up the challenge, try saying, “You need, unique, New York.”)

Bring Your Voice Up Front

Bring your voice from the back of your throat to inside your mouth. Practice bringing your voice forward by trying this exercise.

Say the words “coal, coal, coal.”

Now, do it again. Say the words “coal, coal, coal” as you hold one hand in front of your mouth and feel the air pushing out on your hand. Do it several times to feel the air.

Now say the words “coal, coal, coal,” but this time let it drop to the back of your throat. Notice that the air is no longer pushing on your hand.

When people have strong, energetic voices, they have their voices upfront. When people are tired, weak, or unenergetic, they have their voices in the back of their throats. As speakers, we want to have strong energetic voices.

Now you understand what we are trying to do. Try it one more time each way: “coal, coal, coal.” This time, don’t just feel for the air difference, but also listen for the difference in sound.

Practice Regularly

It is not enough to want to get better; you have to practice.

Watch [5 vocal exercises for a more powerful voice \(2 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Practice These Phrases

Once you have your voice warmed up, voice coach Graham Williamson suggests you practice these phrases. As

you speak them, try to keep an even tone and pace as if you were speaking one long word with no break in between.

1. Many men munch many melons.
2. Mandy made marinade in May.
3. Major Mickey's malt makes me merry.
4. My mom's marvelous modern manicure.
5. Mervin Maclean's mess marred my marmalade.

Magnify Your Voice

Having a strong, clear voice is important for speechmaking. The best way to learn to amplify your voice is with practice. Amplify doesn't mean to scream, it means to use the force of your breath and the amplification provided in your mouth to make the sounds strong and clear.

Try talking to your furniture. Right now, look at a chair that you can see and say, "Hello chair." Imagine seeing your words as rays of light traveling to the chair. Now, look out of a window or a door and see an object farther away and try it again. For example, you can look out the window and say, "Hello tree" and imagine your words traveling to the tree. Try this for various objects at varying distances.

Arguably you may feel silly doing this but trust the process and give it a try. Practice with things inside your room and outside your window. Feel the air and notice the difference.

Practice Changing Your Volume

To practice changing the volume of your voice, Williamson suggests counting exercises. Try to do it in one breath.

1. Count and gradually increase the loudness.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Count to 10, gradually increasing your volume from 1-5, then start again at 6 with gradual increase in volume until you reach 10. 5 and 10 should be the loudest numbers in the exercise.

2. Count and gradually decrease the loudness.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Count to 10, gradually decreasing your volume from 1-5, then start again at 6 with gradual decrease in volume until you reach 10. 1 and 6 should be the loudest numbers in the exercise.

3. Count and increase the loudness on every 2nd number.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Count to 10, increasing your volume equally on every second number. Odd numbers should be quiet, even numbers should be louder.

4. ... on every 3rd number.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Count to 9, in sets of 3, where the first two numbers are quiet, and the third is louder. 3, 6 and 9 should be loud, while the other numbers are quieter.

5. ... on every 4th number.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Count to 12, where every 4th number is louder. 4, 8 and 12 should be spoken loudly, the rest of the numbers should be quieter.

6. ... on every 5th number.

1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 **10**

Count to quietly to 10, with numbers 5 and 10 spoken loudly.

Try more breath exercises here: [Voice Projection Exercises \(sltinfo.com\)](http://sltinfo.com)

Yawn to Open Up

1. Yawn a couple of times really big. Feel the back of your throat open when you are yawning.
2. Now try a big yawn, as you exhale close your mouth, let out a sigh. The goal is to open your throat.
3. Focus on the back of your throat opening up. Now yawn right before taking a big breath to open up the back of your throat. Relax your larynx and your head and neck muscles.

Watch [The yawn and sigh approach for voice release \(2 mins\) on YouTube](#) for step-by-step instructions.

(Turn up your volume, the video is very quiet).

Exercise Your Vocal Folds

1. Grab a straw and prepare to try this technique.
2. Put the straw in your mouth, pinch your nose, and hum.

Watch [Public speaking tips: Use a straw! \(2 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Use Pauses for Effect

A pause can be a way to help give your presentation impact. A pause can:

- **Help Comprehension:** Pauses give people time to understand what you're saying.
- **Emphasize A Point:** They make key ideas stand out and stick in people's minds.
- **Build Suspense:** Pauses can make your audience curious about what's coming next.
- **Show Confidence:** Using pauses makes it clear you know your stuff and are in control.
- **Keep People Interested:** Well-timed silence helps to keep your listeners engaged in what you're saying.

Don't be afraid to take a moment of silence—it's a great tool for good communication.

Watch [The importance of pauses \(2 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Avoid Filled Pauses

Um, uh, ok, like, ya know. All of these happen to even the best speakers, but they are distracting. According to one study, recording yourself and listening to your speech is one way to reduce ums. Another trick is to replace the filler word with the word “period” or “pause” in your everyday speech to help your filler awareness. Why do we use filler words? We use filler words because we are afraid of silence and pauses. As an advanced speaker, you should begin to think of pauses as a purposeful thing you do for emphasis. Eliminating those “ums” will make you sound more organized and confident.

In the video below, **hesitation phenomena** is explained. Replacing empty filler words like “um” or “uh” with intentional pauses and words like “look” can help your audience understand.

Watch [Why do we, like, hesitate when we, um, speak? – Lorenzo García-Amaya \(6 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Avoid Uptalk

Uptalk is where the voice goes up at the end of sentences. To many listeners, uptalk makes the speaker sound uncertain, insecure, and annoying. Within other circles (groups of uptalkers), the use of uptalk may signal that the speaker is “one of us.” UK Publisher, Pearson, interviewed 700 managers on the use of uptalk and this is what they found:

- 85% thought it was a “clear indicator of insecurity.”

- 70% found uptalk annoying.
- Of those, 50% said that uptalk would hinder the prospect of employees and interviewers.
- 44% stated that they would mark down applicants with uptalk by as much as a third.

The evidence is clear that in professional circles, uptalk can hurt your credibility. Record yourself while giving a speech and listen for uptalk. Start being aware of when you do it in everyday speech.

Watch [What is uptalk? \(3 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Keep Your Voice Healthy



Photo by [Damir Spanic](#), used under [Unsplash License](#)

Stay Hydrated.

Staying hydrated helps your body lubricate your vocal cords. It can take up to six hours for the water you drink to get to your vocal cords so you need to hydrate hours before your speech. You cannot wash off your vocal cords. You cannot slick them down with water.

Limit Alcohol and Caffeine.

Balance alcohol and caffeine consumption with water. Drink one glass of water for each cup of coffee or alcoholic beverage.

Humidify.

Use a humidifier when the air is dry to keep your throat moist.

Avoid Inhaling Smoke.

Do not smoke and avoid second-hand smoke. This also includes avoiding other airborne pollutants as much as possible.

Protect Your Voice.

Project your voice, don't scream. Avoid vocal extremes. Too much shouting or too much whispering can damage your voice.

Warm Up Your Voice.

Before you give a speech, sing, or teach. Practice humming and gliding.

Resist Dairy: It Makes You Snotty.

Dairy products can thicken mucus and clog you up. When you get excess mucus, you are likely to damage your voice by repeated throat clearing.

Avoid Throat Clearing and Limit Coughing.

Coughing and throat clearing are hard on your voice. Try sipping water or sucking on a non-menthol or non-eucalyptus cough drops. It is better for your voice to cough than to clear your voice multiple times. The need to clear the voice often comes from thick mucus—staying hydrated thins the mucus and reduces the need to clear your voice.

Avoid Speaking from Your Throat

Use your breath to carry your voice. Speak from your core and use your diaphragm to support your breath. If you speak from your throat, your voice will begin to sound raspy, and you will struggle to maintain volume in even a three minute speech.

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- Having a strong voice can help you as a speaker, but it can also help you professionally.
- Vocal qualities include: Volume, Pitch, Pace, Timbre, Tone, Prosody, Pace, Silence
- Do vocal exercises to improve the strength of your voice.
- Using proper air control helps your voice.
- Avoid vocal fillers and uptalk.
- Work on sounding natural when you're reading a script

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Why Your Voice is the Most Important Part of Your Speech: If They Can’t Hear You It is Only a Frustrating Exercise in Lip Reading](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#). / Content has been streamlined, introduction revised

video links updated, uncited quotes removed, references added where missing. Removed section on occupational voice

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ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE: DON'T SPIT RANDOM WORDS AT GENERIC PEOPLE

*The success of your presentation
will be judged not by the knowledge you send
but by what the listener receives.*

Lilly Walters, Secrets of Successful Speakers

There are four words that can change everything about how you look at public speaking. These four words can alter how you look at nervousness, how you design your content, the way you present, and the way the audience receives the message. What are these words? **“It is not about you.”**

It is Not About You

It is not about you; it is about your audience. Most of the time, speakers think, “I have this great message I need to tell people” or “I need to inform them of what I know.” In each case, it is about “I”. To be a successful speaker, you have to change your way of thinking. A speech is not about *you*, the speaker, it is about *them*, the audience. It is about the fact they need something, and you can provide it for them. They may need information, they may need to be inspired, they may need to know about a product that will improve their lives, they may need to celebrate a special moment. They have needs and when your message meets those needs, your audience will be transformed.

Chris Anderson of TED talks says, The truth about “speaking your truth” is this: “If the audience doesn’t understand how your truth applies to them, or what they get by learning about your dreams, they’ll tune out or quickly forget what you’ve said.” The more you think about your audience and explore who they are and what they need, the more you can tailor your speech.

*Treat your audience as guests
who’ve consented to give you
some of their precious time and attention.*

*Don’t abuse their gift
by making them feel like captives
who are compelled to listen to you.*

Vivian Buchan, Make Presentations with Confidence

Give Your Audience Something of Value: Audience Before

Content

A speech is a gift you give the audience. Chris Anderson, the curator of TED Talks, says, “Focusing on what you should give, should be the foundation of your talk.” From the moment, you are tasked with giving a speech, you should ask yourself what gift you have to give. One way to think about it is the acronym ABC-audience before content

Game designer Jane McGonigal tells her audience she is giving them something valuable. She suggests she will give them seven and a half extra minutes to their life. Watch her introduction to hear for yourself.

Watch [The game that can give you 10 extra years of life \(19 mins\) on TED](#)

I’m a gamer, so I like to have goals. I like special missions and secret objectives. So here’s my special mission for this talk: I’m going to try to increase the life span of every single person in this room by seven and a half minutes. Literally, you will live seven and a half minutes longer than you would have otherwise, just because you watched this talk (McGonigal, n.d.).

Speech is about serving your audience instead of serving your agenda. One group of speech coaches, [Ginger Public Speaking](#), emphasize being servant speakers. They illustrate the difference between *taking* and *servicing* this way:

Normal public speaking can focus more on *taking* from an audience:

- *I need them to listen to me.*
- *I need them to look interested in what I’m saying.*
- *I need them to laugh at my jokes.*
- *I need them to affirm my expertise.*
- *I need them to know how good I am.*

Servant speaking is all about building a community:

- *I want to give my community what they most need to hear.*
- *I believe my message will bring benefit to those listening.*
- *I want the people listening to me to feel a part OF something not apart FROM something.*

Every speech, every time, is about connecting with the audience. Think about who they are and the perspective they bring. Think about their wants, their needs, their desires, and their perspective. Public speaking is about serving, it is about giving a gift.

Watch [TED’s secret to great public speaking | Chris Anderson \(8 mins\) on TED](#)

Did you notice three out of four of the key features that Chris Anderson mentions have to do with the audience?

- 1. Limit your talk to just one major idea.**
- 2. Give them a reason to care.**
- 3. Build your ideas based on what the audience already knows.**
- 4. Make your idea worth sharing. Who does this idea benefit?**

The information in this video is for a specific context—how to give a TED Talk—but many of the lessons apply to public speaking in general.

Getting into the Mind of Your Audience

“Speakers do not give speeches to audiences; they jointly create meaning with audiences,” according to scholars Sprague, Stuart, and Bodary, to create meaning, you need to think about what your audience already knows. You need to get into the mind of your audience. The key to good speaking is to put an idea in the mind of your audience. For this to work, you need to think about them and their worldview. To do this, you need to research your audience as well as your topic.

Frank Luntz knows all about how to get in the mind of an audience, it’s what he does for a living. He is an American political and communications consultant and he polls audiences to find out their beliefs. He specializes in helping speakers find what words best resonate with audiences. He says:

You can have the best message in the world, but the person on the receiving end will always understand it through the prism of his or her own emotions, preconceptions, prejudices, and preexisting beliefs. It’s not enough to be correct or reasonable or even brilliant. The key to successful communication is to take the imaginative leap of stuffing yourself into your listener’s shoes to know what they are thinking and feeling in the deepest recesses of their mind and heart. How that person perceives what you say is even more real, at least in a practical sense, than how you perceive yourself.

This means not just looking at an audience in terms of demographics, but rather, what are their goals, why should they care, what do they need?

Ask Yourself, What Do They Need?

Many of you are reading this book because you are in a public speaking class. If so, you are thinking, “What do I have to do to make an “A” on this speech?” or “What is the least I can do to get my college credit?” Notice that both approaches focus on “I.” Realize when you give your presentation, there will be an audience of college students that *need* something. What do they need? They need not be bored. They need to think it was worth it to come to class. They need to learn things. They need to be inspired. If it is a persuasion speech,

don't think about what you need to persuade them to do, think about them and how their lives will be improved if they listen to your speech and act on the important issue you presented. If you are giving a ceremonial speech, think about how you can make them feel a part of something—make them feel included.

The goal of effective communication

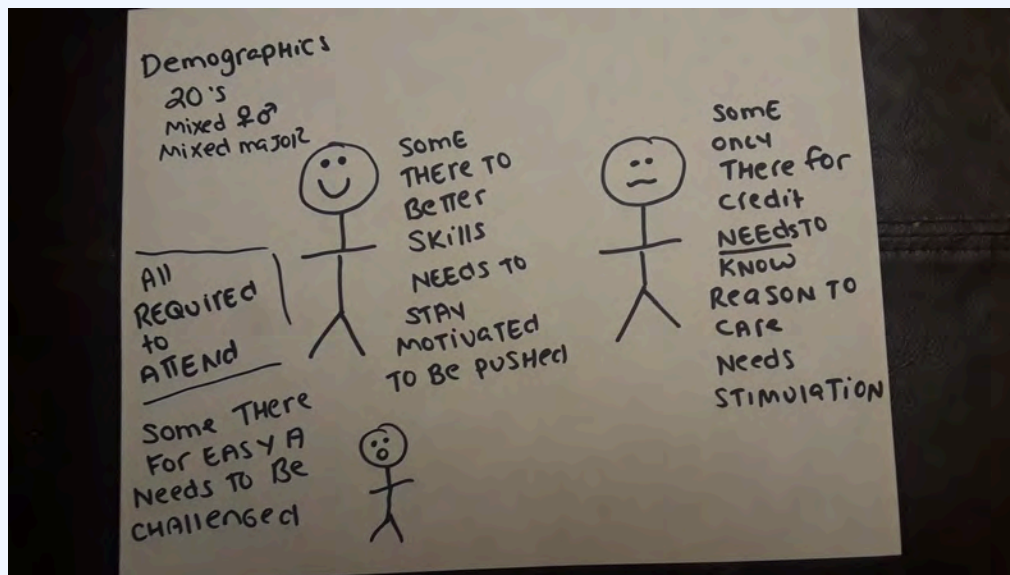
should be for listeners to say

'Me too!' versus 'So what?'

–Jim Rohn, motivational speaker

Write down what your listeners need and why they are at the event. It is easy to think about the tangible reasons they attended, but it is helpful to think about the emotional reasons they are there. Are they there to bond with friends? Are they there to be inspired? Are they there because they have to be? What reward do they get for coming? Notice in some of the examples, there are things like “to feel good,” “to know more,” “to connect.”

Make yourself a graphic of the target audience members. You can draw stick figures and note particular information about the audience members. As you write your speech, keep looking at this reference so you keep the audience's needs in mind.



Example audience demographics: 20's, mixed genders, mixed majors. All are required to attend. Some are there for an easy A, needs to be challenged. Some there to better skills needs to stay motivated/to be pushed. Some only there for the credit, needs to know the reason to care, need stimulation. **Source:** "Needs" by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Nancy Duarte, the author of *The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations*, suggests you ask yourself these questions about your audience.

1. **Lifestyle:** What does a walk in their shoes look like?

2. **Knowledge:** What do they already know and not know about your topic?
3. **Motivation and Desire:** What are their wants and desires? What motivates them?
4. **Values:** What is important to them? How does their use of time and money reveal their priorities?
5. **Influence:** What influences their behaviors and thoughts?
6. **Respect:** What makes them feel respected? How do they give and receive respect?

Try Duarte's tool: [Audience Needs Map | Duarte](#)

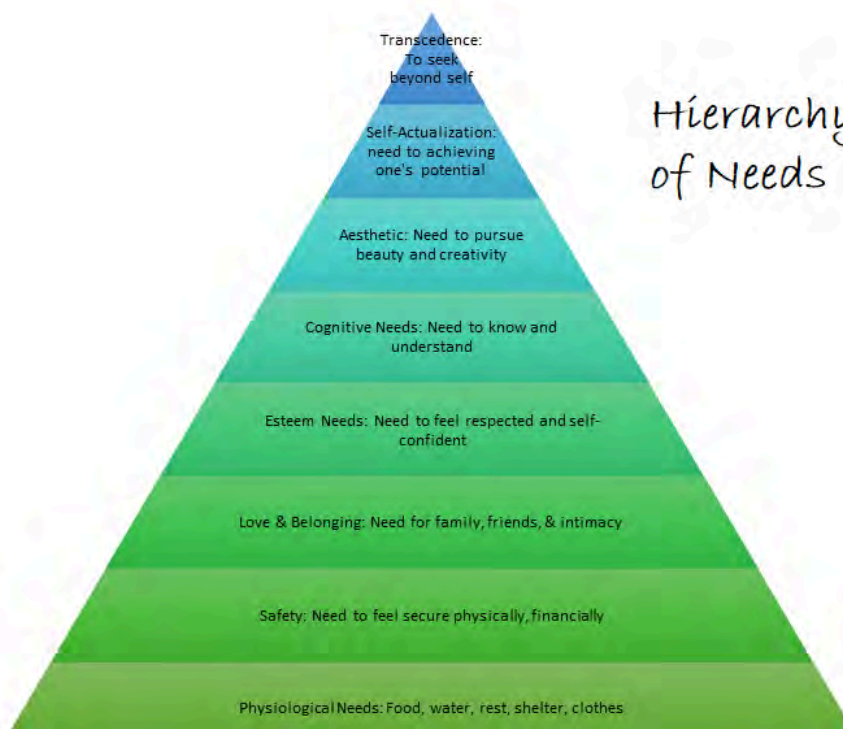
Consider the Audience's Needs

People don't remember what we think is important.

They remember what they think is important.

John Maxwell, leadership expert

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is one tool you can use to help you analyze audience needs. Work through the pyramid and see if you can relate each level to your topic in some way. This is particularly helpful to use it as a brainstorming tool when constructing speeches. In short, psychologist Abraham Maslow suggested people are motivated by their needs and they seek to satisfy their needs. For our purposes, we won't delve into the larger theory but rather acknowledge that people seek to satisfy their needs. The more you identify and talk to their need and demonstrate how those needs can be satisfied, the more likely they are to have a positive response to your topic (and more likely to be persuaded).



Hierarchy of Needs

Consider the needs of your audience. At the bottom of the Hierarchy of Needs triangle/ largest area are physiological needs (food, water, rest, shelter clothes). The next level up is safety (need to feel secure, physically, financially). Above safety is love & belonging (need for family, friends & intimacy). Esteem needs are higher than love & belonging, including need to feel respected and self confident. Cognitive needs (need to know and understand) are the next level up, followed by Aesthetic (need to pursue beauty and creativity). The second highest tier is self-actualization (need to achieve one's potential) and the highest tier (top of the triangle is transcendence (to seek beyond self). [“Hierarchy of Needs”](#) by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CCO](#)

Let's work through an example of this. Imagine you are doing a speech to persuade people to take a self-defense course at a local gym.

- **Physiological needs:** People need to sleep: I can remind listeners that they sleep better once they exercise. They will sleep better knowing they can protect themselves. Taking a self-defense class will help them get a good night's sleep.
- **Safety needs:** People need to feel safe: I can remind them of crime statistics to make them feel unsafe so they take the class to regain a sense of safety.
- **Belonging needs:** People need to belong: I can encourage them to take the class with a group of friends or I can remind them of times they missed spending time with friends because they were uncomfortable being out late at night alone. Take a self-defense class will give them the confidence they need to go out with friends.
- **Esteem needs:** People need to feel good about themselves: I can remind them how bad it feels to not be able to fend for themselves and tell them how good it feels to have the confidence to know how to defend themselves. Learning new skills makes you feel good. Independence feels good.
- **Cognitive needs:** People have the need to know, so I can tell them about the science of some of the techniques and why they work.
- **Self-actualization needs:** People need to feel safe, they need to know and belong, so they can work to fulfill their life's goals. A college student who is afraid to walk to their night class, might skip class and then fall short of their personal goal of graduating.

*Designing a presentation without an audience in mind
is like writing a love letter and addressing it:
To Whom It May Concern.*
– Ken Haemer, Presentation Design Manager

Recipe for Listenability

Listenability: What does that mean in plain English?

By using easily understood phrases and words and giving the audience a reason to listen you are making your speech listenable.

Think of your speech in terms of listenability. Communication scholar D.L. Rubin says, “Listenable discourse is characterized by linguistic and rhetorical structures that ease the particular cognitive burdens

listeners face.” (What do you think about that quote, appropriate to the audience of this book or unnecessarily wordy and full of big words? Was it a listenable quote?)

In plain English, make your speech easy to listen to. How do you do that? Glad you asked; here are a few ways.

To Be Listenable, Find Common Ground

Seek to establish a connection with your audience right away. Find common ground or draw from common experiences. If you are talking to a civic organization read their mission statement and seek commonalities. Work in the common ground such as, “Like you, I am passionate about finding a better solution for the homeless in our area.” Recognize similarities if they represent a cause that matters to you, if you have a hometown team in common, if you all ate a catered lunch, or if you all walked uphill to get to class. It is no coincidence when speakers come onto a college campus, they almost always mention one of these: The mascot, the sports team, a place on campus, a famous eating establishment, or a campus hero. These details draw the audience in to listen. People appreciate a speaker who took the time to think about them it will increase both liking and credibility.

Sometimes a speaker will use the same speech with different audiences and common ground has to change. Julie Miyeon Sohn, Toastmaster’s competitor, reflected on what she learned about adapting to an audience. Her failure to adapt caused her not to win at the World Championship of Public Speaking:

“One thing I would do differently is changing how I select my speech topic. My story about learning English was well received in Korea because the Korean audience had all had a similar experience to mine. However, I failed to connect with the audience at the semi-final because the story was not very relatable to the international audience. I would change my story to something more universal so that everyone can relate to it regardless of their race, nationality, and age.”

In order to find common ground, you need to take time to get to know the audience. In addition to the traditional research, one speaker suggests reading up on the news before you speak and draw references to things most people might know. Make sure the examples you give are now by most audience members. Speaker Nancy Duarte shares her common ground mishaps:

I referred to an airline, (an example of amazing customer service, Open Skies) to an audience of American business executives, forgetting that an airline with only one route (NY-Paris) wasn’t something many of them would know.

Even if most of your audience knows about your common ground reference, they may have differing opinions about it. Nancy Duarte says,

I learned this the hard way with the same audience, telling them, proudly, how a former customer had asked

me for referral to a therapist (everyone goes to therapists in NY!), which provoked guffaws from brawny macho Midwesterners.

Finding common ground with your audience, not only gets their attention, but it helps them get on the same wavelength—literally. Princeton neuroscientist Uri Hasson says the more commonality between a storyteller and listener, the more brain imaging shows that the brains sync up. Let that sink in. When you find common ground through story, it shows up on a brain scan. Your audience’s brain scan lights up in the same places yours does—that is incredible. Thinking about your audience and then finding common ground is crucial to your success.

The royal road to a man’s heart
is to talk to him about the things he treasures most.

Dale Carnegie, Author, Speaker

To Be Listenable, Reference Someone in the Group

When possible, go to a speaking event early and talk to several people. Engage them in friendly conversation and then ask them questions related to your topic. During your presentation, point them out and say, “Derek was telling me that...” The audience’s attention zooms in when you acknowledge someone from the group. If you don’t have time to visit beforehand, you can always reference the host who invited you. Mentioning anyone they know can draw the audience’s attention.

To Be Listenable, Tell Them How It Applies to Them

To keep the audience’s attention, talk about what they care about the most—themselves. Get the audience on your side by telling them why this speech is relevant to them. Don’t just assume they know, help them make those connections. Typically, highly engaged, and knowledgeable audiences, need only a light reminder of the topic’s application. For those that are not very knowledgeable or not motivated listeners, you need to tell them specifically how it applies and why. One easy way to do this is to say, “So what, who cares...” Another way is to simply ask the audience, “Why do you think this should matter to you?” Then, answer the question. Laura Tempesta, Sports Bra Expert, Inventor & Founder of Bravolution, gave a TED Talk about bras and cleverly found a way to relate to the whole audience. Watch to see how she engages the WHOLE audience and makes them want to listen.

Watch [You'll never look at a bra the same way again – Laura Tempesta \(19 mins\) on YouTube](#)

So, let's take a look at the design of the bra and the limits it imposes. And for those of you who don't wear bras, I'm assuming you've encountered a few along the way and are familiar with the technology. Laura Tempesta

To Be Listenable, Use the Language of Your Audience

Author, William Butler Yeats said, “Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.” Make sure that the words you use match the vocabulary and the knowledge level of the audience. Throughout your speech, define your terms clearly and carefully. Be careful not to use jargon or “insider” language that will exclude listeners who aren’t “in the know.”

Watch this Wired video where an astrophysicist explains gravity in five levels of difficulty. (You don’t have to watch the whole video, just watch a little bit of how she talks to each person to get the point). This is an excellent example of talking about the same topic to different audience members.

Watch [Astrophysicist explains gravity in 5 levels of difficulty \(36 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Finding the right vocabulary and the right tone for the right audience takes a lot of thought and practice. Alan Alda and the Center for Communicating Science issued a “flame challenge” and they asked scientists to explain a flame to 11-year-olds.

Watch more on [Alan Alda's 'Flame Challenge' Illuminates Importance of Communicating Science](#)

*Here is perhaps the simplest case
of persuasion.
You persuade a person only
insofar as you can talk their language
by speech, gesture, tonality, order,
image, attitude, idea,
identifying your ways with theirs.
Kenneth Burke, American literary theorist*

To Be Listenable, Use Inclusive Language

Inclusive language means many things. It means speaking to the knowledge level and education level of your audience. It also means designing sentences where you invite them to be a part.

NO: I know *most people* worry about what goes into *their* food.

YES: I know most of *us* worry about what goes into *our* food.

The use of “us” and “our,” makes the sentence more personal and friendly. As much as possible, use personal pronouns with your audience. As Shel Leanne points out in the book, *Say It Like Obama: The Power of Speaking with Purpose and Vision*, these words help to “send the message that the speaker and those listening are on the same team, in the same boat, facing the same fate.”

To Be Listenable, Give the Audience a Map of the Journey so they Won't Get Lost

Tell them what you are going to say, say it, and then tell them what you said. Along the way, help them stay on track by telling them where they are headed. “Now that we talked about this history of this, I want to share with you the future of the product.”

Always keep the focus on what is the point of your speech. Nancy Duarte, presentation expert suggests, “Every bit of content you share should propel the audience towards that destination.”

To Be Listenable, Take the Audience's Perspective

Your speech is a journey, and you are taking your audience on that journey with you. Chris Anderson, TED Talk curator says, “It is your job to know about your fellow travelers. What do they need from the journey and how can you help them, so they enjoy the trip and they don't get lost?” Delve into the audience's mind, what is their perspective of your topic?

Consider This

When the country music singer, Garth Brooks arrives at the venue, he sits in many of the seats that are pointing at the stage and asks, “What am I doing for this person.” As a speaker, it is good to sit in the many (symbolic) seats of your audience and ask, “What am I doing for this person?”

To Be Listenable, Ask for Audience Participation

Actively involving your audience helps them stay alert and attentive. All too often, speakers seem to spit random words at generic people. The audience is supposed to passively sit back and take in whatever comes their way. An audience is made up of people who need to be considered, addressed, and engaged and it is your challenge to figure out how to connect. Consider using one of the following when engaging your audience:

- Ask rhetorical questions.

- Take an informal poll.
- Ask for a volunteer.
- Have them write something down.
- Ask them to talk with their neighbor about a topic.
- Have everyone yell the answer at the same time.
- Tell them there will be a “test” at the end.

Watch [Toastmaster’s World Champion of Public Speaking, Darren Tay Wen Jie \(3 mins\) on YouTube](#) to see how he relates to the audience.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/dynamicpresentations/?p=195#oembed-5>

Video source: Toastmasters International. (2016, August 21). *2016 World Champion of Public Speaking, Darren Tay Wen Jie* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/v26CcifgEq4>

Look at All the Ways He Connected with the Audience

Darren Tay said in a Business Insider interview that he emphasized the importance of making audience members feel like he was talking directly to them. One way he does this is by asking rhetorical questions of the audience: “If you are all wondering whether the underwear Greg used was clean, I had the same question.” Look at this list of all the ways he connects with the audience in this speech.

- He opens by staring at them directly.
- If *you* are all wondering whether the underwear Greg used was clean, I had the same question.
- Mr. contest chair, fellow toastmasters, and anyone including those watching worldwide. If *you* are looking at Calvin Klein here, stop staring! My eyes are up here.
- “I gonna knock you in my teeth and punch you in the guts and laugh at your sorry behind. He didn’t quite use the word- behind. I just cleaned up the words because *this is a toastmaster program*.
- And, have *you* ever wondered why a bully needs to tell you the exact sequence that they gonna bully you?
- *My friends*, whenever I heard those words, my hands would tremble. *Have you ever felt so fearful*, that you cannot eat or sleep?

- *My friends, as much as we tried to deny it, we are our toughest and strongest bully. We beat ourselves up and put ourselves down. Have you ever felt that you are not good enough? I thought that way.*
- *I'm standing on stage now in front of two thousand of you and more are watching worldwide but I am not afraid anymore. I am in control because I am acknowledging it, I am stepping out of it, observing it, and watching it weaken and fade. My friends, let's all not run away from our inner bullies anymore. Let us all face our inner bullies and acknowledge its presence and fight. Let us all be together as a family supporting one another because we can all outsmart and (outlast).*

Don't Make Assumptions

Make a list of the known demographics of your audience and create a profile. Make a list of what you know about them and what you assume about them. Be honest, but don't let that profile lead you astray. Don't create unrealistic stereotypes and expectations based on the way you profiled them. For example, just because your audience is made up of seventy-year-old women, does not mean that they have the same values as your conservative grandma. Most of us naturally default to grouping things based on what we already know—don't assume.

Don't assume you know about your audience's abilities and interests based on age or on gender roles.

Your Credibility is Linked to the Audience's Opinion of You

Every time you speak, you are building credibility, maintaining credibility, or diminishing credibility, according to Ryan Sheets, Director of the Business Communication Lab at the University of Arkansas, your credibility (ethos) is linked to what the audience thinks of you. An audience expects you to not only have knowledge but also to be trustworthy and sincere. What they think about you translates to how much they will listen to your message. That opinion is formed by looking at the way you are dressed, how you carry yourself, the words you say, and the way you address them.

Your credibility is tied up in their opinion of you and whether they think you care about them.

Thinking About the Audience Makes You Less Anxious

When you realize speech is not about you having something to say but rather, you are giving the audience something of value, it changes things. Not only will you give a better speech, but you will benefit yourself as well. When you think about the needs of the audience, you become less nervous. Focusing on their needs and the topic helps you focus on providing a service rather than delivering a performance.

- Instead of thinking, “I am so nervous,” try thinking “the audience really will benefit from knowing this.”
- Instead of thinking, “I will persuade them to do this” change your thinking to “their life will be better if they try this.”

If you pick a topic you are passionate about and if you believe in it, you will begin to care more about the importance of the topic and less about your own personal discomfort. If you feel a little nervous, think about how your information can improve lives or change people’s perspectives. Make your topic so important that you forget to be nervous.

Quit being so self-centered. It’s not about you— it’s about the audience. They need something and you have it. Writer Ambrose Redmoon said, “Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.”

Don’t be selfish. It does little good to have all that experience and all that knowledge and keep it to yourself. Author Marianne Williamson says, “Your playing small does not serve the world.” It is worth a little discomfort for the awesome privilege you have to change, educate, motivate, and persuade your audience. They need this information, and you are the one lucky enough to get to give it to them. When you spend all your time thinking about how to connect with the audience and how to help them understand what you have to offer, you have less energy to spend worrying about if you are nervous.

*I tell myself that what I have to say in any speech
is important for people to hear,
and that I prepped for it,
and am well versed in it.
So basically knowing that what I have to say is worth hearing
makes me confident in saying it.
Andrew Powell, Former University of Arkansas Communication Student*

Audience Analysis Tools

There are many ways to gather information about the audience. Here are a few of the most common and a list of the pros and cons of each

Interview

- Ask the person who invited you to tell you about the audience.
- When possible, interview a member of the audience.
- Sometimes, it is helpful to ask someone outside the group to give you their impressions of the group.

Pros

- Gives great insider information.
- Often yields quotable items.

Cons

- Are time-consuming.
- The interviewee always represents a limited perspective.

Survey

- Send out an electronic survey.
- Do an informal survey by those who pass by in a break room or lunchroom.
- Have the leadership administer a survey.

Pros

- Allows you to know key opinions.
- Gives the audience the first impression of you as someone who wants to be prepared.

Cons

- Surveys may become a burden to people who don't want one more thing to do.
- People often say what is expected rather than what they really feel.

Internet Research

- Search the internet for information about the group, the person, the venue.
- Check out professional- LinkedIn- and social media-Facebook, Instagram, Twitter- sites for information.
- Look up the mission statement of the organization.
- Find pictures of the venue.

Pros

- Gives you an overview of who they want people to think they are.
- Helps you identify the priorities of an organization.

Cons

- It can be/feel a little creepy to look at family photos of someone on their Facebook and Instagram.
- Mentioning you looked at their social media can freak them out.

Demographic Data

Demographic data can come from statistical sources or it can come from asking questions to the person who invited you to the venue.

- Race
- Religion
- Age
- Professional status
- Education level
- Sexual Orientation
- Beliefs

Pros

- Gives you an overview of who they want people to think they are.
- Helps you identify the priorities of an organization.

Cons

- Can result in stereotypes.
- Can be time-consuming.

When we think a speech is about what we have to say, we get it wrong. The whole reason you are giving the presentation is for the audience. The speech is about them, and your job is to figure out who they are and what they need before you write even the first word.

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- The most important thing to remember is it is not about you; it is about the audience.
- Focus on making your speech listenable.
- Make a list of what your audience needs and the reasons they are listening to your speech.
- Don't stereotype or make assumptions about your audience.
- Know the right words to use for your specific audience.
- Use a variety of tools to gather information about your audience.

Extras to Help You with Understanding Audience

Further Resources

Actor and writer Alan Alda trains communicators by teaching them basic improvisational techniques. The goal is to help them to gain empathy and to learn to read people better. In this video, he explains a couple of ways to gain empathy with your audience.

Watch [Alan Alda: Grow your empathy through better visual perception \(10 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Watch [Keeping your audience engaged \(7 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Engage Your Audience: Don’t Spit Random Words at Generic People](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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DELIVERY ADVICE: MANAGING EYE CONTACT, MOVEMENT, AND GESTURES

You can speak well

if your tongue can deliver the message of your heart.

– John Ford, celebrated Irish American director

In this chapter, you will be provided with practical tips to strengthen presentation skills and cautioned away from misleading advice. The most valuable actions to take when it comes to enhancing presentation skills are: (1) nurturing the belief in personal improvement through practice, and (2) understanding that the objective should be establishing a connection with the audience, rather than striving for flawless perfection.



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Believe You Can Improve

When you think about speaking are you tempted to believe, “Some people are just born good speakers” or “I just wasn’t made for this public speaking stuff.” If that is you, you may have what Stanford researcher, Carol Dweck calls a “fixed mindset.” She suggested that we have a *fixed mindset*– people are just born to be good at things or we have a *growth mindset*–people, with effort, can learn new skills.

When it comes to public speaking, you should work on having a growth mindset and acknowledge that effort is needed for mastery. You can improve, but it may take work. Especially with public speaking, practice equals progress. Adjusting your belief to a growth mindset frees your self-limiting beliefs and allows you to move beyond what you thought was possible.

Those who think they got their success from effort often can go farther than those who believe success is due to their natural ability. The key to making the change is to continually recognize your effort: “I gave it my best, I really stretched myself today, I put a lot of time into this, and I can tell it made a difference.” In addition, Dweck suggests the simple change of adding the word “yet” to your self vocabulary helps keep you growth-focused. Instead of saying, “I’m not good a public speaking,” say “I’m not good at public speaking yet.” Believe if you work hard enough, and practice enough, and get help when needed, you can improve and grow.

The Power of YET

Avoid saying, “I can’t do this”
but rather say “I can’t do this **yet**”

In one case, you are telling your brain to quit trying
in the other version, you allow yourself to be open to possibilities.

Never say, “I’m not good at public speaking.”
but rather say, “I may not be a perfect speaker **yet** but what I have to say is important
so I will work and keep getting better at it.”

Believing you can improve is an important first step! Many speakers who begin timid and insecure are able to rise to become confident, and powerful in only a few months. Some people seem to know how to succeed at public speaking naturally, but for most of us, it takes work. Realize with practice, you can improve as a speaker. If you are one of those lucky natural speakers, realize you too have room to improve.

Now, let’s talk about two specific presentation skills where you can improve—eye contact and gestures.

Eye Contact

Bad Advice—Look at Their Foreheads

You might hear advice like this: “Don’t make eye contact with the audience because they will make you nervous. Don’t look at their eyes—look at their foreheads.” Test this theory out; just for fun, walk up to a friend and begin to speak to their forehead to see how they react. It just looks weird! Chances are your friend will say, “What the heck are you doing?”

That is the same thing your audience will think if you stare at their foreheads. Honestly, it is harder to focus on foreheads than it is to look in the eyes.

Bad Advice—Imagine Your Audience Naked

You have probably heard this advice: “Just imagine your audience naked.” This is the WORST advice; it actually might make eye contact more awkward! One speech coach said, “Depending on your audience, this is too exciting or too disgusting.” Although this piece of advice is designed to make you feel more at ease, but it

doesn't work. I do not know about you, but the thought of speaking to a room full of naked people does not make me feel relaxed.

Bad Advice– Stare at Random Spots Above Their Heads

Well-meaning teachers sometimes say, “Look at the back wall.” If you look over the person, you miss the person. Ask yourself, why is eye contact so frightening? Is it because there is a person connected to those eyes? Is it because if we look at the person, we have to acknowledge their existence? One nonverbal researcher says, “Eye contact makes interaction an obligation.”

When you make eye contact, you must recognize I am speaking to a real person with feelings, expectations, and dreams. If I make eye contact, I must realize a speech is an interaction and I have an obligation to that person. If I make eye contact, I become much more aware they expect something from me and I feel obligated not to waste their time.

The other reason this is bad advice is it makes you look odd, and you will lose credibility with the audience. It is a strange thing to talk to walls. If you are a speaker, it looks strange for you to look over the audience's heads to stare at the wall. I guarantee the audience feels strange when you do it. Even in a large audience where you can't make eye contact with everyone, you should at least find people throughout the room to look at.

Bad Advice– Follow the Eye Contact Formula

A lot of well-meaning advisors will say things like “Make eye contact for 3-5 seconds with each person” (the three-second rule) or “scan the audience from left to right” (the lighthouse technique) or “find three places in the room and look to those” (the umpire technique). The advice is not entirely bad, but the problem is it puts too much pressure on the speaker. If I am counting the seconds or working on the perfect eye contact pattern, then I am missing the point of being conversational.

Good Advice on Eye Contact

The most important advice I can give you on eye contact is to JUST DO IT. Find friendly faces around the room and look at them. Find those nice people who smile and nod and then begin looking at them in the room. Looking at them helps you gauge whether they are listening.

When speaking to a large audience, you may have to make audience contact instead of eye contact. Look at various areas where the audience members are seated to create the feeling that you are looking at them.

Benefits of Eye Contact

There are many benefits to making good eye contact. Communication researcher Steven Beebe conducted a study where he discovered an increase in eye contact increases a speaker's perceived credibility. Other research suggests eye contact impacts focus memory, and recall. Eye contact helps the audience to see you as credible, and to remember your message more—what is not to love about that?

Watch the video, below by Dananjaya Hettiarachchi and notice how he looks directly at audience members. It is obvious why he is the world champion.

[Watch Dananjaya Hettiarachchi – World Champion of Public Speaking 2014 – Full Speech \(8 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Practical Tips for Maximizing Eye Contact

- If you struggle with eye contact, at the top of every page of your notes write—“Make eye contact.”
- Have your friends sit at various places throughout the room so you have a few friendly eyes you can talk to.
- Practice with people. Sure, it is helpful to record yourself, to practice talking to a wall, and to speak to a mirror, but those are no substitutes for what happens when you speak to people. Find some friends and practice with them. Chris Anderson, of TED, says: “Perhaps the most important physical act onstage is making eye contact. Find five or six friendly-looking people in different parts of the audience and look them in the eye as you speak. Think of them as friends you haven't seen in a year, whom you're bringing up to date on your work.”



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Eye Contact in Online Presentations

Increasingly, business presentations are being made in the online environment. The pandemic forced schools to use online learning tools where teachers give lectures online and students give presentations online. In addition, many businesses are conducting job interviews through virtual platforms. It is likely you will encounter an online speech and it is helpful to understand the unique differences. If you are making your presentations online, eye contact means looking into the camera.

Draw a smiley face on a notecard and tape it beside your camera to remind you to look at your audience. It is tempting to try to make eye contact with the faces on your screen, and it is OK to look at the faces on the screen to remind you of your audience but spend the majority of your presentation time looking into the eyes of the camera.

It can be helpful to tape your notecards on a wall behind your computer or phone screen so you can glance at them briefly and then speak directly to your audience. Do not try to read your speech off your computer or phone screen; it will be obvious to the audience you are reading.

Cultural Note

Eye contact can vary from culture to culture and person to person. Just because an audience member looks away from you, it may not mean they are not interested. Consider the following differences.

- In some cultures, it would be considered inappropriate to make eye contact with someone of different gender (or sex).
- When in a high-power culture (a culture where those in power are given higher status and have deferential body language), you may notice those in lower status lower their eyes or avoid eye contact with those of higher status.
- Arabs, Latin Americans, and Southern Europeans tend to make direct eye contact
- Those from Asia and parts of Africa tend to make less eye contact.
- Those on the Autism Spectrum may avoid eye contact to help them focus on the words you are saying.

*“All you need is something to say,
and a burning desire to say it...”*

it doesn't matter where your hands are.”

Lou Holtz, former Arkansas Razorback football coach

Gestures

Isn't it funny how we rarely notice what our hands are doing while we are talking? When we get up there to give a speech, suddenly we are aware of our hands, and we can't figure out what to do with them. One of the

frequently asked questions I hear is, “What do I do with my hands?” The short answer is to relax and gesture naturally. Vivian Buchan, author of *Make Presentations with Confidence* suggests, “The only place a gesture comes from is inside you. Gestures come from your heart and soul, your instincts, your interests, and your involvement.” She suggests focusing on your speech and your passion and the gestures will work themselves out. The more you practice your speech, the more you will feel confident gesturing.

“Great speakers keep their body open” according to Dananjaya Hettiarachchi, 2014 Toastmasters International world champion of public speaking. “Failing to make gestures or holding your hands tightly in front of you makes you look insecure. When you’re nervous, you try to cover your vital organs.” It is OK to *feel* nervous, the goal is to try and not *look* nervous. Public speaking instructor Cathy Hollingsworth offered this nugget of advice:

So many times, when speakers are telling a story to their friends in person or even via the phone, gestures are big and descriptive but when speakers get in front of an audience, all of sudden, arms and hands become appendages that have no apparent purpose. This is what I tell speakers: Use your gestures as “bodily visual aids”. Pretend you are in a situation in which there are no electronics to show slides nor is there a whiteboard. How will you get your ideas across to the audience? Easy! Just use your gesturing to take the audience along with you on the speech. Be brave enough to make those gestures big and at least shoulder high. This is not charades, but it is close.

Gestures help you look like a polished speaker. Vanessa Van Edwards did a study and found the top TED talk speakers made an average of 465 gestures in 18 minutes while the less popular speakers made 272 gestures. The top speakers gestured almost twice as much. Gestures not only increase a speaker’s credibility but speakers who gesture are seen as more persuasive and more likable. According to Vanessa van Edwards, “It’s not what you say; it’s how you say it.” She found people rated speakers similarly on charisma, credibility, and intelligence whether they saw the speech with the sound on or off.

When speakers gesture, listeners are better able to learn the content. People who were instructed to gesture while learning new information, had better recall of information. That sounds like a good study tip!

It’s not just your audience that will be helped by your gestures, you will be helped as well. Did you know people who are born blind gesture in some of the same ways sighted individuals do? How do they know to gesture? Why do they gesture? They gesture because it seems to be something they are hardwired to do. They gesture because it seems to help the speaker to think and speak more clearly. I often have my students sit on their hands and then tell a story about their weekend or give directions to their favorite restaurant. It is amazing how many of them struggle to think of directions when they can’t move. It might be said you think with your hands. In a study where they asked children to talk about a game they played, those who gestured while speaking told more details and they spoke with fewer hesitations. The authors suggested gesturing reduces cognitive load. It is easier to hold up your hands and say “The fish I caught is this big” than it is to say, “the fish I caught was big. He was about 10 inches long.” Gestures give us a shortcut to speaking.

In addition, gestures beat out the rhythm of the speech. They help us synchronize our words to our speech. Typically, we speak in chunks of about four to five syllables called a phonemic clause. At the end of

that chunk, we tend to gesture. Try it for yourself. I wrote the phrases as most people say them (phonemic clause). Say these phrases out loud and see what gestures you do naturally.

I don't know where they are
I've looked everywhere
I simply cannot remember
where I put my keys.
They were right there table
last night.

Read it again. This time, notice you naturally gesture right before the last beat of the phrase. Gestures don't come after the phrase, they come during the phrase. You can tell if someone has been speech coached poorly because they will gesture after the phrase. It looks unnatural.

Gestures are Good

- They are good for the audience's attention to your speech.
- They are good for the audience's recall of the speech.
- They help you as a speaker to be more fluid in speaking.
- They help to reduce your cognitive load.
- They help you keep the rhythm in your speech.



Photo by [Usman Yousaf](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

With all this information, you know you should gesture throughout your speech. One way to loosen up and find your own gestures is what I call, “getting funky.” After you have your speech written, sing your speech, say it in a funny accent, or rap it while in the shower. As silly as this sounds, it will help relax you and in those funky practices, you will find you begin having more free-flowing gestures.

Students in Dale Carnegie classes often do the Box Factory activity to help them learn to use their whole bodies in their speech.

Dale Dunphy posted as part of a Dale Carnegie course, he had to tell a story of the Box Factory with enthusiasm and emphasize certain words. Other participants talked about the importance of telling the story with their whole bodies.

The Box Factory

I found myself yesterday near a huge box factory located on a high hill.

Running all around this building was a picket fence about this high.

I walked up to the factory, threw open the door, walked in, and found myself in a long hallway.

At the far end of the hallway was a spiral staircase.

I walked up this spiral staircase, pushed open a sliding door, and found myself in a big room piled high with boxes.

There were big boxes, middle-sized boxes, and very small boxes.

Suddenly, the boxes came tumbling down around my head!

I woke with a start, yawned, stretched, and went back to sleep.

Watch this short clip from [Dale Carnegie Training of Western CT as they do this activity](#).

As silly as activities like this one may seem, they help speakers to relax and to use their whole bodies in speeches.

What NOT to Do with Your Hands

- Do NOT put both hands in your pockets.
- Do NOT jingle keys or change in your pocket.
- Do NOT hold hands clasped behind your back.
- Do NOT fidget with your pen, necklace.
- Do NOT tap or pound on the podium.
- Do NOT rest your hands on the podium.
- Do NOT wring hands.
- Do NOT play with your hair.
- Do NOT fidget with your clothing.
- Do NOT pick your fingernails.
- Do NOT fiddle with notecards.

Pro-Tip

When you feel yourself getting nervous, touch your index finger to your thumb, it is a self-soothing gesture

Advanced Gestures

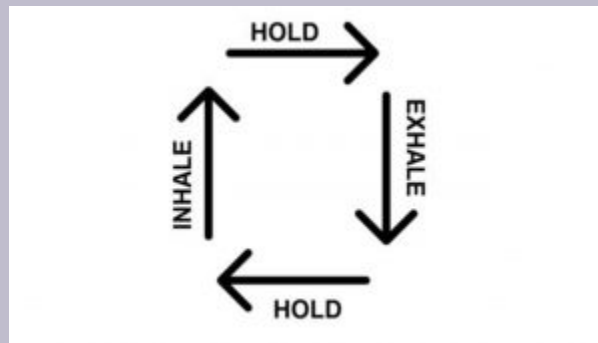
Some of you are still working on relaxing enough to gesture. That is OK, it takes time and like any other skill, with practice, you will get better. Others of you have spoken long enough you are wanting to take your gestures to the next level, this section is for you.

Sabina Nawaz, speech coach recommends people “air out their armpits” when they gesture. That is her way of reminding people to make their gestures large and noticeable and to move their arms away from their torso. Dale Carnegie Trainer, Larry Prevot, says speakers who keep their arms too close to their body remind him of old westerns where the hero is tied up. The rope is around his chest and arms bound tightly, but below the elbow, his hands are free allowing him to finally escape, “Be that hero today. Remove the perceived constraints that are pinning your upper arms against your chest and start using everything at your disposal.” Darren Tay, Toastmaster’s World Champion, said in a Business Insider interview “It’s common for novice public speakers to have their gestures centered either too close to their face, which suggests nervousness, or too low, which is distracting. He said the ideal center is around the belly button.”

In addition to making the arm movements large, the next pro tip is to gesture palms up. Toastmaster Champion Hettiarachchi, suggests you look at the back of your hand and then look at the palm of your hand. Which one relaxes your eye? The palm relaxes your eye which is why great public speakers tend to open their palms towards the audience (video included in bonus features below). In the TED talk, *Power in the Palm of Your Hand* (video included in bonus features below), Allan Pease tells of a study where speakers had 20 minutes to present a proposal using palm-up gestures, palm down gestures, or pointing gestures. Here’s what he found: The palm-up speakers were described as laid back, friendly, humorous, and engaging. The speakers with the palm up gesture maintained 40% more retention than the speaker who used the palm-down gesture. The palms down speakers were described as authoritative, and the pointing speakers were described with negative adjectives.

How To Stop Shaking When You Are Nervous

In this video, *How to Stop Shaking when You Are Nervous*, Trace Dominguez explains how New York City Police and Members of the Military stop their hands from shaking when they have an adrenaline response. Tactical and box breathing can help you slow down your rapid heart rate and stimulate the vagus nerve. The slower and deeper you breathe, the more relaxed you feel. This technique is done by taking deep breaths through the nose.



How To Do Box Breathing:

1. Exhale all the breath out of your lungs.
2. Breathe in for four seconds. As your chest rises and air enters let your mind travel up the side of the box.
3. Hold for four seconds and in your mind travel across the top of the box.
4. Breathe out for four seconds and let your mind travel down one side of the box.
5. Relax for four seconds and let your mind travel across the bottom.
6. Repeat at least three times.

According to clinical psychologist, Dr. Symington, This visual of the box “provides a helpful anchor for your attention and quickly allows you to get into the flow of rhythmic breathing.”

Watch this short video, [How to Stop Shaking When You're Nervous \(4 mins\) on YouTube](#), as it relates to box breathing.

Video source: Seeker. (2015, September 7). *How to stop shaking when you're nervous* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/yjHl0Du5jO4>

Your Body Language

When does your speech credibility begin with an audience? At first glance. People start evaluating you the moment they see you. If you are pacing wildly in the hall, if you are sitting submissively while playing on your phone, if you are in the bathroom before your speech having a pep talk and a member of the audience sees you, that is when they start the credibility meter. The moment you arrive at the speech venue, you should walk, talk, and act with confidence. I once worked for a company that insisted our car was clean inside and out because the client might see it out their office window and begin sizing up our credibility. If you are a college student, consider the fact that every day your classmates see you in class, you are either gaining credibility or losing credibility. If you sit passively in class playing on your cell phone every day, if you wear pajama pants to class, if you slump over dismissively when others give their speeches, you will have diminished credibility with that audience.

Posture

Your body tells people how you wanted to be treated. Your body tells people what you want them to think of you. Confident posture tells your audience you believe you are a person of power, and you know what you are talking about. A confident posture shows your audience you are “comfortable in your own skin.” When people see someone with good posture and body confidence, they perceive them to have more positive attributes and to have increased competence and power. Your confident posture helps you as well, as Harvard Researcher Amy Cuddy points out, people who hold themselves confidently also feel confident. Individuals with a confident posture had more positive attitudes and were more persistent when engaging in a complex task.

To Move or Not to Move, That is the Question

In some situations, you are expected to stand behind a lectern and in other settings, you are standing there with nothing between you and the audience. You will have to adapt to various contexts in your speaking career. In most settings, it is recommended you put as few barriers between you and the audience as possible. When thinking about movement remember, you are a tree—plant your feet but move your branches naturally in the wind. Ok, you can be a tree that moves a little. When you do decide to walk around, make sure it looks purposeful and not nervous—there is a difference between engaged movement and pacing.

The video in this chapter, *Body Language – Gestures and Eye Contact in Public Speaking* shows a variety of speakers and how each adapts to the speech situation. As you watch it, pay special attention to their feet and arms. One of the things that I like about this video is that it shows that there is no one definitive way to do gestures. Each speaker’s unique personality comes out in their body movements. I tell my students that being

a good speaker is about learning to be comfortable in their own skin and learning their unique way of connecting with the audience.

Movement for Advanced Speakers

For you advanced speakers, it is time to be even more intentional with your movement. Some speakers use the baseball method of movement where they “walk their points”. Imagine a baseball diamond on the floor. When you make your first point, you walk to first base. On your second point, you walk to the second base, and on your third point, you move to the third base. Walking to home plate signals that your speech has come full circle (or full diamond) and you are restating the thesis to show how you are connecting with where you began. This physical representation of your speech can help anchor ideas in the minds of the audience.

Cathy Hollingsworth suggests you use purposeful movement to take your audience with you on the journey.

“For many speakers, the hardest thing to resist is walking aimlessly the whole speech. Then, that movement looks like nervous wandering. Instead, take a few steps during a transition and **STOP**. Stay awhile and talk! When you move to the next point or start to tell a story, take a few more steps and **STOP**. Stay awhile and talk.”

I learned one of my favorite tricks at a teacher’s retreat. After about an hour of walking around the room teaching, the conference leader looked at us and asked “Do you see where I am standing? Have you noticed every time I make a big point, I stand in the same place?” He went on to tell us throughout the weekend-long conference he had conditioned us to pay attention to his big idea by standing in the same spot every time he drew a conclusion. When he stood in that spot, we knew what he was about to say was important. This same speaker would stomp with one foot at times as he made a point to get our attention. It was like an exclamation point. He even did a hop using both feet once or twice as a double exclamation point.

The distance you are from the audience and the position of your eyes to the audience can also have an effect. You can create intimacy when telling a personal story by walking closer to the audience or even by sitting down. Moving from behind the podium can signal “I am being vulnerable before you.” Making your eyes the same level as the audience can signal we are on the same level (though the room and size of the audience can influence this). The key is whatever you do, make movement intentional and purposeful (imagine me doing a two-footed hop here!).

Enlist the Help of a Friend. Chances are you have some presentation area where you need work. Ask a friend to give you an honest assessment of what you do. For example, I used to rock up and back when I spoke. I had a friend who would move his pointer finger up and back to let me know when I was doing it. It took a lot of practice and several “rockin” speeches, but eventually, I corrected the behavior.

How To Dress for Your Speech

How do you dress for your speech? The answer should be “it depends.” It depends on the context, the audience, the topic, and the occasion. Kelly Stoetzel, TED’s Content Director says the most important thing is you “wear something you feel great in.” She also suggests “Believe it or not, your clothing can earn you an audience connection before you’ve even spoken a word.” Here are a few guidelines to consider:

1. **Consider the context, topic, and purpose.** It may give you credibility to wear a lab coat as you talk about your experience working as a nurse’s assistant. Wearing hiking gear would be appropriate for a speech on how to rappel, and yoga pants are appropriate for a speech about the sun salutation poses. I’m not telling you to dress gimmicky, but to consider what is appropriate for the topic.
2. **Dress nicer than your audience to enhance your credibility.** If you are talking to other college students in your class and they are wearing jeans and t-shirts, wear nice pants and a collared shirt. If you are presenting to business professionals in suits, wear a suit. It can be a mistake to overdress your audience. If you dress too formally, they will think you are untrustworthy and insincere, however, if you dress too casually the audience might not take you seriously. Whatever you wear, consider the impact. Typically, there is a balance between looking credible and looking approachable. For example, a study of college teachers found teachers who dressed in professional attire were perceived as more organized and knowledgeable while those dressed casually were perceived as more approachable.
3. **Dress professionally to feel credible.** Martin McDermott said, “People elevate their behavior to match their attire.” Dressing professionally can make you feel more confident resulting in enhanced cognition and abstract processing.
4. **Avoid distracting clothing and artifacts.** Unless you are comfortable in high heels, you should avoid them in a speech. Be aware that some dress shoes can be very loud and distracting. If you are tempted to fidget with a ring or necklace, it is best not to wear them when you speak.
5. **Practice in your outfit.** It is a good idea to practice your speech in the outfit you will wear to your speech. It will help you identify any issues like sagging straps or an overly tight shirt that restricts gestures.
6. **Consider the sweat factor.** Typically, people perspire more when they are giving a speech. Wear something that minimizes any sweat stains.
7. **Consider the backdrop.** If you wear black pants and a black shirt, you may get lost in front of a black velvet curtain. If possible, get a picture of or visit the venue where you will be speaking to consider how it will impact your clothing choices.
8. **Consider microphones.** If you will be wearing a lapel microphone, you shouldn’t wear a floppy cardigan. If you are wearing a microphone with a battery pack, you will need a belt or defined waistline to clip it onto. If you are wearing an over-the-ear microphone, your dangling earrings may make loud noises that are picked up by the mic. Always ask what the microphone set up will be days before the

event so you can dress accordingly.

9. **Zip it.** The best advice about clothing rules I have ever received as a speaker is to always check your fly before you speak.

Social psychologist Erving Goffman asks us to consider we are all like actors on a stage. When we are backstage, we may act one way, and when we are on the front stage, we act another. Actors make intentional choices when performing on the main stage; he called this impression management. As actors, we use props, clothing, artifacts, and nonverbal communication to tell people which “character” we are. If we are successful, the audience will view us the way we want to be viewed. Consider which character you will be and be intentional about how to create that character on your “front stage.”

Thoughts Our Blotchy Friends

Many people get red blotches when they speak in public. Clothing choices can magnify the issue. A crisp white shirt next to a red neck highlights the issue, whereas a black shirt breaks up the red and doesn't highlight it so much.

Of course, the best solution is not to get red. Easy to say, but not so easy to do, huh? Doing deep breathing before a speech, being well prepared, and caring about your speech topic all help. The biggest thing of all is to be aware of your triggers. You might get red when you get passionate, nervous, or are exposed to different fabrics, temperatures, or smells. For some of us, red happens. If red happens to you, it certainly doesn't mean you avoid speaking.

If this is you, you can minimize it, and more importantly, when it happens, the audience can still enjoy your speech. If you get red, you are in good company. Dress to minimize it, breathe deeply, and focus on the message and your audience will too.

Key Takeaways

- Public speaking is a skill and with practice, you can improve. Keep an open mindset.
- Make eye contact with the audience being sure to look in different areas of the room.
- Gestures should be natural. Gestures help both the speaker and the listeners.
- Open palms and larger gestures can make you appear more approachable.
- Use confident body posture, not just during your speech, but any time you are in sight of

your audience.

- Dress according to the context, speech topic, and audience. Typically, dress a little bit above your audience.

Extra Resources

Watch These Videos That Were Referenced in the Text

He starts talking about the palm at 4.35

Watch [Body language, the power is in the palm of your hands – Allan Pease \(15 mins\) on YouTube](#)

The Power of YET

Carol Dweck explains how “basic human abilities can be grown and how using “Yet” and “Not Yet” influences learning in different classroom settings. Whether you are teaching kids math or teaching yourself to improve as a public speaker, practicing a growth mindset will be crucial for your success.

Watch [Developing a growth mindset with Carol Dweck \(10 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Delivery Advice: Do Not Imagine the Audience Naked! Managing Eye Contact, Movement, and Gestures](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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DON'T RUIN A GREAT PRESENTATION WITH TERRIBLE SLIDES

The more strikingly visual your presentation is,
the more people will remember it.

And more importantly, they will remember you.

– Paul Arden

Creative Director of Advertising Company Satchi and Satchi

Professor Lynn Meade tells this story:

“The speaker was a master in his field which is why he was chosen to speak. He was brilliant, he was motivated to share his ideas, and he was great at conversation. The only problem was he was the most boring speaker I have ever heard. He stood at the front of the room and read presentation slides to us for two hours. He rarely looked at the audience. It was the longest two hours of any conference I have ever attended!”

Chances are you have had a similar experience. A speaker has ridiculous amounts of text on a slide and then stands there and reads it to you. Unfortunately for all of us, a lot of college classes are that way. In fact, most of us learned about how to use slides **by seeing our teachers use them—poorly**.

The use of electronic slides—PowerPoint, Presenter, Google Slides, Prezi—is pervasive. Sixty-seven percent of college students reported that instructors used PowerPoint; and of these instructors, 95% used this software all or most of the time. Numerous articles chide that presentation slides might be the death of education.

Many successful speakers have shunned slides altogether. Chris Anderson, head of TED, the highly successful group that leads TED Talks, highlights at least of third of the most viewed TED talks do not use any slides whatsoever.

The Most Important Questions of All

1. Do I need slides?
2. If I need slides, what does the audience need to get from those slides?

If you sit at your computer and you open your presentation software and begin writing your speech on your slides, you are making a slide show, not a speech. A good speaker always considers what the

audience needs to hear and then uses slides to offer visual support to help the audience understand. If you start with the slides, you've got it backward.

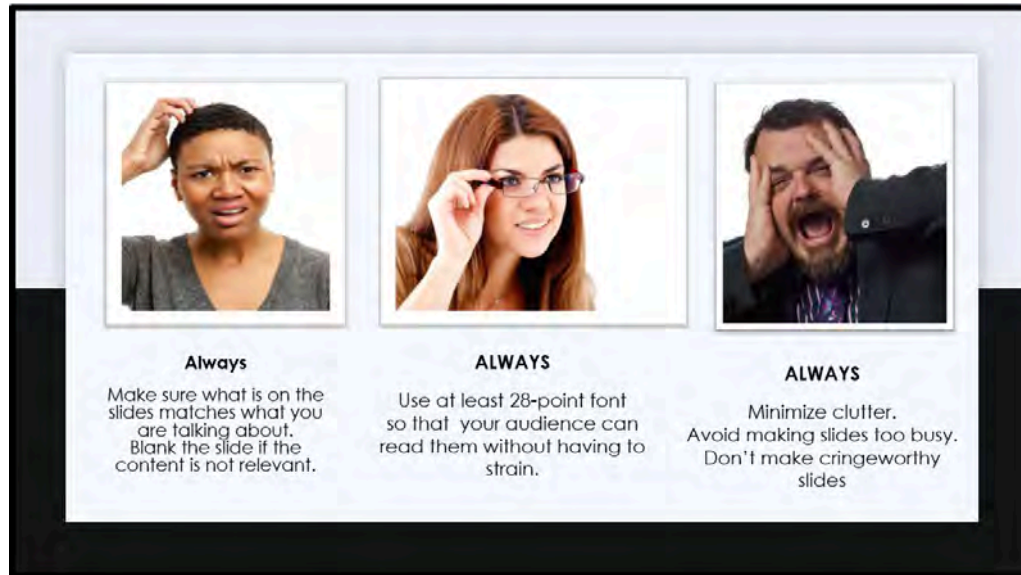
Slides are Good Because They...

- Can create credibility. (Many people expect you to use slides and meeting that expectation gives you credibility.)
- Help focus the audience's attention.
- Help the audience visualize concepts.
- Help people take organized notes of a talk.
- Helps the speaker stay on track.
- Provides aesthetic appeal.
- Show something that may be hard to describe.

Slides are Bad Because They...

- Can distract from what the speaker is saying.
- Can hurt the speaker's credibility when poorly constructed.
- Can cause people to mindlessly take notes without thinking about the content.
- Can be boring...especially when a speaker stands up there and simply reads the slides to an audience.
- Can lead to passive listening when a teacher uses them in the classroom and give the students a copy of the slides.

Rules for Slides



Always: make sure your slide matches what you are talking about, blank the slide if content isn't relevant, use at least 28-point font so the audience can read without straining, and minimize clutter. Avoid making your slides too busy and don't make cringeworthy slides. [“Always do this for your slideshow”](#) by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CCO](#).

Write Your Speech First

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the most important things you can do when preparing your speech is to get away from your slide software. Under no circumstance should you open your slide software (PowerPoint, Presenter, Google slides, Prezi, Keynote, etc.) until your speech is complete **and** you have made a plan for what visuals the audience needs to see.

Keep Text to A Minimum

No more than six words across and six words down. Chris Anderson of TED specifies,

Even when a text slide is simple, it may be indirectly stealing your thunder. Instead of a slide that reads: A black hole is an object so massive that no light can escape from it, you'd do better with one that reads: How black is a black hole? Then you'd give the information from that original slide in spoken form. That way, the slide teases the audience's curiosity and makes your words more interesting, not less.

Offer One Idea to a Slide

You can keep text to a minimum by limiting ideas to one per slide. Audience members should be able to glance quickly—about 3 seconds—and get all the information. It is better to have a lot of slides where each has only one idea per slide than it is to have one slide with a list of ideas. Nancy Duarte, communication coach, reminds us that if you have too many words, it is no longer a visual aid but a teleprompter. Estimate approximately how long it will take an audience member to read your slide by timing yourself reading the slide backward.

Think of your slides as billboards. When people drive, they only briefly take their eyes off their main focus — the road — to process billboard information. Similarly, your audience should focus intently on what you're saying, looking only briefly at your slides when you display them. Nancy Duarte

Get Rid of the Title (Most of the time)

Most of the time, a title on each slide is not needed. You, the speaker, will say what the content is about; no need to read it—it is just distracting.

Reduce Cognitive Load

It is better to help the audience focus on the main point in the slide. By keeping things simple, it reduces the audience's cognitive resources. There are several ways you can reduce cognitive load.

- Avoid busy backgrounds they can drain mental energy.
- Eliminate unneeded titles.
- Use basic, easy-to-read font.
- Ask yourself if the company logo or school banner is needed on the slide or if it just becomes one more thing.
- Keep background colors consistent
- Format photos and illustrations in the same style.

Use Pictures Instead of Words When Possible

People retain more information when what they see on the screen supports the message they are hearing.

We are incredible at remembering pictures.

Hear a piece of information,

and three days later you'll remember 10% of it. A

dd a picture and you'll remember 65%.

John Medina, author of Brain Rules.

Learning Recall Related to Type of Presentation

Table 1: Recall over time

Presentation	Ability to recall after 3 hours	Ability to recall after 3 days
Spoken lecture	25%	10-20%
Written (reading)	72%	10%
Visual and verbal (illustrated lecture)	80%	65%

Avoid Distracting Slide Transitions

There is rarely a time when you should use the transition feature of the software. Things that twirl, cube, swap, and swoosh rarely help the audience to focus on your idea. Most of the time, they are just cheesy and distracting. Three transitions that can be used with a level of professionalism are cut, fade, and dissolve. The easiest rule is if you do not have a reason for a transition, don't do it.

Use Easy-to-Read, Plain Font

Use 28-point font and larger. Do not use more than three different sizes and make the size variants purposeful. It is best to stick with a plain, sans-serif font such as Helvetica, Arial, or Tahoma. There are two types of font, serif (with fancy tails) and san serif (without fancy tails). The Plain, san serif font is easiest to read when projected.



The letters on the left are plain, san-serif font, and the ones on the right are serif, or fancy font. "[Latin alphabet S](#)" by [Eirik1231](#), licensed under [CC0](#)

Go For High Contrast

Always go for the highest contrast. I recently attended a special event and the speaker projected his slide and then looked back at it surprised and said, "Sorry, you can't see the red letters." The speaker had attempted to put red letters on a black ground—this is always a no-no because it rarely shows well. It is best to pick a dark blue or black background and put white or yellow letters on it. You can also use a white or yellow background with dark black or blue letters (While JP Philips in the video *Death by PowerPoint* -below- advises against it, it is still a professional standard).

Use Minimal Bullets

If you do have bullet points, make sure you have more than one point because let's face it, bullet points are for making lists and one point does not make a list. In addition, you should never have more than six bullet points because then you would have too much stuff on your slide.

Bullets belong to the Godfather.

Avoid them at all costs.

Dashes belong at the Olympics,
not at the beginning of the text.

Chris Anderson, TED Talks

While I'm not sure I fully support eliminating all bullets, I do warn you to use them sparingly.

Use Blank Slides

You do not always have to have a slide behind you. Insert black, blank slides between points when you need to talk to the audience without the distraction of a visual.

Have a Backup Plan

Technology is evil and is the enemy of all that is good. It will crash on you. You should always have a backup plan and you should always be prepared to speak even if your slides do not work. You should always have notecards or print out your slides to reference. Then, if the projector bulb goes out or the computer crashes, you can still make your presentation.

Test Your Slide Show, Videos, and Clicker/Remote

You should always practice using your slides. It is helpful to test out your presentation on your friends or trusted colleague and ask them to give you feedback. When you get to the place where you will give your presentation, it is a good idea to pull up your slides and make sure they work with the clicker/remote. It is a good idea to carry extra batteries with you too. Test the volume of your videos and make sure they play properly. Finally, make sure you know where the audio-visual person will be in case you have any problems. If you are a student, have a friend who can come up and fix your slides while you keep your speech going.

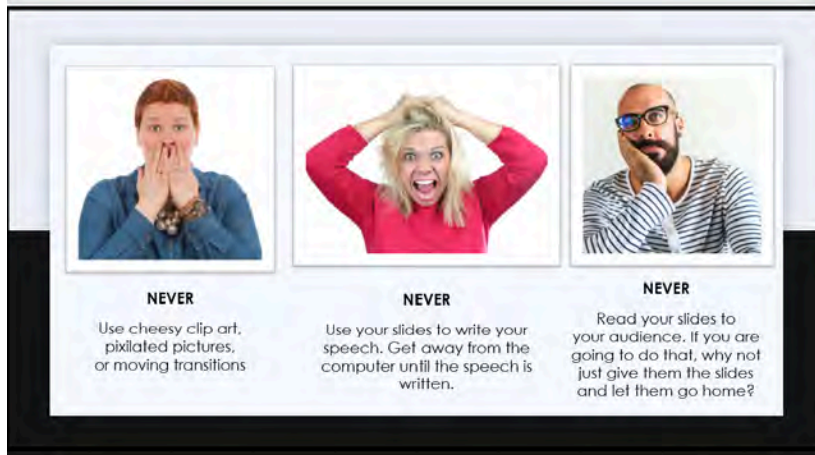
Avoid the Laser Pointer

A laser pointer highlights any shakiness you have in your hands. If you want to highlight something on a slide, use a graphic arrow.

Make Reminders on Your Notes to Change Your Slide

Many student presenters will turn on their presentation slides and during the speech forget they are there. After they conclude their speech and we have applauded, they will look back at the projector and say, “Oh, here is my visual aid,” and then will rapidly click through the seven slides they should have shown us during the speech.

To avoid this, practice with your slides and mark on your notecards where to advance your slide. One way: draw an “S” in a circle and then color in the circle with a highlighter.



Never: Use cheesy clip art, pixilated pictures, or moving transitions, never use your slides to write your speech. Get away from the computer until the speech is written. Never read your slides to your audience. If you were going to read them, why not just give them the slides and let them go home? [“Never do this for your slideshow”](#) by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC0](#)

Point Your Body and Your Eyes Towards the Audience Not Towards the Slides

Your feet indicate where you want to go. If your feet are pointed towards the door, you are indicating you want to go out the door. Similarly, if your feet are pointed towards the back wall where your slides are located, it indicates you want to go towards your slides and not towards the audience. In short, you have turned your back on your audience. **Point your feet, your hips, and your head towards the audience.**

Keep your eyes on your audience and not your slides. Having brief slides helps. If you only have a few words or a nice photo on your slides, you are less tempted to stand there and read to the audience. In addition, having your notes in front of you as opposed to using your slides as your notes helps you keep pointed forward. Just remember, talk to your audience, not your slides.

Use Movement Minimally

These days, there are many different types of presentation slides. One of those is Prezi. For many (like me), the movement in Prezi creates a nauseous feeling. If you decide to use this tool, keep movement limited.

Watch [The hidden power of smiling – Ron Gutman \(7 mins\) on YouTube to see a TED Talk that effectively uses Prezi](#)

Give Credit for Visuals When Possible

When possible credit to the originator of the photo. Simply write “Photo credit: Name or originator of the photo.” Usually, 12-14-point font credit is centered under the photo or in the bottom right-hand corners. Be consistent in the way you do your citations. Citing your graphic may not look as nice as a plain slide, but it shows you have integrity, and that you give credit where it is due. Make sure you have a legal license to use the photo or they are listed as Creative Commons; better yet, do as a friend of mine does, always use your original photos.

Thoughts About Fair Dealing (Canada)

The internet makes it easy to get photos, videos, and music that you can use in your presentation. Just because it is easy to get, doesn't mean it is legal.

Chances are you are using this textbook because you are a college student. Because your presentations are of an educational nature, many uses of external content are covered under Fair Dealing copyright laws, which means you can use small amounts of copyrighted material once for educational purposes *if* you give credit to the authors.

Once you graduate and work for a company, what was once considered free to use is now under a different system. For example, you may have to get permission to use someone's photos or you may now have to pay to use a music clip.

Check your [Library's Copyright guide](#) for information about student use of copyrighted information. Don't hesitate to ask for help from your Professor or the library if you have questions or concerns.

Use Photos Wisely

When using photos, it is usually best to make them full screen if the picture is the point of the visual. If they are a decoration to the point, format them so they are visually pleasing and balanced with the words. If you do use a smaller photo, use a plain background. Always use pictures with the highest resolution possible and always give photo credit. In the college classroom, students prefer pictures and “visually rich” slides if they were relevant to the content of the lecture. In addition, they preferred minimal text and limited bullet-point lists.

Don't Do This!

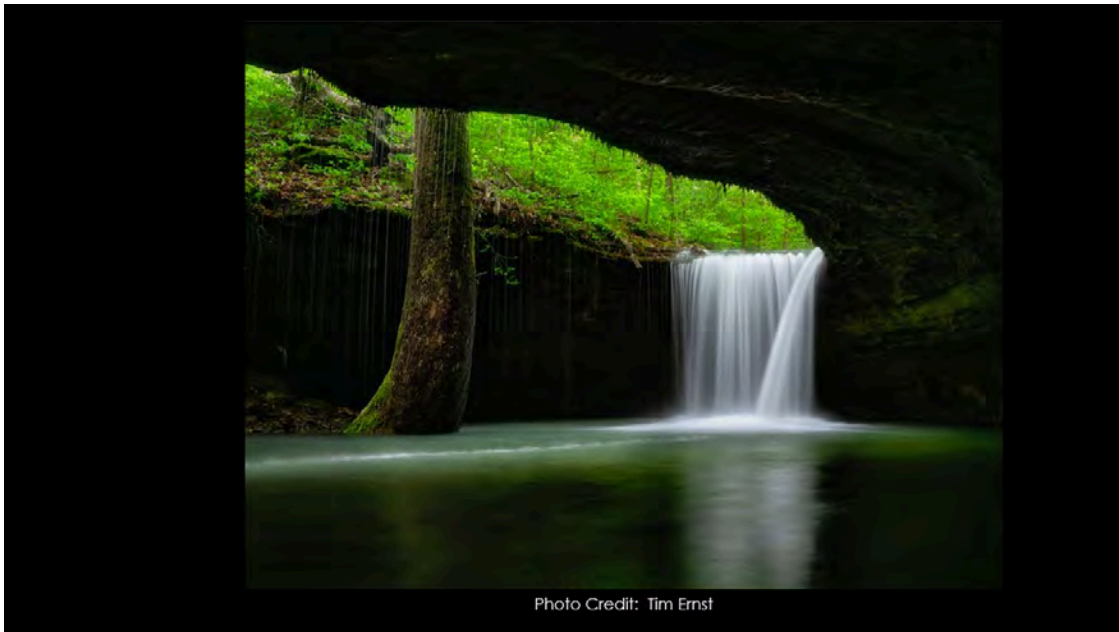


There are many things wrong with this slide: The background is distracting, there are too many photos, the heading should be spoken by the speaker and not written, and the photo credit is too large. “[Slide sample](#)” by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CCO](#)

What's Wrong With This Slide?

- The background is distracting.
- There are too many photos on the slide.
- The heading is not needed—the speaker should say it.
- The photo credit is too large.

Do This Instead!



Notice that the picture takes up most of the slide, the background is plain, and the photo credit is simple and doesn't distract. Notice that the picture takes up most of the slide, the background is plain, and the photo credit is simple and doesn't distract. "[Slide 3](#)" by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CCO](#)

What's Right With This Slide?

- The picture is clear and takes up most of the slide.
- No unnecessarily distracting words
- The photo credit is balanced and an appropriate size.
- No caption is needed because the speaker will tell about what it is and where it is

Want to Take Your Slide Composition to the Next Level? Check out these Resources

- To see a great explanation with examples of why certain slide layouts work, see [Effective PowerPoint Slides for Business](#)
- To see samples of good and bad use of photos on slides, check out [Presentation Zen](#).
- To take your visual composition to the next level by using the rule of thirds to compose slides, check out the [rule of thirds](#).

- To see the types of slides a professional designer make, check out [Nolan Haim's portfolio](#)

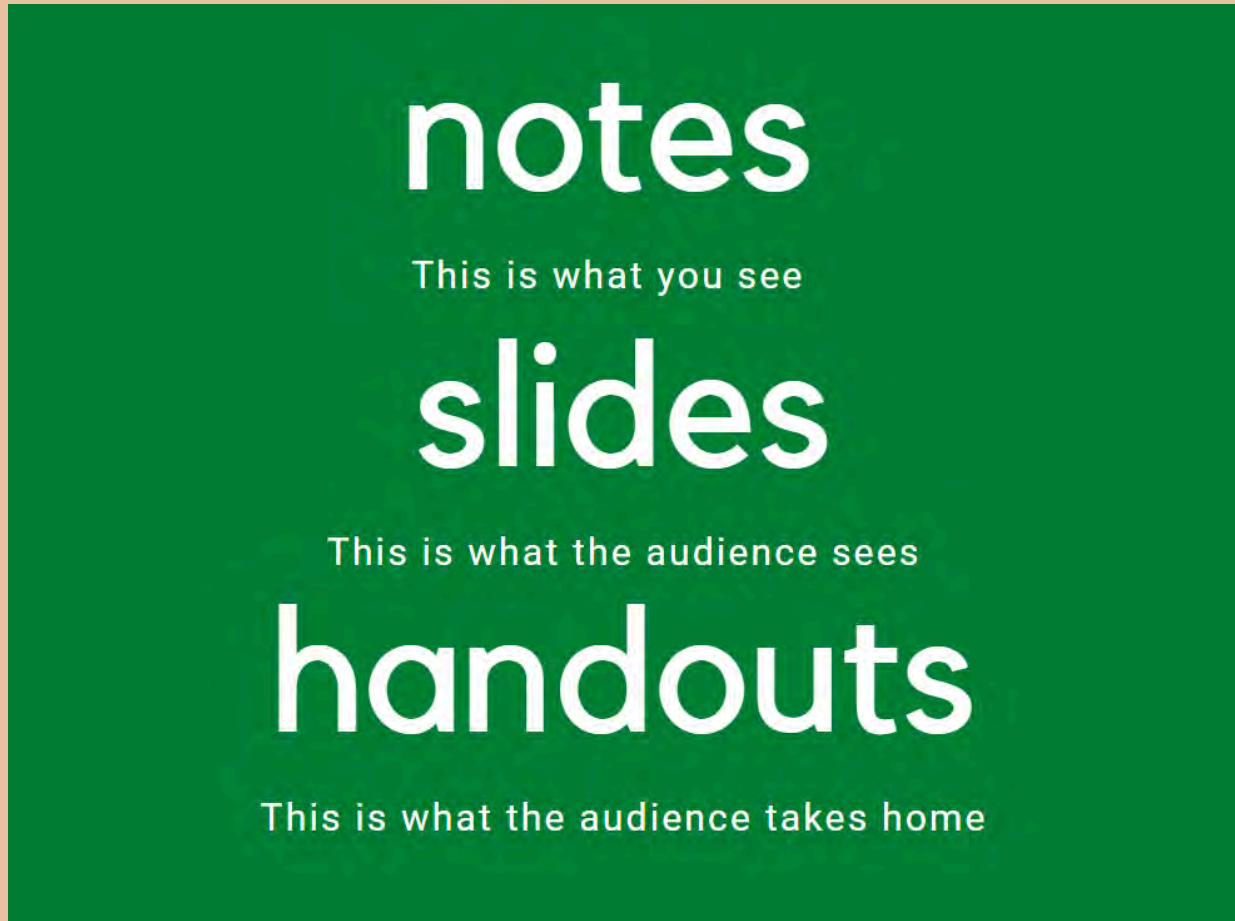
Nancy Duarte: [For visuals], I think people tend to go with the easiest, fastest idea. Like, “I’m going to put a handshake in front of a globe to mean partnership!” Well, how many handshakes in front of a globe do we have to look at before we realize it’s a total cliché? Another common one — the arrow in the middle of a bullseye. Really? Everyone else is thinking that way. The slides themselves are supposed to be a mnemonic device for the audience so they can remember what you had to say. They’re not just a teleprompter for the speaker. A bullseye isn’t going to make anyone remember anything. Don’t go for the first idea. Think about the point you’re trying to make and brainstorm individual moments that you’re trying to emphasize. Think to the second, the third, the fourth idea — and by the time you get to about the tenth idea, those will be the more clever memorable things for the audience.

Watch [Photos that will make you want to save the Everglades – Mac Stone \(21 mins\) on YouTube](#) as he shows photos that make “You want to save the Everglades.”

Be *in* the Image but Not *on* the Image

Stand near your slides but don’t stand where you will be a shadow on your slides. Sometimes a presenter will stand far away from their slide causing the audience to have to bounce back and forth with their attention. On the other hand, practice with your slides at the venue and have a friend let you know where you can and cannot stand. If it is easy to stand in front of the slides, I will sometimes put tape on the floor to indicate where to stand and put a tape boundary to remind myself where not to stand.

These Are Not the Same



Notes are what you see. Slides are what the audience sees. Handouts are what the audience takes home. "[The difference in notes, slides, handouts](#)" by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC0](#).

Should I Give Out My Slides As a Handout?

One BIG mistake novice speechmakers make is they use their slides as their notes, their visual aid, and their handout. In this model, a speaker opens up the presentation software and writes their speech on the slide. When the day of the presentation comes along, the speaker stands in front of the audience and reads the slides to the audience. Finally, the speaker gives the audience members a copy of the slides to take home.

- **Delivery Notes** are what you look at during your presentation. They should have details about what you will say, they should have reminders for when to advance your slides, and they should have notes reminding you to project your voice or to look up.
- **Slides** are the projection the audience sees. They should be purposeful, brief, and concise, and designed to help listeners understand.
- **Handouts** are the items you give the audience to take home with them. It should provide only the information the audience needs to remember after your presentation is over.

Never, ever hand out copies of your slides, and certainly not before your presentation. That is the kiss of death. By definition since slides are “speaker support” material, they are there in support of the speaker...You. As such, they should be completely incapable of standing by themselves and are thus useless to give to your audience, where they will simply be guaranteed to be a distraction. The flip side of this is that if the slides can stand by themselves, why the heck are you up there in front of them? (David Rose as quoted in Presentation Zen)

With that said, when students spend their attention copying slides, they do not spend time listening to the lecture. Making the slides available to students to use during an educational lecture may reduce cognitive load and encourage learning. However, if the slides are so detailed the student can get all the information from the slide, then they may not attend class or they may not take any notes of their own which reduces learning. It is a delicate balance of structure but not all the content.

How To Avoid Death by PowerPoint

Watch [How to avoid death by PowerPoint \(21 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Excerpt from *How to Avoid Death By PowerPoint*

Okay, ladies and gentlemen, welcome. There is a question which has puzzled me for quite a while, and that is, why do our PowerPoints look the way they look? Or rather, how on earth, can we accept that they look the way they look? How can you do that?

And do you know what's even more intellectually challenging for me to understand, is how can a

person sit over here in this meeting room with ten others, observing this dismally bad PowerPoint filled with charts, graphical elements, page numbers, fading away five, seven minutes thinking of other things. You know the feeling, the boredom, the waste of time!? This person, after 40 minutes, he/she will stand up, a bit dazed, trotting off to his own office, coming to his own computer, flipping it up, going like: oh my god, I've got a presentation tomorrow, and I do have a PowerPoint to build. Now what is the chance that this person will build an equally bad PowerPoint as the one that he/she was by herself tortured by in the other conference room? Is that a big chance? Yeah. David JP Phillips, TED Speaker. How to Avoid Death By Power Point

David JP Phillip Provides This Solution

1. Only put one idea per slide.
2. Make spoken and projected content match. Don't make an audience chose between listening to you or looking at your slide. Sweller and Mayer conclude there is something in our brain called the redundancy effect, and it works like this. If the audience has to pick between reading text on a slide or listening to you talk, they have a hard time focusing and cannot recall most of what was said.
3. Build slides with minimal distractions. We pay attention to moving objects, signaling colors, contrast-rich objects, big objects. Build your slides with this in mind. For example, only have a large title if it is the most important, otherwise, make it smaller.
4. Avoid using full sentences on slides.
5. Contrast controls your focus. If you use a white background, it draws attention away from the speaker.
6. Do not put too many objects on your slide. Go for six or less.

Source: Phillips, D. J. P. (2014, April 14). *How to avoid death by PowerPoint* [Video]. YouTube.
<https://youtu.be/lwpi1Lm6dFo>

Watch These Creative Uses of Slides

Notice how Tim Urban uses slides to engage the audience. Instead of long lists of words, he uses funny drawings, which results in the audience hanging on his every word.

Watch [Tim Urban: Inside the mind of a master procrastinator \(14 mins\) on YouTube](#)

How to Put Citations in Slides

When considering the how and when of citations, it is important to consider the context of your speech.

Different contexts will require different types of citations. Many speakers have ended their presentation with, “And here’s my reference page.” That has got to be the most boring way to end a speech ever! Don’t do it. There is **never** any reason to project your reference page for your audience to see. Depending on the context, however, you may include your reference on your slide.

Table 2: Handling References in Different Types of Presentations

A student in a public speaking class	A College Teacher	A Businessperson Making a Formal Presentation:
<p>In class, you should always verbally mention your research and you should turn in a complete reference page. Teachers will vary if they want you to include the full reference on the bottom of the slide. You should always ask the teacher.</p>	<p>Typically, in graduate-level classes, students and teachers are expected to offer full citations. These are likely to be in the form of a reference page given to the audience in paper or electronic form. Each discipline is different. When in doubt, include the full reference at the bottom of a slide.</p>	<p>You will have to read into the context of this one. You should always mention any research to give you credibility but whether you put a citation on the slide will vary from place to place. When in doubt, err on the side of including the citation. Business presentations rarely include citations on photos.</p>

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- Slides should always be used purposefully.
- Write your speech before making your slides.
- It is better to have many slides that each make only one point than it is to have few slides with many points.
- No more than six words across and six words down, use at least 28-point, plain (san-serif) font.

Bonus Feature

Watch a part of Sonaar Luthra’s speech for a great example of slide usage. The pictures help us to understand and remember and he avoids unnecessary words.

Watch [Sonaar Luthra: Meet the water canary \(4 mins\) on YouTube](#)

For those of you interested in Multi-Media Learning Principles, this chart explains how to each principle applies to good slide creation.

Multimedia Learning – Moreno and Mayer

Learning the principles behind why and how it works can help you remember how to apply them. This chart shares with you some of the best practices from multimedia research on the principle and the application of visual media.

Table 3: Best Practices & Principles in the Application of Visual Media

Principle	What does it mean?	What does it mean for your slides?
Multiple Representation Principle	For meaningful learning to occur, both channels (verbal and visual) should be used at the same time in a way learners can connect the information from each channel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say it and show it on your slide to help people remember things. • It is helpful to access the visual and auditory parts of the brain to help people connect.
Temporal Contiguity Principle	<p>Don't be talking about one thing and have a picture up of something else. Verbal and visual content should be presented together in contiguous time.</p> <p>Putting words and pictures explaining the same content into working memory at the same time is beneficial.</p> <p>If the information is out of synch, the brain is less able to connect the information from the two inputs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your words and pictures presented simultaneously. • Don't be talking about one thing and have a picture or graph of something different on your slide.
Split Attention Principles and Modality Principle	People learn best when their attention is not split between spoken and visual words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is better to say things in your speech rather than write sentences on a screen. • Keep text to a minimum. • Better to use pictures instead of words.
Redundancy Principle	While two channels of content that support each other can be more effective, too much can cause cognitive overload.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is best to talk and show pictures rather than talk, have words, and show pictures. • When you speak words and you project words and then you add a picture, it causes overload.
Coherence Principle	Background sounds and music can overload auditory channels and distract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure everything on the slide is related to the message. • Skip the distractions.

Image Principle	People do not learn better when the speaker's image is on the screen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No need to show your headshot.
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Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Don’t Ruin a Great Presentation with Terrible Slides](#)” In [Advanced Public Speaking](#) by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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TYPES OF SPEECHES

Dynamic Presentations by Amanda Quibell

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In this chapter...

- [The Power of Story: The Secret Ingredient to Making Any Speech Memorable](#)
- [Special Occasion Speeches: Toasts and Tributes](#)
- [Speaking to Inform](#)
- [Persuasive Speechmaking: Motivating Change](#)

THE POWER OF STORY: THE SECRET INGREDIENT TO MAKING ANY SPEECH MEMORABLE



*Ideas are not really alive
if they are confined to one person's mind.
Nancy Duarte, Speech coach and author*

Photo by [Ball Park Brand](#), used under [Unsplash](#) license

We love stories because they are engaging, they ignite the imagination, and they have the potential to teach us something. You have likely sat around a campfire or the dinner table telling stories? That is because stories are the primary way we understand the world causing Rhetorical scholar Walter Fisher (1985) to call us *homo narrans—storytelling humans*. Not only is storytelling important in conversation, but it is also important to speechmaking. It is no surprise then, that when researchers looked at 500 TED Talks, they found of the TED talks that go viral, 65% included personal stories (Gallo, 2016).

Professional speakers, college students, politicians, business leaders, and teachers are all beginning to understand the benefits of telling stories in speeches. Increasingly, business leaders are encouraged to move away from the old model of sharing the vision and the mission to a new model of telling the story of the business. Academic literature points out that teachers who use stories can help students understand and recall information (Dicks, 2018). For years, politicians have been coached to include a story in their speeches (Dennings, 2005). They do it because it works, and it is bound in science.

In short, people don't pay attention to boring things. The story is one way to engage and help ideas come alive. Cognitive psychologist Daniel Willingham (2009) says, "The human mind seems exquisitely tuned to

understand and remember stories—so much that psychologists sometimes refer to stories as ‘psychologically privileged,’ meaning that they are treated differently in memory than other types of material.”

The goal of public speaking is to plant an idea into the minds of your listeners and the most effective way to accomplish that is through a story. Here are three major principles about storytelling:

1. Stories, when told properly, will ignite both the reason center and the emotion center of your audience’s brains making them not only more effective in the moment but also more memorable in long run.
 2. Stories activate the little voices in the audience’s heads and help them think creatively about problems. This activation encourages audiences to act on the idea as opposed to just being passive listeners.
 3. The best way to tell a story is to connect it to a message, offer concrete details, and follow a predetermined plotline.
-

The best way to learn about how to write a good story is to see numerous examples of good stories in action. Watch the numerous videos illustrating how the story is used . This chapter is different from standard textbooks on the subject because it includes more examples than text. You will only get deep learning if you take the time to watch the video clips!

Tell me the fact and I'll learn.

Tell me the truth and I'll believe.

But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.

–Ancient proverb

Stories Engage the Audience and Make a Point

In under four minutes, Mark Bezos, tells a memorable story. He makes us laugh, allows us to see the situation, and then uses all the emotion and visualization he has created to make a powerful point. A good story draws us in and helps us connect with the person and their idea.

Watch [A life lesson from a volunteer firefighter \(4 mins\) on TED](#)

The brain doesn't pay attention to boring things.
 – John Medina, author of *Brain Rules*

Stories Help Ideas Stick

Stories are sticky. A well-told story “sticks” to our brains and attaches to our emotions (Heath & Heath, 2008). A speaker can tell a story in such a way that the audience “sees” the story in their mind’s eye and “feels” the emotions of the story. In some situations, an audience may become so involved in the story they “react” by making facial expressions or gasping in surprise. By “seeing the story” and physically reacting to the story, the audience is moved from a passive listener to an active participant.

Think about college teachers you have had who told stories as part of their lectures. Did it help you to listen? Did it help you to learn? Chances are it did. Researchers Kromka and Goodby (2019) put it to the test on one hundred ninety-four undergraduate students. One group listened to a lecture that included a lesson with a story, while others just heard the lesson’s key points. Students that heard the narrative had more sustained attention to the lecture and they did better on a test of short-term recall. The stories helped them remember the material, but there was an added benefit. The students who heard the narrative liked the teacher more and were more likely to take another course from the instructor in the future.

Jane Goodall explains how her stories about her time spent with chimpanzees engaged people’s interest in greater ways than just information about them (Schrobsdorff, 2021).

“If one wants to change attitudes, you have to reach the heart.

You can reach the heart by telling stories,
 not by arguing with people’s intellects.”

Jane Goodall

Watch [Jane Goodall, a Portrait of Enduring Hope \(3 minutes\) on Youtube.](#)

Try This

Consider the connection between **thinking and doing.**

- Imagine you are looking at the Eiffel tower.
- Think of two words that start with “b.”
- Think of two words that start with “p.”
- Imagine that I am cutting a lemon in half and then squeezing the juice in a glass.

- Imagine fingernails running down a chalkboard.

When imagining the Eiffel tower, most people's eyes scan up.

When thinking of the words that begin with "b" and "p", most people will mouth the words.

When imagining the lemon, many people will salivate.

When imagining fingernails on a chalkboard, many people will tighten their facial muscles.

We respond physically because a connection exists between our imagination and our physical response. When we say things in our speech that cause a physical response, the audience becomes actively engaged with our talk.

Stories Help the Audience Become Emotionally Engaged

"Emotions are the condiments of speech," according to speech coach Nancy Duarte (n.d). They add spice and flavor to your talk. Emotions such as passion, vulnerability, excitement, and fear are particularly powerful.

Researchers at Ohio State have a word for that sense of being carried away into the world of a story. They call it *transportation*. Their research demonstrated that people can get so immersed in a story they hardly notice the world around them. Audiences can be transported by stories as facts and stories as fiction (Green & Brock, 2000). Narrative transportation theory proposes that when people lose themselves their intentions and attitudes may change to align with the characters in the story. As speakers, our goal should be to help our audience get lost in the story. Sometimes that means telling our own stories, sometimes it means telling the stories of others, and other times telling a hypothetical story.

You've probably heard of an fMRI. It's the machine that measures blood flow to the brain. Scientists used fMRI machines to measure what happened when someone is telling a story and when someone is listening to that story. What they found is exciting. When they compared the speaker's brain to the listener's brains, they noticed the brains were lighting up in the same places (Hasson, et al. 2012). When the speaker described something emotional, the audience was feeling the emotion and the emotional centers of their brains were lighting up. Princeton researcher, Uri Hasson (2012) calls this brain synching, "neural coupling."

Consider a study at Emory University that noticed differences in how brains respond to texture words, "she had a rough day" versus non-texture words "she had a bad day." (Lacey, et al.,2012). The texture words activated sensory parts of the brain. When telling a story, find creative and tactile descriptions to engage your audience.

Texture words

- He is a smooth talker.
- The logic was fuzzy.
- She is sharp-witted.
- She gave a slick performance.
- She is soft-hearted.

Non-texture words

- He is persuasive.
- The logic was vague.
- She is quick-witted.
- She gave a stellar performance.
- She is kind-hearted.

Imagine you pull up to a flashing red stoplight at an intersection. Seeing it in your mind activates the visual part of your brain. Now, imagine a loved one giving you a pat on the back. Once you imagine it, your tactile center will light up. This is quite powerful when you think about it. When you hear a story, you don't just hear it, but you *feel it, visualize it, and simulate it*.

Dopamine, oxytocin, and endorphins are what David Philips calls the “angel’s cocktail.” He suggests speakers should intentionally create stories to activate each of these hormones. By telling a story in which you build suspense, you increase dopamine which increases focus, memory, and motivation. Telling a story in which the audience can empathize with a character increases oxytocin, the bonding hormone which is known to increase generosity and trust. Finally, making people laugh can activate feel-good endorphins which help people feel more relaxed, more creative, and more focused.

Because of neural coupling (our brain waves synching) and transportation (getting lost in a story), the audience members begin to see the world of the person in the story. Because of hormonal changes, they feel their situation and can empathize. A thoughtfully crafted story has the power to help the audience believe in a cause and care about the outcome.

*Time and time,
when faced with the task of persuading a group of managers
to get enthusiastic about a major change,
storytelling was the only thing that worked.
Steve Denning, the Leaders Guide to Storytelling*

Stories Inspire Action

The conventional view has always been when you speak, you try to get the listeners to pay attention to you. The way you get them to pay attention is to keep the little voice inside their heads quiet. If it stays quiet, then your message will get through. Stephen Denning in *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling* suggests an alternative view. He challenges speakers to tell stories to work in harmony with the voices in people's heads. He says that you don't want your audience to ignore their voice; you want to tell a story in a way that awakens their little voice to tell its own story. You awaken their voice and then you give it something to do. He advocates using stories as springboards to help the audience think about situations so they can begin to mentally solve problems. In this way, you are not speaking to an audience but rather you are inviting the audience to participate with you.

Stories translate information in a way that connects with the audience's emotions

Storytelling is a potent tool for teaching, selling, or convincing, engaging various parts of the brain beyond mere information processing (Seneca Libraries, 2014). Unlike straight facts, stories can plant ideas and emotions, making them more effective in marketing and idea acceptance. Learning to write and tell stories is recommended for presentations, assignments, business pitches, and negotiations. Crafting a story involves utilizing the dramatic arc, incorporating emotion, and being concise in conveying the narrative (Seneca Libraries, 2014).

Watch [Storytelling \(4 minutes\) on YouTube](#)

Stories Help People Engage With Topics

When incorporated into presentations, stories humanize the message, making it more engaging and relatable. Effective research communication requires striking a balance between storytelling and factual presentation. Storytelling, as a communication medium, has the power to change beliefs and sway opinions. Reports and news stories follow different formats, with reports focusing on data and facts, while news stories emphasize narrative and meaning (Duarte, 2014).. The key is to tell a story with data, creating a pattern and rhythm to keep presentations interesting. Great presentations spread ideas and enhance organizational recognition, emphasizing the importance of effective storytelling.

Watch [How do I share a story that engages my audience and what were the benefits of business storytelling? \(4 minutes\) on YouTube](#)

Story Changes the Brain Chemistry in Listeners

Paul Zak told audience members a story and then measured the chemicals their bodies released during this story. His conclusion is that story changes brain chemistry and makes individuals more empathetic. In this case, they were more likely to donate money to charity. Watch this video as Zak talks about a universal story structure that includes exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.

Watch [Empathy, neurochemistry, and the dramatic arc: Paul Zak at the Future of StoryTelling 2012 \(6 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Stories Can Have Drawbacks

While storytelling can be used positively, it can have drawbacks. A story can be more memorable than the point. If the audience remembers your story without the purpose of the story, you missed it. In the teacher's study mentioned before, students had better short-term recall when the teacher told a narrative. The study also reported that listening to stories increased student cognitive load and some students basically used up their "brainpower" to remembering extraneous information instead of the lesson. The lesson here is to make sure the story reinforces a point and to make sure that the point is clear.

Because stories draw people in emotionally, there can be ethical challenges. Is it ethical to tug at an audience's heartstrings to get them to donate money? How about giving you money? Speakers need to consider the ethical obligation to consider the impact of the story. Stories tap into emotions and create lasting memories. Stories told with the wrong motives can be manipulative.

The Formula for a Good Story



"Formula for a story" by [Lynn Meade](#), licensed under [CCO](#)

Tension-Release

So now you see the clear advantage in telling a story, let's talk about the formula for a good story. A good story should help the audience see the events in their mind's eye. Your story should play out like a movie in their head. This movie happens because you help them see the setting, characters, and details. To be fully engaged, the audience must *feel* some sort of tension.

The formula is tension and release.

The best stories create tension or conflict and

then in some way resolve conflict. In persuasion, a story can create tension that can be released only by acting on the persuasion. Haven (2007) defines a story as “A character-based narration of a character’s struggles to overcome obstacles and reach an important goal.” Notice the focus on struggle and overcoming the struggle. Once you decide on the story that you want to tell, work on helping the audience feel the tension and release.

If the point of life is the same as the point of a story, the point of life is character transformation. If I got any comfort as I set out on my first story, it was that in nearly every story, the protagonist is transformed. He’s a jerk at the beginning and nice at the end, or a coward at the beginning and brave at the end. If the character doesn’t change, the story hasn’t happened yet. And if story is derived from real life, if story is just condensed version of life then life itself may be designed to change us so that we evolve from one kind of person to another.

Donald Miller, *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years: What I Learned While Editing My Life* (1994).

Dale Carnegie’s (2017) formula for storytelling includes three parts: Incident, action, and benefit. In the incident phase, the storyteller shares a vivid personal experience relevant to the point. Next, they give the action phrase, and they share the specific action that was taken. Finally, the speaker tells the benefit of taking the action. It still fits the tension-release formula, it just expands it to make sure that the speaker clearly lets the audience know what conclusion they are supposed to draw.

Good stories represent a change

One part of the tension-release model is how the character changes. Matthew Dick, Moth storytelling champion suggests that stories, where no change took place in the storyteller, are just anecdotes, romps, drinking stories, or vacation stories, but they leave no real lasting impression.

The story of how you’re an amazing person who did an amazing thing and ended up in an amazing place is not a story, it is a recipe for a douchebag. The story of how you are a pathetic person who did a pathetic thing and remained pathetic, is also not a story, it is a recipe for a sadsack. You should represent a change in behavior, a change in heart, a change in attitude. It can be a small change or a very large change. A story cannot simply be a series of remarkable events. You must start out as one version of yourself and end as something new. The change can be infinitesimal. It need not reflect an improvement in yourself or your character, but change must happen.

Matthew Dick.

I once was this, but now I am this

I once thought this, but now I think this

I once felt this, but now I feel this.

I once was hopeful, but now I am not

I once was lost, but now I am found

I once was happy, but now I am sad

I once was sad, but now I am happy

I once was uncertain, but now I know

I once was angry, but now I am grateful

I once was afraid, but now I am fearless

I once doubted, but now I believe

Stories Often Follow Common Plots

According to Heath and Heath (2008) of *Made to Stick*, there are common story plots. Each of these can be used in most speech types and can be adapted to the tension-release model.

Challenge Plot

- Underdog story
- Rags-to-riches story
- Willpower over adversity

Challenge plots work because they inspire us to act.

- To take on challenges
- To work harder

Connection Plot

- Focusing on relationships
- Making and developing friendships
- Discovering and growing in love

Connection plots work because they inspire us in social ways.

- To love others
- To help others
- To be more tolerant of others

Creativity Plot

- Making a mental breakthrough
- Solving a longstanding puzzle
- Attacking a problem in an innovative way

Creativity plots work because they inspire us to do something differently.

- To be creative
 - To experiment
 - To try something new
-

Elements to a Good Story

For the audience to experience the tension and release, they must be invested in the story. Good stories help the audience see the setting, know the characters, and feel the action.

1. Setting

Think of the setting as a basket to hold your story. If you start with the basket, the audience has a place to hold all the other details you give them. For this reason, many storytellers begin by describing the setting.

2. Characters

When you describe how the characters look or how they felt, we can see them as if we are watching them in a movie. The trick is to tell enough details we can create a mental picture of the character without giving so much information that we get bogged down.

3. Action

When you describe the action that is taking place, the audience begins to *feel* the action. If you describe something sad that happened, the audience will feel the sadness. If you describe something exciting that happened to you or a character, the audience will feel that excitement.

Pixar creator, Andrew Stanton, emphasizes that storytelling is joke telling, involving knowing the punchline or ending that leads to a singular goal, confirming truths about humanity. Stanton underscores the power of a good story in engaging the audience and sets the stage for an intriguing journey. He describes storytelling as a well-told promise that propels the audience forward, using the absence of information to draw them in. Stanton emphasizes the importance of creating anticipation in storytelling, stating that drama is anticipation mingled with uncertainty (TED, 2012).

Watch [The Clues to a great story \(19 mins\) on Youtube](#)

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- A story is a powerful tool because it engages the audience on not just a logical but also an emotional level.
- Good stories offer a setting, a description of the characters, and add enough detail for the audience to see the story take place in their mind's eye. The action of a story should be told in a way that the audience can see the events unfold in their mind's eye.
- Good stories have tension and release.
- Good stories have characters and situations that demonstrate a change.

Examples of Concise Storytelling

- [Ric Elias: 3 things I learned while my plane crashed | TED Talk](#) (5 minutes)
- [Heritage Minutes: Viola Desmond \(youtube.com\)](#) (1 minute)
- [Heritage Minutes: Chanie Wenjack \(youtube.com\)](#) (1 minute)
- [Richard Turere: My invention that made peace with lions | TED Talk](#) (7 mins)
- [How I beat stage fright | Joe Kowan \(youtube.com\)](#) (8 mins)

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[The Power of Story: The Secret Ingredient to Making Any Speech Memorable](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#). / Replaced/refreshed outdated video content, moved “stories help people”, deleted: example from corporate trainer, keep a story log/notetaking challenge, theory application.

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SPECIAL OCCASION SPEECHES: TOASTS AND TRIBUTES

Special Occasion Speeches



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*Here's to those that love us!
And for those that do not love us,
may God turn their hearts.
And if he cannot turn their hearts,
may he turn their ankles;
so that we may know them,
by their limping.
— Irish Blessing/Curse*

Cheers, slainte, skal, prost, and salud! A toast speech is a type of tribute speech meant to honor someone. Your goal as a speaker should be to make that person feel special and to allow others in the room to be included in the celebration.

Ceremonial Speaking Wheel

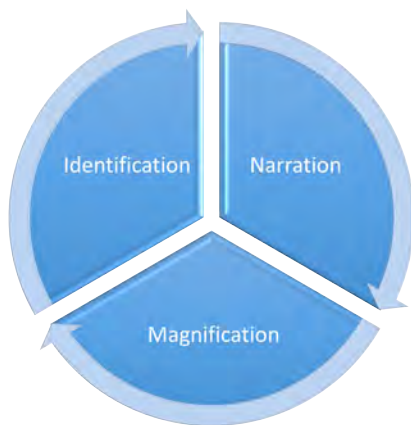


Image by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

All ceremonial speeches should include the trio –narration, magnification, and identification.

Identification: Make everyone feel included

When thinking about your tribute or toast, don't just think about who or what you are celebrating. Think about everyone in the room and think about how to bring them into your speech. Saying “we” are here to honor the person (event, or thing) and reminding the audience of shared values helps the audience to be a part of the process. Say things that invite the audience in several times throughout the speech.

Wedding Toast

Instead of saying: Amy and I played Barbie as children and always made sure that Barbie found her perfect soulmate.

Say: *As many of you know*, Amy and I played Barbie for hours as children. What you may not know is we always made sure that Barbie found her perfect soulmate.

Graduation Toast

Instead of saying: I wish you the best in your journey ahead as you graduate and start your new career.

Say: *We here, your family and friends*, all wish you the best in your journey ahead as you graduate and start your new career

Retirement Toast

Instead of saying: Dad, I was so happy you let me come and play in your office even if I ran your stapler out of staples by shooting them at the invisible villains that were hiding under your desk.

Say: *As many of you here now*, dad would sometimes let me come to work with him. And while *most of you* thought that I was the perfect little bosses' kids, you may not have known that I was really a super hero executing the invisible villain that I found in dad's desk. I killed it with all the staples from dad's stapler.

Notice how this speaker invites all listeners to be part of the memorial.

I stand here today to pay tribute to the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building Bombing Memorial in Oklahoma City.

This memorial represents the honor and strength as well as all the **pain of every person** who remembers that historical day.

It has helped an **immense number of people** to cope with this national tragedy

It is a place of reflection, emotion, and healing.

In this excerpt, Drew speaks to all those who are present at the Doolittle Raider reunion (A reunion of men who in 1942 led the first attack after the bombing of Pearl Harbor)

Each of **us** in this room has our own memories of growing up with these men and the reasons why they are so **special to us**. For these men, it is an everyday occurrence that someone thanks them for their service to their country and what they did 65 years ago. So today is my pleasure **to share with you** the reason why these men are my heroes and why one of them impractically means the world to me.

I hope each of **you** will always remember the little things these men have done for **you**. L.M. Heroux once said "heroism is not just pulling a child from a burning house or a driver from an icy river or a kitten from a tall tree. Heroism is also holding the door for a frail elderly and driving courteously

and cooperatively and listening with an attentive heart to a friend's words. Small daily acts of love are as heroic as big once-in-a-lifetime acts of rescue.”

In this tribute to his teacher, “the greatest swing pusher” Hosea Born reminds the group of a common thing, finding your name on the desk.

Walking into a new teacher's classroom is terrifying. We have all been there. You remember. Finding your desk with your name on it. My name tag was an apple. Tribute to the best swing pusher.

Narration: Tell Stories that celebrate rather than inform

The use of story helps the audience to be drawn in and want to listen. In short toasts, you can tell a series of one-sentence stories. In larger toasts or tributes, you can tell one long story or numerous little stories. Tell your story in a way that the audience relives the moment with you.

Describe the situation or person in vivid detail so we can see the person you're celebrating in their element. Jeremy Stuthard gave a tribute to his Grandma and said they were “Two peas in a pod.” Notice how in one sentence you get a sense of grandma's humor and personality. from only one line, “I remember when you dumped a whole bucket of water on me, to wake me up, just to have me help you with your TV.” In another example, Patience Beard describes cooking with her grandma, “Nana ALWAYS let me lick the spoon. We would make icing all from scratch she would turn that mixer on and it would never fail– icing would fly everywhere and her laughwould echo through the whole room.” In each example, you can “see” the interaction in your mind. The speaker didn't tell you that his grandma was a trickster, he showed you that. Patience didn't tell you her grandma cooked for her, she “showed” you that she did.

People in the audience may not know the person you are celebrating. Resist the temptation to give an informative speech about your person, that is the equivalent of reading someone's Wikipedia biography–boring. Instead, pick a few things about them to celebrate.

In this tribute to his hometown dirt roads, Nathan Brock's speech is a good example. He tells us the facts without sounding like an informative speech, I kept this sample in a manuscript format so you could see the emphasis and the rhythm. When you see /// it means to pause.

So, here's to you, dirt roads

the defining feature of my hometown.

Here's to you, dirt roads, /// the place of my upbringing in middle-of-nowhere America.

Pawnee, Oklahoma is a town with many dirt roads

A town with a population of 2,136//

It felt like less.

When Googling “living in Pawnee, Oklahoma” one can find a list of pros and cons

Pros include “cost-of-living”

Cons include “unattractive setting”

That is where you came in, dirt roads.

Magnification: Teach lessons in the small things.

Take a trait of the individual and magnify it. This is NOT superfluous embellishment; this should be honest elaboration. For example, you might talk about

- Triumph over obstacles
- Unusual accomplishment
- Superior performance
- Unselfish motive
- Benefit to society
- The greatness of a simple thing

Caitlyn Steiner wrote a tribute speech about the love her grandparent have for each other. Notice how she uses the little things to demonstrate love.

Love appreciates the smallest details the most. My grandpa still puts the toothpaste on both their toothbrushes every morning. My grandma still hangs a towel on the rack for my grandpa every day after he gets in the shower. And they still slow dance together every night in the living room before they go to bed.

In this example, Fawn Kurtzo gives a birthday tribute to her brother Buck. As you read this manuscript excerpt, I want to draw your attention to the fact that each line is a story for those who know him.

We are gathered here today to celebrate another year in the life of Buck.
 Congratulations Buck? Who am I kidding, CONGRATULATIONS US!
 We all survived another year of
 10,000 questions why,
 mental duels,
 being outshot with bullets and arrows,
 countless times of side-splitting laughs as he carried the life of the party //
 begin terribly humiliated in a game of dominoes //
 and just flat being outlasted by this kid!

In tribute speeches, the little things are often the big things. A simple story can reveal something deeper. In this speech, Brittany Brunson is telling the story about riding in her dad’s lap, but really it is a metaphor for their relationship. I kept this in manuscript form so you couldn’t get a feel for how she intended it to be heard.

I don’t remember much from the age of 7//

But I do remember getting to sit on my dad's lap and driving down the alley.
I couldn't reach the pedals // so my dad was in charge of those//
Although I thought I was in charge of the wheel//
My dad had ultimate control because if I ever got to close to the wall of the alleyway //
my dad would steer me right back to the center.
Ironically, I never got in big trouble growing up
// except for maybe prank calling the police one time..... but anyways//
I never got in big trouble growing up because if I ever got close to that barrier of bad choices /// my dad
//steered me right back to the center.
Although I thought I had control of the wheel of my life
ultimately my dad guided me on to the right path //
that led me to hold myself to a higher standard // and stand firm in my beliefs.

Tributes and Toasts

Special occasion speeches (Toasts or Tributes) are celebratory speeches that honors a person, a monument, a holiday, or an event. Always adapt your speech to the occasion: Wedding, graduation, retirement, business celebration, award celebration, birthday.

Gather all the information

- Who is the audience?
- Are there other speakers?
- What is the time limit?
- Is this formal or informal?
- Will there be a podium? microphone?

You will give a different speech to your old college roommate on his birthday if it is just you and the gang versus if his conservative parents are in the room. It will be an even different speech if his new employer is present. Remember, a toast is not just about the person being celebrated but it is about others in the room. As you write your speech, keep imagining the key people present at the event.



Photo by [M.T. ElGassier](#), used under [Unsplash license](#) **What type of toast is it?**

Brainstorm

Sit down and just start jotting ideas. Think of your brain as a water faucet. You are not going to get any water until you turn the thing on. Many people complain they can't think of ideas, but they never actually turn on the idea faucet. Think of brainstorming as turning those ideas on and getting your creative juices flowing. Start brainstorming ideas and memories one day and then give it a day or two to think about more memories.

- What life lessons did they teach you? How are you different because of this person?
- What are their best qualities? Tell a story about that quality
- What three words best describe this person?
- What makes this person so great?
- What is the funniest thing that you remember?
- What are some sayings—one-liners—they are known for?
- What is something simple that they do that demonstrates their character?
- What is unique about her lifestyle or behavior?
- What is a special gift that they gave you and why is it so special?
- What adventure have you shared with this person?
- What's a story that everyone tells about this person?
- What helpful advice has this person given you?
- Look through a photo album—what one or two pictures tell about them ?

A toast or a tribute to a person typically includes one of these items:

- Small descriptions so we can “see” the person in their element.
- Stories of their deeds.
- Stories of how the person affected others.
- Funny or emotional moments.
- The legacy that person is leaving.

Tributes to occasions can be any of the following:

- Milestone Birthday, Retirement, Anniversary
- Mother's day, Father's Day, Truth and Reconciliation Day
- Race for the Cure, We Day
- Family reunion, School reunion

Tributes to occasions typically include:

- Emphasis on shared values
- Appreciation for the people involved
- Origin and evolution of the event
- Stories of people related to the event
- The larger context surrounding the event

Sit Down and Write

At this point, just get your ideas down. Put down more ideas than you will use. Allow yourself to write down some ideas that are silly, extreme, or not right for the occasion. Just go with it. Write all those ideas down; maybe you will use this somehow but probably not. Most importantly, the creative ideas are hiding in your brain behind the silly ones and if you don't get the silly ideas out of the way, you will never get to the next level.

Taking It to The Professional Level

If you want to give your toast the professional edge, try using a theme and then adding in some parallel construction. In this next section, I will show you how that works.

Use a Theme

Pick a theme for your toast and carry it throughout the whole toast or tribute. A theme is the container that holds the speech together.

For example, Drew gave a best man speech and used the theme of a road trip. He told stories of him and his best friend and their adventures (at least the adventures you the ones that you can tell when mom is in the room). He talked about fighting over which music is played, he told stories about bathroom breaks, and he confessed that his friend was always getting lost. These were fun stories and by hearing them we could all imagine the friendship they shared. In his speech, he told us that whoever was in the passenger seat was called the “roundtrip captain.” He gave the new bride advice on how to navigate the relationship since he knew so much about his friend from all these road trips. The speech wrapped up with Drew telling the bride that she was the map reader now and he passed to her the title of “road trip captain.”

Erin gave a graduation toast to her family members who supported her through college. She used the theme of climbing hills. It was the perfect theme since the University of Arkansas campus that she graduated from seems to be arranged so everything is uphill—both ways. She talked about walking the hills both physically

and symbolically. In her speech, she talked about how beautiful the view is from the top. She wrapped up her speech by saying now that she is graduated how she has new hills to climb.

Keep in mind the theme is just the container. If you have only a container, it will seem cliché and sound like a cheap greeting card. The theme is not the speech, it is the container that holds your many stories. Make sure to develop those stories.

Use Parallel Construction

Parallel construction is where you take one sentence and you repeat it. It lets you tell a lot of little stories in a short period. Always have at least 3 sentences, keep them together, and try to give them rhythm.

Consider this format and how it might be used for the different toast types.

At a Wedding Toast

I remember when ____

I remember when ____

I remember when ____

I knew you were the “one” because...

I knew you were the “one” because...

I knew you were the “one” because...

At a Retirement Toast

Many of you know dad for selling insurance, but I know dad for selling me on the idea to go to college

Many of you know dad for working long hours at the office, but I know dad for working long hours on school projects that I only mentioned to him the night before they were due.

Many of you know dad as a business profession, but I know dad as my super hero.

Many of you know dad for, but I know dad for

Many of you know dad for, but I know dad for

Many of you know dad for, but I know dad for

Toast Patterns

When picking a speech pattern for the toast, consider the audience and occasion. Many toasts are just one to two minutes while others can be five to seven minutes.

Short Toasts Pattern

1. Let us raise our glass to... Today, I would like to recognize...
2. Make a list of attributes/accomplishments of the person.

With each statement there is a building sensation –each statement you make is better than the next.

3. Build to a climax. Create a building sensation using parallel construction.
4. Raise your glass near the end.
5. End with a poem, quote, or wish them well. (I really think a well-chosen quote makes these speeches special...it is worth the time to look for one to make it really special)



Photo by [Mattheiu Joannon](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Note: Typically short toasts are memorized and longer toasts are written as a manuscript.

Wedding Toasts Possible Patterns

Give Their New Spouse the Manual of How to Get Along with Them

1. Tell a story or two about your friendship with your friend
2. Tell a story about when your friend met the person they are marrying. What did they say about this person? What were your first impressions? Tell anything about the two of them together? What are they like as a couple? How do you know they are right for each other? Tell something you observe about them when they are together?
3. Give the person advice on how to navigate life with your friend since you know them so well. Think of this as passing on the manual.

Three Stories

Tell three stories about the couple.

- Maybe, how they met, the engagement, and a story they tell on themselves.
- Maybe, three ways you know they are in love.
- Maybe, three things you noticed about how they care for each other.

I Knew It Was Love...

- Tell five ways that you knew it was love. Tell a story attached to each of the ways
- Tell what your friend was like before and how they are better now than they are with the one they love.

Note: Never mention old girlfriend/boyfriends, never give away secrets to clueless family members (they are living together, that you and your friend snuck out in high school), and always keep it positive. You likely have inside information about the person you are toasting—their wedding is not the time to reveal it.

Retirement Toast Possible Patterns

If you are a work colleague of the person retiring:

- These are the three things that set this person apart.
- These are the three things that I learned from this person.

If you are the child or the spouse of the person retiring:

- Talk about what their career looked like from your position. How were they dedicated?
- How did it help you benefit from their job and friends? What did you learn from watching them work?

Note: It can be fun to use their job as the theme. For example, if the person is a coach make the whole speech in the theme of a game. If the person is in sales, use marketing terms to hold it together. If they collected something interesting that was displayed in the office, it lends itself to the theme.

Graduation Toast Possible Patterns

Looking back, looking ahead

- Tell a few stories about them before graduation and tell what you expect to see in the future.

We've come through a lot together, Here's some advice for your next step.

- Tell stories of your relationship, how that relationship talks about character attributes that led them to graduate.
- Give advice on how to navigate the next step.

Top Ten List

- Ten things you need to know about (surviving college, having your first real job, etc.).
- This can be especially fun coming from the sibling that is in college to the one headed to college.
- Top ten things you learned in school that you can use in life.
- Top ten things about you that will make you successful.

Let Us Not Forget

- A series of memories that you and most of the group present share. Great for a group of friends
- Find some great meaning to it all. What did it all mean? what did you learn?

Note: It can be fun to use their major, their future job, or their hobbies as the theme.

Anniversary Toast Patterns

Three Stories

- Tell three stories about the couple.
- Maybe how they met, the engagement, and a story they tell on themselves.
- Maybe, three ways you know they are in love.

I Knew It Was Love...

- Tell five ways that you knew it was love and tell a story attached to each of the ways. Interview five of their friends and tell the five stories from their friends about love.

How They Taught You What Love Is

- What have you learned by watching them love each other well?

A Biography of Love

- Tell a story about their love when they met when they overcame when they did things together.
- Tell a timeline of love events and stories about every major milestone.

Ending a Toast Speech

Typically, a toast speech ends with a thoughtful saying, witty quote, or poem. There are many toast websites with great one-liners or short poems you can use to end a toast. If it is a longer toast, consider using a theme and connecting the ending with the theme.

“May misfortunes chase you all of your life and never catch up.”

“As you slide down the banister of life may the splinters never point the wrong way.”

Short, Short Toasts

There may be times you are called to give a quick, one to three-sentence toast. It is a good idea to have a few memorized quotes ready that can be woven into a short, short toast.

Here is to those who've seen us at our best and seen us at our worst and can't tell the difference.

May you live for as long as you want, and never want for as long as you live!

May we get what we want, but never what we deserve.

May you always lie, cheat, and steal. Lie beside the one you love, cheat the devil, and steal away from bad company.

Here's to friends and family who know us well but love us just the same.

Let us drink to bread, for without bread, there would be no toast.

Tell Stories

In this tribute speech to her father, she tells a story of how a Jewish man and a Muslim man can transcend boundaries and become friends.

Watch [A tribute to my father \(9 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Tribute Speech at We Day

Watch [Inspirational Native American Frank Waln tells his story at WE Day! \(3 mins\) on YouTube](#)

We Day was an annual series of stadium-sized youth empowerment events organized by We Charity, a Canadian charity founded by brothers Marc and Craig Kielburger. WE Day events host tens of thousands of students and celebrate the effect they have made on local and global issues.

Source: WE Movement. (2017, April 21). *Inspirational Native American Frank Waln tells his story at WE Day!* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/-2SE-19WqS8>

Watch [A tribute to all healthcare workers \(4 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Tribute to Famous Person

When giving a tribute to a famous person that you do not know personally, it is important to resist giving a biographical speech. Instead, you should talk about how that person influenced you in some way. The story of them becomes the story of you and them.

In his tribute to Stan Lee, David Lester wrote,

One of my earliest experiences with his work, is through his comics. When my mom would take forever shopping in Walmart, I would fly to the magazine section find those comic books and my time—— just—— evaporated.

Later he mentions the relationship again

The first Marvel movie I remember seeing saw was IRON MAN. I remember seeing Robert Downey Jr. beat up terrorists and change the way we see superheroes, not as just statues but as complex people like us.

In his conclusion, he brings it around to impact on all of us

BUT Do you wanna know who Stan thought the real superheroes were? It's not the ones we talk about all the time. It's not the ones that are played by Chris Evans, Chris Pratt, and Chris Hemsworth. NO! It's us, the fans. We were the heroes all along. Looking out for each other. Supporting people around us who needed it the most. Protecting others from harm. Standing as examples for our community for what we can become. Doing more than the average man would do. That one person can make a difference. That you don't need a cape just to be a hero. He brought us together. He did all of this.

Hilarious Father of the Bride Toast

This toast is a good example of how to tell a funny story in a speech. This father’s story is brilliant, and his long pauses are perfect for this speech. He goes from having you crying from laughter to tearing up with sentiment.

Watch [The most hilarious father of the bride toast \(7 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Key Takeaways

- **Remember This!**

- Spend a lot of time brainstorming, reflecting, researching, and talking to others before you begin to write.
- Write in a manuscript format.
- Structure your speech so your audience feels like they are part of something.
- Celebrate the person’s accomplishments and don’t make it an informative speech about them.
- Tells stories when possible.
- Try incorporating colourful language: Simile, metaphor, antithesis, alliteration, parallel construction.
- Consider using a theme that fits the person or the situation.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Toast Speech](#)” and “[Tribute Speech: Celebrate](#)”

[the Occasion, the Person, or the Monument](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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SPEAKING TO INFORM

Explaining Complex Ideas



Photo by [Stephen Kraakmo](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

The ability to share complicated ideas across disciplines and professions has significant benefits. A good informative speaker conveys accurate, clear, and interesting information to the audience and keeps them engaged in the topic. If information is inaccurate, incomplete, or unclear, it will be useless to the audience!

Before you present, know your purpose

You're not going to be able to tell the audience everything about your topic in your presentation, so you'll need to

be selective. Narrow your topic and focus on a specific goal, with your specific audience in mind. It is better to talk in detail about a smaller aspect than to try to tell everything. Prioritize information that enhances audience learning.

Ensure accuracy

Make sure that your information is current. Even if you know much about your topic or wrote a good paper on the topic in a previous course, verify your own accuracy and completeness. Most people understand that technology changes rapidly, so update your information often. The same applies to topics that on the surface seem to require less updating. Contemporary research continues to offer offers new insights on all topics, including historical events, classic literature and art, or psychological theories. So, even with a topic that seems to be unchanging, carefully check your information to confirm that it is accurate and current.

Also note, you're only as smart as your sources. Any information you use in your presentation should come from sources you've checked for validity.

Avoid Jargon

Limit how much technical language or jargon you use, even if you're speaking about a highly specialized topic. You will not effectively deliver information if your words are not clear to your audience. Even if you define many technical terms, the audience may feel as if they are being bombarded with definitions instead of useful information.

Don't treat your speech as a crash course in an entire topic. If you must, introduce one specialized term and carefully define and explain it to the audience. Define it in words, and then use a concrete and relevant example to clarify the meaning.

Know where to start

Adapt your message according to the listener's background and knowledge. Don't spend time with definitions that they do not need, but don't confuse them with information they don't understand. Fill in gaps in understanding by using relatable examples. When possible, ask your audience questions to check their understanding.

Make your speech personal. "I want to talk to *you* today about" is much more personal than saying, "I will explain how...".

Don't get "lost in the weeds" or "go too far down the rabbit hole"

Avoid overwhelming your audience with too much information. Focus on explaining a few key points clearly. Select the most significant aspects of your topic, and explain these by relating them to familiar concepts.

Stay focused on key ideas! If you overload your audience with information, they will be unable to follow your narrative. As you plan your presentation, carefully narrow your topic, and limit information to its most complete and coherent. Don't go off on tangents or confuse your audience. Use definitions, descriptions, explanations, and examples you need to make your meanings clear, but don't add tangential information merely because you find it interesting.

Prioritize Clarity

Keep your message clear and concise. Make a priority of giving your audience a basic understanding, rather than expanding on every intricate detail (Amorelli, 2019).

For your listeners to benefit from your speech, convey your ideas in a way that they can understand. Organize your message in a logical, easy-to-follow way.

To present a clear and interesting speech, use descriptions, causal analysis, or categories. With description, use words to create a picture in your audience's minds. Describe physical realities, social realities, emotional experiences, sequences, consequences, or contexts

Use words that your audience will understand and define terms that they may not know. Do not assume that something that's obvious to you will also be obvious to your audience. Formulate your

work with the objective of being understood in all details. In a community lecture on wild edible plants in the Ozarks, the speaker said, “This plant has a cathartic effect” and “I like this for its astringent properties.” An audience member wasn’t sure what these terms meant, so she looked them up while he was talking, missing part of his lecture (Lynn Meade).

Create Concrete Images

Abstract terms lend themselves to many interpretations. For instance, in the abstract, the term responsibility can mean many things, such as duty, task, authority, or blame. Because of the potential for misunderstanding, use a concrete word instead. For example, rather than saying, “Helen Worth was responsible for the project,” convey a clearer meaning by saying, “Helen Worth managed the project,” or “Helen Kimes completed the project,” or “Helen Worth was to blame for the failed project.”

To illustrate the differences between abstract and concrete language, let’s look at a few word pairs:

Table 1: Concrete and Abstract Word Pairs

Abstract words	Concrete words
transportation	air travel
success	completion of project
discrimination	exclusion of women
athletic	physically fit
profound	knowledgeable

By using an abstract term in a sentence and then comparing the concrete, notice the more precise concrete term’s meaning. Precise terms are more clearly understood. In the last pair of terms, knowledgeable is listed as a concrete term, but it can also be considered an abstract term. Still, it’s likely to be much clearer and more precise than profound.

Quick Check 1

Quick Check 1 (Text version)

As a speaker, create concrete images in your audiences' mind to help them understand your message, and avoid abstract language. What is a concrete image for transportation?

- a. A bird
- b. An airplane

Check Your Answer:¹

Activity source: “Quick Check 12.1” In *Public Speaking* by Sarah Billington and Shirene McKay, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Learn more about making your speech more clear and engaging with language: [Vivid and Sensory Words Make Your Speech Come Alive – Dynamic Presentations](#)

Emphasize why your topic is interesting and relevant

Share with your audience the reasons why you find the topic fascinating (Amorelli, 2019). Give them relevant, real-life examples that help them to connect the subject to their lives.

Your listeners will benefit the most if they can give sustained attention to the speech, and this won't happen if they are bored. Emphasize the ways your topic connects to your audience's interests and curiosities. Suppose, for example, that you had a summer job as a veterinary assistant and learned a great deal about canine parasites. This topic might be very interesting to you, but how interesting will it be to others in your class? To make this topic interesting, find a way to connect it with the audience's interests and curiosities. For instance, perhaps there are certain canine parasites that also pose risks to humans—this might be an interesting connection.

Always keep your audience members center stage. For instance, if your speech is about air pollution, ask your audience to imagine feeling their eyes and lungs burning from smog. This is a strategy for making the topic more real to them, since it may happen to them often; and even if it hasn't, it easily could.

Personalize Your Content

Giving a human face to a topic helps the audience perceive it as interesting. If your topic is related to the Maasai rite of passage into manhood, the prevalence of drug addiction in a particular locale, the development of a professional filmmaker, or the treatment of a disease, putting a human face on it should not be difficult. Find a case study you can describe within the speech and refer to the human subject by name. This conveys to the audience that these processes happen to real people. Use a real case study, though—don't make one up. Using a fictional character without letting your audience know that the example is hypothetical is a betrayal of the listener's trust, and hence, is unethical.

Quick Check 2

Quick Check 2 (Text version)

1. When creating any speech, but specifically an informative speech, make all topic information relevant and useful for your audience.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Disagree
2. Darrin is preparing a speech on World War II's D-day invasion. By researching in the library and online, he has found a really cool book by a British general published soon after the war and a bunch of old pictures. He thinks this is all he needs as source material. By relying only on potentially outdated sources, Darrin is likely to sacrifice which important element of informative speaking?

- a. Accuracy
- b. Immediacy

Check Your Answers:²

Activity source: “[Quick Check 12.2](#)” In *Public Speaking* by Sarah Billington and Shirene McKay, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Being Ethical

Honesty and credibility must be the undergird to your presentation; otherwise, you betray your listeners’ trust. Therefore, if you choose a topic that turns out to be too difficult, you must decide what will serve your audience’s needs and interests. Shortcuts and oversimplifications are not the answer.

Being ethical often involves a surprising amount of work. In the case of choosing too ambitious a topic, you have some choices:

- Narrow your topic further.
- Narrow your topic in a different way.
- Reconsider your specific purpose.
- Start over with a new topic.

Your goal is to serve your audience’s interests and needs, whoever they are and whether you believe they already know something about your topic.

Quick Check 3

Quick Check 3 (Text version)

For informative speech topics, speakers can choose from five different types: objects, people, events, concepts, and processes.

True or false?

Check Your Answer:³

Activity source: “Quick Check 12.3” In *Public Speaking* by Sarah Billington and Shirene McKay, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

How do I add logos?

For informative speeches, focus on the rhetorical appeal, logos. The appeals as you recall are pathos, ethos, and logos. Logos is the logical appeal. An easy way to remember this is that logos starts with an “L” and so does logic. How can you use logos or appeal to logic inside your informative speech?

Ask yourself these questions to consider if you are using logos properly in your informative speech:



Appeals-Highlighted, by Abigail Fuller, licensed under CC0

- Are you using statistics? If so, are you using them properly and making sure they are accurate?
- Are you stating facts that you have found through research, which are actually facts and not opinions?
- Are you explaining your ideas in a logical manner? Is your audience able to follow what you are saying?
- Are you using sound reasoning as you explain facts and statistics to your audience?
- Are you using definitions in the speech? If so, are they accurate?
- Are you thinking of the audience as a reasonable and logical group of individuals?
- Are you appealing to logic in your speech by using examples, statistics, facts, definitions, and explanations?
- Are you logically arranging and organizing ideas?
- Is your speech easy to understand? Will the audience understand your speech’s main points?

You must answer yes to most of these questions for any research-based and informative speech. And remember, do not forget to also add pathos and ethos to your speech as well.

Sharing Research and Engaging Audiences

Watch [Kang Lee's "Can you really tell if a kid is lying?" \(13 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Kang Lee presents his research, dispelling common beliefs about children and lying. Notice the ways he engages his listeners throughout, using several strategies:

Engaging Opening:

- Lee initiates audience involvement by posing a reflective question about childhood honesty, immediately engaging listeners.

Humour:

- Throughout the talk, humor is skillfully integrated, with Lee making lighthearted comments about audience honesty and sharing entertaining anecdotes.

Storytelling:

- Lee incorporates storytelling by narrating an anecdote about Mr. Richard Messina, an elementary school principal, effectively illustrating prevailing beliefs about children and lying.

Use of Visuals:

- The presentation includes impactful visuals, including videos of children responding to questions, enhancing the audience's understanding of the speaker's points.

Interactive Element:

- Audience participation is facilitated through video analysis, where attendees are asked to discern which child is lying, adding an interactive dimension to the presentation.

Rhetorical Questions:

- Strategic use of rhetorical questions stimulates audience thinking and engagement, fostering a more dynamic interaction.

Statistics and Research Findings:

- Credibility is bolstered through the integration of statistics and research findings, such as percentages of children lying at different ages.

Contrast and Surprise:

- Lee challenges conventional beliefs about children and lying, revealing surprising research findings to capture and maintain the audience's attention.

Repetition for Emphasis:

- Key points are reinforced through repetition, emphasizing the importance of certain concepts throughout the talk.

Application of Findings:

- Lee discusses real-world applications of lie-detection technology, highlighting its relevance in education, healthcare, and politics.

Call to Action:

- The talk concludes with a compelling call to action, prompting the audience to reflect on the broader implications of the presented technology and its potential impact on various aspects of life.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Chapter 12: Informative Speaking](#)” In *Public Speaking* by Sarah Billington and Shirene McKay, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#). / A derivative of “[Informative Speaking](#)” In *Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking* by University of Minnesota, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#).

Small portions are adapted from “[Informative Speech](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

References

Amorelli, J. (2019, Nov 19). How to explain anything to anyone. 4 steps to clearer communication. *TED*.
<https://ideas.ted.com/how-to-explain-anything-to-anyone-4-steps-to-clearer-communication>

Notes

1. b. An airplane
2. 1. a., 2. a.
3. True

PERSUASIVE SPEECHMAKING: MOTIVATING CHANGE

Audience Needs are Key

According to Professor Clay Warren, a common mistake you might make is focusing on what *you* want to say rather than considering what *the audience* needs to hear.

Before delivering a persuasive speech, take the time to gather information about the audience and the event. Envision the faces of the audience and understand who they are and what motivates them to listen. Then, think about how their message can improve the lives of the audience in some way.

Once you have a clear mental picture of the audience, you can begin to write the speech.



Photo by [Melyna Valle](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

The Audience Needs to “See” to be Persuaded

If you are persuading an audience to buy a product, they need to visualize how it works and how it fits into their life. If you are persuading an audience to make a social change, they need to visualize how the world will be better because of this change. If you are persuading an audience to donate to an organization, you need to help the audience visualize the impact of their donation.

Visualization can be achieved by literally showing visuals, by demonstrating the product, or by telling a story.

Oftentimes a story will help awaken emotions in an audience. This is known as **pathos**. Pathos is the passion of the speaker and the types of things that the speaker talks about. Warren reminds us “facts go through your brain like water through a sieve. But a story creates an emotional connection. If you get the emotion, you will remember. It is harder to attach an emotion to a number.”

The Audience Needs to Be Given the Facts in a Way that

They Can Understand, Relate, and Remember

Yes, you want to identify with an audience and help them feel something, but you also need facts in your speech. You need to do the research and you need to present the arguments. Keep in mind — facts alone are rarely persuasive. It is the *way you present those facts* that makes them persuasive. When giving your numbers, pair them with a story. When giving statistics, help the audience to visualize them.

Make sure you chose to talk about facts that match the audience. For some, the review of a social media influencer is more convincing than the reviews from a publication. For an academic audience, the names of the researchers and the names of the journals they publish in will garner attention, but for other audiences, the title of the person as “cardiologist at a top research institute” would be more persuasive.

The Audience Needs to Trust You

Credibility is key to the success or failure of a presenter. The whole speech rests on credibility, if they don't trust you, they won't listen. You build your credibility by how you are dressed, how you are introduced, how you tell the audience why you are competent in this area helps the audience listen. In my story, our credibility came from the name of the big company that used our parts.

Your credibility helps create trust and trust is essential to persuasion.

Ethos: Credibility

Ethos (credibility) is all about your character, your intentions, your good judgment, as well as your respect for yourself, your speech, and your audience. Aristotle said there are three components of ethos and all three should be employed.

- **Phronesis** (froh-nee-sis) practical wisdom. Prudence. It implies good judgment and excellence of character and habits.
” To do the right thing in the right place, at the right time, in the right way.” -Carr
- **Arete** (ah-reh-‘tay) is the moral virtue of your argument. It refers to excellence of any kind but when applied to speech it means to persuade in a morally virtuous way.

- **Eunoia** (you-noh-ia) is the goodwill you establish. It is what happens when a speaker considers the audience and cultivates a relationship of trust with them.

Watch [How can you change someone's mind? \(hint: facts aren't always enough\) – Hugo Mercier \(3 mins\) on YouTube](#) for the connection between what we have just discussed on credibility and audience needs.

Make it Do-Able

Persuasion needs to be doable. Be specific with what you want the audience to do. Are you wanting them to consider an opposing viewpoint? Are you wanting them to donate blood? Are you wanting them to give to a charity? Are you wanting them to see the value of a liberal arts education? Are you wanting them to buy your product? Tell them specifically what you want.

To make your persuasion effective, you need to make it achievable by being specific about the desired action from your audience. This could be encouraging them to consider an opposing viewpoint, donating blood, giving to a charity, seeing the value of a liberal arts education, or buying your product.

Giving realistic goals is another way to make it achievable. For example, a health and fitness program aimed at promoting healthy practices would be more successful if it encouraged participants to do chair yoga at their desk or add one more serving of fruit or vegetable to their diet, rather than asking them to run five miles a day. Similarly, in sales or donor engagement, it's important to set realistic goals based on the audience's financial means or stock only the most popular items to test customer satisfaction.

Lastly, telling the audience how to accomplish what you've asked for will make it easy for them to comply. For example, if you are promoting a tourist attraction, you could show them on a map where it's located, share pictures of the experience, and tell them what to pack. By providing visual aids, you can help your audience to better visualize themselves doing it and increase their likelihood of following through with your request.

Overcome Objections

When you're trying to sell something or persuade someone, it's important to be prepared for objections. In a one-on-one sales pitch, you might ask, "Is there anything that's holding you back?" When you're giving a persuasive presentation, you can do the same thing, but in a more subtle way.

Think of getting a flu shot – you’re given a small dose of the flu to build immunity for the future. In the same way, giving someone a small dose of an opposing argument can help them prepare for future persuasion attempts. This is called **inoculation theory**.

You can do this by **forewarning** your audience of what they might hear from the other side. For example, if you’re trying to persuade someone to try chiropractic treatment for headaches, you might say, “You may hear that chiropractors are just trying to get your money, but my own experience has been...” By warning them and helping them think about how they might argue for their side, you’re building their immunity.

Another way to overcome objections is by preemptively addressing counterarguments. This is called *refutational preemption*. Think about what objections your audience might have and address them in your presentation. For instance, if you’re trying to sell aftermarket diesel engine parts, you might imagine they’ll object because your product isn’t a name-brand. In response, you could say, “Let me tell you why the quality of our product is equal to the competition” and show them data and statistics.

When you’re inoculating your audience, make sure you don’t make the other side’s argument too strong, or they might end up agreeing with them. Also, don’t misrepresent the other side’s position, as that would be unethical and could hurt your credibility.

Try This

When working on a persuasive presentation ask several people, “Why might someone object to this?” or “Why might someone not want to try this?” When they answer. Resist the temptation to justify. Don’t be defensive, just listen and write down the things they say. Go back to your speech and see how you might preemptively deal with those objections in your presentation.

Look for Agreement

When someone says, “No.” Their whole body begins to disagree. They may lock their jaw, squint their eyes, or cross their arms. Keeping your speech positive and seeking agreement can draw an audience into your topic. Dale Carnegie in his famous book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* suggested getting the audience to say, “Yes” multiple times. Even better if they nod yes as well. “Can we agree tuition is too high—yes. Can we agree it is hard to eat healthy as a college student—yes. Can we all agree...fill in the blank...yes?”

Begin with the End in Mind

When thinking about your persuasion speech, ask yourself how you will measure success? Success in speech class should always be more than the grade you earned. Earnestly try to persuade your classmates of something that will make their lives better.

For example, a student group successfully convinced the city to add a traffic signal in front of their college, potentially saving lives. Another student recommended a weekend trip to Quebec City and several classmates followed through, thanking them for the recommendation. Measurable success can also come from changing attitudes, even if it's not immediately tangible. Sometimes success means simply getting the word out or planting a seed that will eventually persuade others. Make sure to write down your desired outcome and what you hope to achieve with your speech.

Always begin with the end in mind.

At this point, watch a persuasive speech and draw your attention to a few key elements. This video has to be watched on the TED YouTube channel.

Persuasion to Change Your Behaviour

Watch [Less stuff, more happiness \(6 mins\) on TED](#)

I'm not saying that we all need to live in 420 sq. ft. But consider the benefits of an edited life. Go from 3,000 to 2,000, from 1,500 to 1,000. Most of us, maybe all of us, are here pretty happily for a bunch of days with a couple of bags, maybe a small space, a hotel room. So when you go home and you walk through your front door, take a second and ask yourselves, "Could I do with a little life editing? Would that give me a little more freedom? Maybe a little more time?"

NOTICE

He tells you what he wants you to do, and he makes it do-able. Notice how he slows down and changes his voice and the ending as he delivers his last words—"Good stuff."

Source: Hill, G. (2011). *Less stuff, more happiness* [Video]. TED. https://www.ted.com/talks/graham_hill_less_stuff_more_happiness

Culture Makes a Difference

There are a lot of demographic differences that can influence how a person is persuaded, and an important one of those is culture. I want to focus on the biggest three cultural differences that can influence how you approach a persuasive speech.

Individualism vs Collectivism

- Individualistic cultures stress the value of “I.” People in individualist cultures typically value independence and uniqueness and are socialized to see themselves as separate and distant.
- Collectivistic cultures stress the value of “we.” People in collectivistic cultures value group membership. They tend to work towards the good of the group and are more compliant with authority.
- A speech that tells the audience how to be independent or how to stand out above the crowd would appeal more to an individualistic audience where a speech that tells the audience how they can fit in and be part of the group would appeal more to a collectivistic culture.
- One study showed the difference in detergent ads. “Cleans with a softness that you will love” was preferred by individualistic societies vs “Cleans with a softness your family will love” was preferred by collectivistic societies.

High vs Low Context

- Low context cultures tend to be direct and linear. There is an emphasis on facts as the most important.
 - High context cultures tend to be indirect. Because of the indirectness, it may be harder to “read” the situation unless you have taken time to get to know the individual.
 - Doctor recommended would appeal more to high context individuals where a focus on the features and advantages of the product would be more persuasive to low context individuals.
 - A speech that is very specific and direct would appeal to a low context culture where a speech that implies or “hints” would appeal more to a high context culture.
-

Persuasive Speech Pattern: Monroe's Motivated Sequence

There are many patterns you can use as you create your speech. We'll concentrate on Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

This model, designed by Alan Monroe, was originally designed for policy speeches but has been expanded to other types. Sales presenters take note, this one may be for you. Participants in one study appreciated this format because of how organized it makes presentations.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

Attention:

Begin by capturing the audience's attention with a grabbing statement, a preview, and a credibility statement. For instance, if the speech is about the importance of healthy eating, the speaker could start with a startling fact such as, "Did you know that poor nutrition contributes to over 11 million deaths globally each year? As a certified nutritionist with 10 years of experience, I'm here today to shed light on the importance of making healthier food choices."

Need:

This step aims to create a sense of urgency or establish a need for change. Present evidence or examples that highlight the need. Continuing with the topic of healthy eating, the speaker could provide statistics on the rising rates of obesity and chronic diseases caused by poor diets, emphasizing the negative impact on individuals' health and quality of life.

Satisfaction:

In this step, you satisfy the need with a plan to address it. Present concrete steps or strategies that can satisfy the need established in the previous step. In the context of healthy eating, the speaker could discuss the benefits of a balanced diet and propose practical tips for incorporating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains into daily meals.

Visualization:

Help the audience visualize the benefits of implementing the proposed solution. Paint a vivid picture of the positive outcomes that can be achieved. Using the healthy eating example, the speaker might describe how individuals who adopt healthier eating habits experience increased energy, improved mood, and reduced risk of chronic diseases. Additionally, they could share success stories of individuals who have made positive changes to their diets and reaped the rewards.

Action:

Tell the audience exactly what you want them to do. This step includes reviewing the main points, providing a specific call to action, and delivering a closing statement. In the case of promoting healthy eating, the speaker could summarize the key benefits of adopting a balanced diet, urge the audience to start making small changes immediately, such as replacing sugary drinks with water, and conclude with an empowering statement like, “Together, let’s take charge of our health and make nutritious choices for a better future.”

Applying Monroe’s Motivated Sequence to persuade an audience

Watch [Overworking’s impact on life: The importance of balance \(6 mins\) on YouTube](#)

In this presentation created for *Dynamic Presentations* at Georgian College, Joshua Morgan uses Monroe’s motivated sequence to persuade his audience to try to establish a healthy work-life balance. He starts by grabbing his listener’s attention and highlighting the negative consequences of overworking; then, he moves on to establish the need for a better way of working. Next, he presents the solution – a work-life balance – and emphasizes its benefits. Finally, he provides some strategies for his audience to achieve a work-life balance and emphasizes the importance of self-care. His message is that we can change our own lives and those of others by not following society’s norms of overworking.

Source: Morgan, J. (2023). *Overworking’s impact on life: The importance of balance* [Video]. <https://youtu.be/pyYtSWkVmSc>

Words are powerful. When you are given the privilege of standing before a group of people, they have given you the gift of time. You owe it to them to give them something worthwhile. You now have some powerful persuasive tools, use them wisely, apply them ethically.

The Science of Persuasion



Photo by [Campaign Creators](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Don't raise your voice, improve your argument.

— Desmond Tutu, human rights activist

Understanding persuasive strategies, like the Elaboration Likelihood model and Judgement Heuristics can help you develop your approach to your next persuasive speech. By applying these principles effectively, you can strategically approach your presentation to address the audience's needs.

Elaboration Likelihood Model

The Elaboration Likelihood Model, developed by Petty and Cacioppo, explains how persuasion works in different situations. It suggests that there are two routes to persuasion. When we think carefully about our decisions, considering personal involvement and relevance, we are taking **the central route**. On the other hand, when we don't think deeply due to various factors like the situation, mood, or the insignificance of the decision, we are taking **the peripheral route**. The peripheral route involves making decisions based on factors other than deep thought, such as authority.

Understanding these different routes of persuasion can help you design effective persuasive arguments for your speech. It's important to decide whether you want to engage in thoughtful persuasion or peripheral persuasion.

Elaboration Likelihood Model–What’s the Big Idea?



Central path considers cost, insurance, safety, reliability, reviews, Fuel efficiency. Peripheral path considers colour, fluffy dice, sex appeal, looking wealthy and big wheels. “Routes of ELM” by [Joe1992](#), licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

- If you want your persuasion to be long-lasting, persuade them via the central route. Offer facts, data, and solid information
- If you want a quick persuasion where they don’t put much thought into it or if your audience is not very knowledgeable, tired, or unmotivated, persuade them by the peripheral route.

Judgmental Heuristics

As you use persuasive strategies, be careful to avoid common fallacies.

[Fallacies–Warning! Deceptive,](#)

In Elaboration Likelihood Model, we find that people are persuaded in one of two ways– because they are thinking about it–the central route–or they are not thinking about it–peripheral.

Judgmental heuristics, as researched by Robert Cialdini, refer to mental shortcuts or rules of thumb that people use to make quick judgments or decisions. These heuristics are cognitive strategies that

help simplify complex information processing and enable individuals to make rapid assessments or choices based on limited information.

Cialdini identified several specific judgmental heuristics, including:

[Hateful Speech Coming Your Way – Dynamic Presentations](#)

Authority

People tend to rely on the expertise, status, or credibility of an authority figure or source to make judgments or decisions. This heuristic leads individuals to assume that information or recommendations from authoritative sources are more valid or accurate.

Liking

People are persuaded by those they like—that is obvious. What is not so obvious are the ways that liking can be enhanced—similarity, compliments, and concern. People are more likely to like people who dress like them. If you are giving a speech to a group in ties, you should dress formally. If the group is more of a T-shirt and khakis type, you shouldn't dress as formally. People like people who are similar. By researching your audience well, you can find ways to look for common ground.

Another way to enhance liking is with a sincere compliment. I'm not talking about a cheesy, overly flattering type. I am also not suggesting that you lie. I am saying that you can find something to like about them and let them know. In her TED Talk, Lizzie Valasquez had a very enthusiastic front row and she looked down and said, “You guys are like the best little section right here.” Finally, people like those who are passionately concerned about an issue. As a speaker, don't aim to be perfect, aim to be passionate.

Commitment Consistency

Commitment/consistency has to do with finding something that people are already demonstrating a commitment to and then encouraging them to act in a consistent manner. People tend to align their behaviors, beliefs, and choices with their past commitments or previous actions. If you see someone carrying a water bottle, you can say, “I see you are committed to health. I notice you take that bottle with you to all your classes. I would like you to think about one more thing that can influence your health.” In this example, you find something that a person is committed to and you encourage them to be consistent.

When you research your audience, find things that they care about and touch on those as you encourage them to be consistent. When I spoke to community groups as a fundraiser, I would look up their mission and it often involved something about helping people so I might say, “I see from your mission that you are community-minded. I would like to share with you one more way that you can carry your mission into this community by helping.”

Social Proof

People look to other people to know how to act. This heuristic is based on the assumption that if many others are doing something, it must be the correct or appropriate course of action.

If you are doing a persuasive speech on a product, you can ethically persuade using social proof by showing how many stars a product has or you could read a poll about how many people support a measure. You can also interview those who are similar to your audience and then report back your findings. Talking about what Instagram and YouTube influencers believe can be powerful if it is someone the audience cares about.

Each of these judgmental heuristics carries with it the danger of abuse, so it is important to be ethical in your use of persuasion. I would be remiss if I didn't mention to you that when it comes to social proof, it can become a bandwagon fallacy. Take for example fad diets. Just because they are popular, doesn't mean they are healthy. Just because everyone thinks it is true, that doesn't mean that it is true. When persuading using social proof, we want to ethically show why others like something and avoid the bandwagon fallacy which assumes that just because a lot of people like something that it must be good.

Scarcity

People hate to miss out on things which is why scarcity as a persuasive tool is so powerful. Scarcity can happen because there is not very much of something, (limited numbers) or there is not very long to get it, (limited time) or the information is restricted (limited information). As a speaker, you can encourage your audience to act immediately because the deadline is coming soon or to buy a product because they are likely to sell out.

People hate to have their options limited. "Don't tell me I can't have it because then I want it." Researchers talk about this in terms of psychological reactance. Psychological reactance is a heightened motivational state in reaction to having our freedoms restricted. This, in part, explains why ammunition sales skyrocket under the threat of gun control measures and why teenagers fall even more madly in love when parents forbid them to date. Leveraging psychological reactance ethically can be tricky, but it can be done. "There are just 20 more days until the election to research your candidate" or "concert tickets usually sell out the first few hours so if you want to go you have to be ready." These are honest statements that can encourage the audience to act.

Reciprocity

We feel obligated to repay others when they do us a favour or give us a gift. We're more likely to do something for someone who has previously done something for us.

Jane McGonigal in her TED Talk, *The Game that Can Give You 10 Extra Years of Life*, said: So, here's my special mission for this talk: I'm going to try to increase the life span of every single person in this room by seven and a half minutes. Literally, you will live seven and a half minutes longer than you would have

otherwise, just because you watched this talk.” She is promising to give us something in exchange for our time so we feel the pressure to listen.

Unity

People want to feel a sense of unity with a group. This group can be everything from their favorite sports team to whether they or dog or cat lovers. Finding ways to help the audience feel like a special group or like they are part of something, can be important to persuasion. “Join the club,” “be one of us,” “as Razorback’s we all feel...” are examples of how that is used. Another way to activate the principle of unity is to use insider language (if you are part of the group if not, it comes off as sucking up or cheesy).

Judgmental Heuristics—What’s the Big Idea?

- People take shortcuts when making decisions: authority, liking, commitment and consistency, social proof, scarcity, reciprocity, unity.
- It is important to be ethical when you use shortcuts.

*You cannot reason people out of a position
that they did not reason themselves into.*
— Ben Goldacre, *Bad Science*

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- Audience needs are key.
- The audience needs to “see” to be persuaded.
- Credibility is essential.
- Persuasion needs to be doable.
- Look for agreement.
- Overcoming objections.
- Consider how you will measure success.
- Consider cultural differences.
- The Elaboration Likelihood Model assumes that people are persuaded via a thinking (central) or nonthinking (peripheral) route.
- Judgmental Heuristics is using shortcuts to decide. These shortcuts are authority, commitment/consistency, unity, reciprocity, liking, scarcity, social proof.

Attribution & References

The from this chapter is adapted from “[Persuasive Speechmaking: Pitching Your Idea and Making it Stick](#)” and “[The Science of Persuasion: A Little Theory Goes a Long Way](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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RESEARCH AND CITATIONS

Dynamic Presentations by Amanda Quibell

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In this chapter...

- [Using and Citing Images](#)
- [What does it mean to use sources ethically?](#)
- [Research: Finding and Citing Your Research](#)

USING AND CITING IMAGES

Using other people's images

You can use your own images in your presentations. You can also use downloaded images, but be careful to use copyright-free images, and credit them properly.

Many images that you see online are copyrighted, meaning you can't use them without the creator's permission. A lot of those images have watermarks to make sure people don't use them, or pay to use them. Don't use watermarked images—it's illegal and unethical. A watermark looks like this:



A watermark often states the name of the photography collection or the word Copyright, and is layered over top of the image to create a visual cue that the image is not free. Image courtesy of Lucinda Atwood

Where to find images

Many high-quality images are freely available online. Carefully check your image to ensure it is marked as *free to use*, as many of these collections often offer images for purchase! Here are some places to find them:

1. [OpenVerse \[New tab\]](#)
2. [Pexels \[New tab\]](#)
3. [Unsplash \[New tab\]](#)
4. [Pixabay \[New tab\]](#)
5. [Flicker – Creative Commons license \[New tab\]](#)

6. [Google \[New tab\]](#): Enter your search words and click *Search*. Then click *Images*, and *Tools* (underneath the search bar). Then click *Usage Rights* and select *Creative Commons Licenses*.

How to give credit

Always give credit to the creators of anything you didn't create – including images, charts, graphs, video, audio and gifs. You don't need to credit anything you made, but you might want to include a note so your instructor knows it's your creation.

1. Provide the credit **on the slide where the image appears**.
2. Include a final slide that includes the full [APA reference list entry](#).

Free to use with no attribution required

In an APA style paper, you should provide a figure number and title before the image. Figure numbers and titles for images like the example below are OPTIONAL for presentations (like PowerPoint).

Figure 1: *Dog sitting in front of a book*



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The [APA Style book](#) indicates that when you use a [clip art or a stock image](#), that says “No Attribution required” a citation is optional. Because Unsplash provides author information, even though it’s not mandatory, it’s considered good practice to list the details that are provided with the image. In this case, “[Photo by Jamie Street](#) used under [Unsplash license](#)” can be included on your slide.

Image that requires attribution

Figure 1: *Butterfly*.



From Butterfly [Photograph], by John Fowler, 2011, Flickr. (<https://flic.kr/p/acU6L8>). [CC BY 2.0](#).

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- From *Title* [Photograph], by creator's name, date, source (url). Creative Commons information.
- Figure Number and Title, like the ones shown above, are optional on your slides

On your final reference slide, you should include a reference list entry that includes Author, Initial. (date). Title. [Descriptor]. Source. url.

Example:

Fowler, J. (2011). *Butterfly*. [Photograph]. Flickr. <https://flic.kr/p/acU6L8>

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO USE SOURCES ETHICALLY?

Avoid Plagiarism

If the idea isn't yours, cite the information source during your speech. Listing the citation on a bibliography or reference page is only half of the correct citation. You must provide correct citations for all your sources within your speech as well. In a very helpful book called *Avoiding Plagiarism: A Student Guide to Writing Your Own Work*, Menager-Beeley and Paulos (2009) provide a list of twelve strategies for avoiding plagiarism:

1. **Do your own work, and use your own words.** One of the goals of a public speaking class is to develop skills that you'll use in the world outside academia. When you are in the workplace and the real world, you'll be expected to think for yourself, so start learning this skill now.
2. **Allow yourself enough time to research the assignment.** Not having adequate time to prepare is no excuse for plagiarism.
3. **Keep careful track of your sources.** A common mistake people make is that they forget where information came from when they start creating the speech itself. When you log your sources, you're less likely to inadvertently lose sources and to cite them incorrectly.
4. **Take careful notes.** It doesn't matter what method you choose for taking research notes, but whatever you do, be systematic to avoid plagiarizing.
5. **Assemble your thoughts, and make it clear who is speaking.** When creating your speech, make sure that you clearly differentiate your voice in the speech from your quoted author's voice. The easiest way to do this is to create a direct quotation or a paraphrase. Remember, audience members cannot see where the quotation marks are located within your speech text, so clearly articulate with words and vocal tone when you are using someone else's ideas within your speech.
6. **If you use an idea, a quotation, paraphrase, or summary, then credit the source.** We can't reiterate it enough—if it is not your idea, tell your audience where the information came from. Giving credit is especially important when your speech includes a statistic, an original theory, or a fact that is not common knowledge.
7. **Learn how to cite sources correctly, both in the body of your paper and in your reference or works-cited page.**

8. **Quote accurately and sparingly.** A public speech should be based on factual information and references, but it shouldn't be a string of direct quotations strung together. Experts recommend that no more than 10 percent of a paper or speech be direct quotations (Menager-Beeley & Paulos, 2009). When selecting direct quotations, always ask yourself if the material could be paraphrased in a manner that would make it clearer for your audience. If the author wrote a sentence in a way that is just perfect, and you don't want to tamper with it, then by all means directly quote the sentence. But if you're just quoting because it's easier than putting the ideas into your own words, this is not a legitimate reason for including direct quotations.
9. **Paraphrase carefully.** Modifying an author's words is not simply a matter of replacing some of the words with synonyms. Instead, as Howard and Taggart explain in *Research Matters*, "paraphrasing force[s] you to understand your sources and to capture their meaning accurately in original words and sentences" (Howard & Taggart, 2010). Incorrect paraphrasing is one of the most common ways that students inadvertently plagiarize. First and foremost, paraphrasing is putting the author's argument, intent, or ideas into your own words.
10. **Do not patchwrite or patchspeak.** Menager-Beeley and Paulos define patchwriting as "mixing several references together and arranging paraphrases and quotations to constitute much of the paper. In essence, the student has assembled others' work with a bit of embroidery here and there but with little original thinking or expression" (Menager-Beeley & Paulos, 2009). Just as students can patchwrite, they can also patchspeak. In patchspeaking, students rely completely on weaving together quotations and paraphrases in a manner that is devoid of the student's original thinking.
11. **Do not auto-summarize.** Some students have learned that most word processing features have an auto-summary function. The auto-summary function will summarize a ten-page document into a short paragraph.
12. **Do not rework another student's speech or buy paper-mill papers or speech-mill speeches.** In today's Internet environment, there are numerous student-speech storehouses on the Internet. Whether you use a speech that is freely available or pay money for a speech, you are plagiarizing. This is also true if your speech's main substance was copied from a web page. Any time you try to present someone else's ideas as your own during a speech, you are plagiarizing.
13. **Do not rely on Artificial Intelligence, such as Chat GPT,** to generate your speech. When you rely on ChatGPT or a similar program to create your script, you are not engaging in the active learning process that is necessary for building knowledge and developing your own ideas. Also, machine learning models are known to generate inaccurate or incomplete information; these tools cannot understand all the details of your assignments or your professor's expectations, or their field of study.

Source: Adapted from Menager-Beeley, R., & Paulos, L. (2009). *Understanding plagiarism: A student guide to writing your own work*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, pp. 5–8. / Adapted to include ChatGPT/Artificial Intelligence.

Use Sources Ethically In a speech

Ways to use sources ethically in a speech:

1. **Avoid plagiarism**, as we already discussed.
2. **Avoid Academic Fraud** – While there are numerous websites from which you can download free speeches for your class, this is tantamount to fraud. If you didn't do the research and write your own speech, then you are fraudulently trying to pass off someone else's work as your own. In addition to being unethical, many institutions have student codes that forbid such activity. Penalties for academic fraud can be as severe as suspension or expulsion from your institution.
3. **Don't Mislead Your Audience** – If you know a source is clearly biased, and you don't spell this out for your audience, then you are purposefully trying to mislead or manipulate your audience. Instead, if you believe the information to be biased, tell your audience and allow them to decide whether to accept or disregard the information.
4. **Give Author Credentials** – Always provide the author's credentials. In a world where anyone can say anything and have it published on the Internet or even in a book, we have to be skeptical of the information we see and hear. For this reason, it's very important to provide your audience with background information about your cited authors' credentials.
5. **Use Primary Research Ethically** – Lastly, if you are using primary research within your speech, you need to use it ethically as well. For example, if you tell your survey participants that the research is anonymous or confidential, then make sure that you maintain their anonymity or confidentiality when you present those results. Furthermore, be respectful if someone says something is off the record during an interview. Always maintain participants' privacy and confidentiality during primary research unless you have their express permission to reveal their names or other identifying information.



“Arrows Direction Way”, by Geralt, licensed under Pixabay License

Quick Check 1

Quick Check 1 (Text version)

1. One way to use sources ethically in a speech is to do what?
 - a. Make sure to cite yourself in a speech that you are giving.
 - b. Give the author's credentials.

2. There are serious penalties for plagiarism at Georgian and in this class, but what is plagiarism in a speech?
 - a. Any time you try to present your own ideas and don't give yourself the credit during your speech.
 - b. Any time you try to present someone else's ideas as your own during a speech, you are plagiarizing.

Check Your Answers:¹

Activity source: "Quick Check 7.6" In *Public Speaking* by Sarah Billington & Shirene McKay, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

How do I establish ethos?

Establishing ethos—one of the three rhetorical appeals—is achieved by including authoritative evidence or research inside of your speech. You establish ethos as well through your credibility and ethics as a speaker.

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you prepare to establish ethos for any speech:

Credibility

- Does the audience see you as topic-credible? What have you done or said to ensure this?
- What makes you credible? Do you explain your credibility to the audience in the speech?
- Can the audience trust you? What reason have you given them to trust you?

Authoritative Sources

- Do you cite your authoritative sources out loud in your speech?
- Are your sources actually authoritative for this topic?
- What makes your sources authoritative? Do you explain that to your audience?

Appearance

- Does your dress, clothing, and appearance match the topic, occasion, and audience for your speech?
How might your audience perceive your appearance from your perspective?

You must be able to answer all of these questions with a yes and a good explanation. The audience should clearly hear and see your ethos in your speech.

Quick Check 2

Quick Check 2 (Text version)

As you are thinking about your ethos in your speech, you think about these three areas:

- Credibility, no sources needed, and the audiences' appearance.
- Credibility, authoritative sources, and appearance.

Check Your Answer:²

Activity source: “Quick Check 7.7” In *Public Speaking* by Sarah Billington & Shirene McKay, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

Attribution & References

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References

- University of Minnesota. (2016). *Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking*. University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. <https://open.lib.umn.edu/publicspeaking/>. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.
- Howard, R. M., & Taggart, A. R. (2010). *Research matters*. McGraw-Hill, p. 131.
- Menager-Beeley, R., & Paulos, L. (2009). *Understanding plagiarism: A student guide to writing your own work*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, pp. 5–8.

Notes

1. 1. b, 2. b
2. b. Credibility, authoritative sources, and appearance.

RESEARCH: FINDING AND CITING YOUR RESEARCH



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*Supposing is good,
but finding out is better.*

Mark Twain, writer

In this chapter, we'll talk about how to be smart when searching for research, how to judge if the research is good, how to put it into your speech without sounding awkward, and how to tweak your reference page to fit the occasion. This book is for people who already know the basics of finding research. The aim here is to encourage you to go further with research and to think about how you can use your research in different ways, depending on the situation.

Advanced Tips on Research

1. Brainstorm

You should thoroughly brainstorm your topic in writing before you ever begin researching. Make a list of possible words you would look up. Anytime you do this type of brainstorming, your goal should be to have at least 20 words.

For example, if you wanted to give an informative speech on the impact of a teacher's body language on student learning, you might look up any of these words:

1. body language
2. nonverbal
3. immediacy behaviors
4. gestures
5. eye contact
6. oculesics
7. personal space
8. dress
9. proxemics
10. education
11. educator
12. teaching
13. teacher
14. university
15. pedagogy
16. college
17. classroom
18. learning

19. student

20. evaluations

2. Research Your Topic Broadly

Vary your research by looking up different types of research from different types of sources. Don't just "google it." Look up books on the topic, look up art on the topic, look up statistics on the topic, use a library periodical search engine on your topic. Resist the temptation to do just one type of research!

You should also diversify your research. Look at the authors of your research, do they represent various genders, ethnicities, and political leanings? Try being intentional with varying your research. Seeking a variety of voices on your topic leads to some varied and interesting perspectives.

3. Interview Someone

Interviewing someone as part of your speech research can help make your speech stand out and really draw your audience in. When possible, do an interview as part of your speech research. One of the added bonuses of doing interviews is you can use it to make a new professional contact. Use your speech research to do networking, you might be surprised that you come out with a new contact or maybe a future job opportunity.

When you talk about the interview in your speech, be sure to tell the audience who you interviewed and the credentials of the person you interviewed. It is also helpful to include why you chose to interview that person. Take a picture of the person you interviewed or their office and if it seems right for your presentation, include the photo in your slides.

Brainstorm interview prospects

- Who can you interview on your topic?
- Who is a professional in the field?
- Who could you talk to who has a lived experience related to your topic?
- Who is a professional you have always wanted to talk to and needed a good excuse to get your foot in the door?

When conducting an interview always:

- Ask open-ended questions.
- Listen way more than you talk.
- Stay focused to the very end.
- Send a thank-you note.



Social research means to ask open ended questions (aim for specifics, not generals), listen way more than you talk (you ain't learning nothing when you're talking), and stay focused to the very end (the good stuff happens when people relax). "[Perform good social research](#)" by [sketchplanations](#), licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

Food For Thought



Photo by [Christina @wocintechchat.com](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

When researching for a ceremonial speech—eulogy, wedding toast, retirement speech, birthday speech—it is helpful to talk to other people who know the person you are celebrating. This type of research usually produces information you wouldn't have otherwise considered.

4. Look up Something Weird

Speaker, educator, and author John Spencer said, “Research shouldn't feel like a chore. It should feel like geeking out.” Think of a weird way to look at your topic. Think of a subpart of your topic. Look up a fun fact related to your topic. Sometimes, this exercise becomes an interesting diversion, but other times, it is a gold mine of new ideas.

Using Your Research in a Speech

For the next section, you'll learn how to give an oral citation and how to write the reference (in APA) on your reference page.

Oral Citations: Using Your Research in a Speech

When mentioning your research in your speech, you should always give an oral citation. Depending on the type of speech and the type of audience, this would be done differently. Citations are about credibility—ethos. When you use high-quality sources, it instills trust in the minds of your audience. They trust the information that you are giving, and they trust you as a person.

Instead of speaking every single part of the citation, find the part that is the most familiar to the audience (like a prominent name or publication) and speak the parts of the reference that enhances your credibility.

- If the information is from a known magazine or journal, you should mention that.
- If the article comes from a respected author that the audience knows, you should mention them.
- If the person you are citing has a title that is relevant, you should mention that.
- If the research is time-sensitive, you should mention the year of publication.

The key here is to be **intentional** about which part of the citation you speak. To further, illustrate this, let's look at the difference between what you say in your speech, how you would write it on a full-sentence outline, and then how it would look on your reference page.

(These samples are in APA)



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Example 1

This is what you would say in your speech.

According to an article on consumer perception of coffee published in *Nutrients Journal*, those who were surveyed said young males are more likely to be inclined to believe there are health benefits from drinking coffee. In a market where there is increased interest in healthy food, there is room to improve the perception of coffee and the scientifically based health benefits.

(Nutrients Journal carries the credibility of a journal. Mentioning the authors would be optional. Since most people don't know who they are, it doesn't help with the credibility.)

This is what it would look like on your outline.

According to an article on consumer perception of coffee published in *Nutrients Journal* those who were surveyed said young males are more likely to be inclined to believe there are health benefits from drinking coffee (Samoggia & Riedel, 2019).

This is what you would put on the reference page.

Samoggia, A., & Riedel, B. (2019). Consumers' perceptions of coffee health benefits and motives for coffee consumption and purchasing. *Nutrients*, 11(3), 653. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/nu11030653>

Example 2

This is what you would say in your speech.

An article published in the *Nutrition and Food Science Journal* titled, “To sip or not to sip: The potential risks and benefits of coffee drinking” coffee drinking can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease, and Parkinson’s disease.

(The title of the article is interesting, and the mention of a Journal gives credibility. Once again, I wouldn’t mention the authors since most people don’t know them.)

This is what it would look like on your outline.

An article published in the *Nutrition and Food Science Journal* titled, “To sip or not to sip: The potential risks and benefits of coffee drinking” coffee drinking can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease, and Parkinson’s disease. (Taylor & Demming-Adams, 2007).

This is what you would put on the reference page.

Taylor, S. R., & Demmig-Adams, B. (2007). To sip or not to sip: The potential health risks and benefits of coffee drinking. *Nutrition and Food Science*, 37(6), 406-418. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00346650710838063>

Example 3

This is what you would say in your speech.

As I was working on this eulogy for today, I talked to a couple of family members and asked them what they most remember about grandpa. Cousin Zena said she remembers him for always wearing bibbed overalls, an International Harvester hat, and for having shoes the size of cars. Most of all, she remembers his laugh.

(In this case, the audience only needs to know the names and relationships. No need for formal titles or last names if the people are familiar)

This is what it would look like on your manuscript.

As I was working on this eulogy for today, I talked to a couple of family members and asked them what they most remember about grandpa. Cousin Zena said she remembers him for always wearing bibbed overalls, an International Harvester hat, and for having shoes the size of cars. Most of all, she remembers his laugh.

This is what you would put on the reference page.

Meade, Z. (2021, May 8). Personal Interview.

Let's be honest, in a real eulogy, you would not turn in a reference page. If you are in a college class, it will be required of you to establish the practice of citing your sources.

Example 4

This is what you would say in your speech.

According to the Hobby Lobby website, wheeled glass nippers will cost you \$16. These will be essential for cutting glass for your mosaic.

This is what it would look like on your outline.

According to the Hobby Lobby website, wheeled glass nippers will cost you \$16. These will be essential for cutting glass for your mosaic (2021).

This is what you would put on the reference page.

Hobbylobby.com (2021) Wheeled Glass Nippers.

Example 5

This is what you would say in your speech.

According to the article, How to Host Your Own Coffee Tasting on the Starbucks website, when formally coffee tasting, you should slurp your coffee to allow the coffee to spray across your tongue and palate.

This is what it would look like on your outline.

According to the article, How to Host Your Own Coffee Tasting on the Starbucks website, when formally coffee tasting, you should slurp your coffee to allow the coffee to spray across your tongue and palate (Starbucks, 2020).

This is what you would put on the reference page.

Starbucks. (n.d) Host your own coffee tasting. Retrieved May 8, 2020, <https://athome.starbucks.com/host-your-own-coffee-tasting/>

Do Not Say This

1. **“According to google.”** Google is not a source; it is a search engine. The equivalent would be to say, according to the university library. The library is where you find the information, not the information itself.
2. **“According to homedepot.com.”** You would never say, “According to 210 South Main Street, Fayetteville, Arkansas because that is an address. When you say “.com” you are citing an address. Don’t site a person’s address or a webpage’s address as your source. You can say, “according to the home depot website.”
3. **“And my source is...”** When saying your source, use the name of the specialist or the name of the article and journal. No need to tell us it is your source; we will figure that out.
4. **“Quote/Unquote.”** Say the author and the quote, no need to say the word “quote.”
5. **“Thank you and now here are my sources.”** You do not need to show your audience your references on your slide show. To make sure your audience doesn’t accidentally see your reference page, put two blank slides at the end of your presentation and then add your references. Putting them with your slides keeps them available for anyone who wants a copy of your slides.

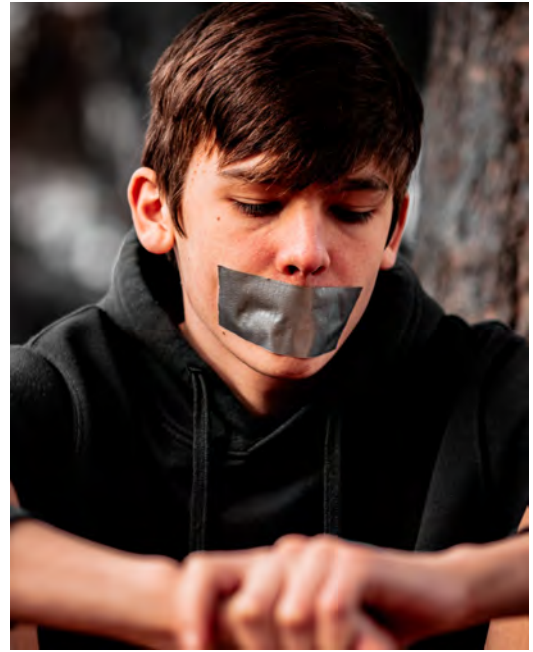


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Fake-istotle Quotes

If you research Aristotle, some amazing quotes will come up as Aristotle quotes. The only problem is, he didn’t say them. There’s a website called Fake-istotle Quotes.

Why is this relevant? It demonstrates one of the many challenges of internet research— typically one person puts it out there and then others copy it. You should be a sleuth and hunt down the originals and you should sniff out faulty research. **Don’t just copy the work of others, look for the original.**

Good quotes, Aristotle just didn’t say them.

- We are what we repeatedly do, excellence then is not an act but a habit. Will Durant
- Mark of an educated man is to entertain a thought without accepting it. Someone other than Aristotle

Does Your Research Pass the CRAAP Test?

Once you have found your research, you should test it to make sure it is credible. Check your research for currency, reliability, authority, accuracy, and purpose using the CRAAP test.

Currency

- When was it published?
- Has it been revised since then?
- Is it current enough for your topic?
- Is it a topic where the opinions about it change over time?

Reliability / Relevance

- Can you depend on the information and trust it to be accurate?
- Is the information biased?
- Is the information the appropriate complexity for the type of project I am working on?
- Does it provide reliable sources to back up claims?

Authority

- Can you trust the source where you found the information?
- Is the author an authority or do they cite subject authorities?
- Are they reputable?
- If the material is taken from other sources, do they credit/cite those sources?
- What does the URL end with? (.gov, .org, .edu, .com?) If not, how are you determining its reliability?

Accuracy

- Can you trust the reliability of the information?
- Is the information correct? How would you know?
- Can you verify any of the information from another source?
- Do the links lead to useful information corroborating the site's statements, or do they link to questionable information?

Purpose/Point of View

- What is the author's motivation for publishing the resource?
- Is the author trying to inform, persuade, or entertain you?
- Does the author appear to have an ax to grind or seem blindly committed to their cause?
- Are they using this information to make money off of users?
- Is there any conflict of interest?

Researching Images

Searching, finding, and using images is a type of research too. Just like text-based research, you should provide citations and give credit.

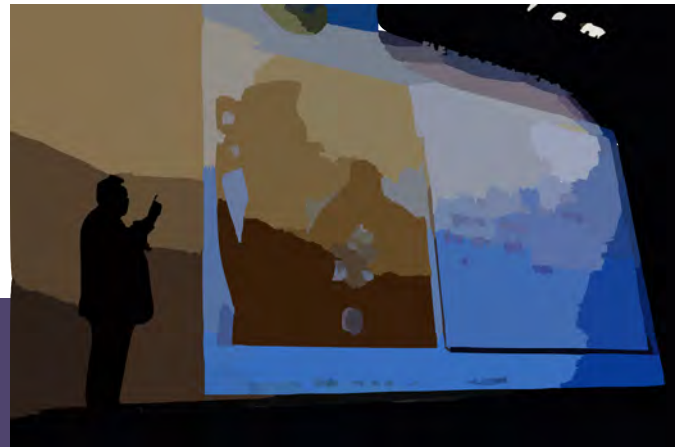


Image by [Cler-Free-Vector-Images](#), used under [Pixabay license](#)

Searching for Images

When searching for images to use, you should seek out images that have a creative commons copyright or are open for use. Here are a couple of my favorite sites.

Don't forget to reference your image on your reference page and on your slides.

- [Creativecommons.org](https://creativecommons.org)
About: “CC Search is a tool that allows openly licensed and public domain works to be discovered and used by everyone. Creative Commons, the nonprofit behind CC Search, is the maker of the [CC licenses](https://creativecommons.org/licenses), used over 1.4 billion times to help creators share knowledge and creativity online.”
- [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)
About: Most items on Unsplash can be used for free. You can use them for commercial and noncommercial purposes. You do not need to ask permission but giving credit to the photographer is appreciated. **Double check to ensure that the image you select is offered under the Unsplash *Free*, as this website now mixes stock photography (pay-per-use) into search results. Unsplash+ images also require a subscription.**
- [Eduimages](https://eduimages.com)
About: A free library of photos celebrating students—and the educators who teach them—in seven schools across the United States.
- [Gettyimages](https://gettyimages.com)
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About: Most images and videos on Pixabay are released free of copyrights under the [Pixabay license](https://pixabay.com/licenses). You may download, modify, distribute, and use them royalty-free for anything you like, even in commercial applications. Attribution is not required. **Double check to ensure that the image you select is offered under the Pixabay license, as this website now mixes stock photography (pay-per-use) into search results.**

Reference Page

The reference page is where you list all the sources that you used in your speech. This means the books, articles, and internet information that you use as well as any interviews, images, videos, and charts.

What Do You Do with Your Reference Page?

What you do with your reference page is going to be different based on context. Many of you are in a college speech class, which means that you will give your teacher a digital or physical copy of your reference page. It's good to be prepared for speeches outside the college classroom, so let's look at how to use a reference page in a variety of contexts.

Type of presentation	What you do with your reference page
College Presentation	<p>If you are in a college class, your teacher will likely ask you to turn in a copy of your reference page. You should have it typed and it should include your name.</p> <p>For tips on using APA, go to OWL Purdue APA or APA Style</p>
Academic Conference Paper Presentation	<p>Academic talks often come from research papers. Typically, you will upload your paper and reference page into a database before the conference. Sometimes, they ask for your slides as well. If that is the case, you should include a final slide to your slideshow that includes your references. You would not actually show that slide during your presentation, but it is available for those who want to download your presentation slides.</p> <p>If you are giving a poster talk, you will want to have copies of your paper with references to hand out. Make a handout that is a photo of your poster on one side and key references and your name on another. Make sure your name is on it and think of it as a business card that people might keep to remember you and your research.</p>
Academic Conference Table talk Discussion group Non-paper presentation	<p>It is likely those in attendance will want a copy of your slides. You should anticipate this and have a reference page on your slides. You would not show your reference page during your talk, but it is there for those who want a copy of your slides.</p> <p>Handout. I prefer giving audiences a printed or digital handout instead of giving them my slides. I can customize a handout to give only the information that someone would want to look at after the talk. In that scenario, I only include the references that they would want to look up to gain more information.</p>
Business Talk	<p>Put your reference page on your presentation slides but don't show them during your presentation. If someone wants a copy of your slides, you have the references included.</p> <p>(Tip: At the end of the slideshow, add two blank slides before your reference page, that way you don't accidentally show them during your presentation)</p>
Community Talk or Training	<p>Pass out a handout that includes relevant references where they can look up more information or create an online resource where they can get the information.</p>
Sales Talk	<p>Most companies have a sales brochure that they give a customer. Ideally, they should include references or point to references on a website.</p> <p>You should be willing to give references if asked. It is a good idea to make a reference page when you prepare your sales presentation and have it in case you need it.</p>

Reference Page

For reference, I have included a sample reference page in APA.

Reference Page Sample APA

- “References” should be at the top.
- Alphabetize references.
- Use a hanging indent
- Every line is double-spaced. (This sample is not correct because of the way this program formats. Every line should be double space with no single-spaced items).
For reference on this look at this [sample student paper from OWL Purdue \[PDF\]](#)-the reference page in on page 17.

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Understanding Peer Review and Scholarly Sources

Make sure that you understand peer review and scholarly sources. When someone says they are wanting you to reference scholarly sources, typically they are talking about items that have been through the peer-review

process. According to OWL Purdue, “One major character of scholarly sources is that they are peer-reviewed. Here’s how a scholarly source typically goes through the process:

1. A scholar/author writes an article and submits it to the editor of a journal or book.
2. The editor sends it to other scholars who are at least the academic *peers* (equals) of the author in that field.
3. The reviewers review or *vet* (examine) it, then tell the editor whether they think it’s good enough to be published in that journal or what should be changed.”

Oftentimes your speech is required to have peer reviewers or scholarly articles, it is important that you are able to understand why peer review articles are different and how to access them.

What is Peer Review, Scholarly Article?

You may be asked to use peer-reviewed/scholarly/refereed articles for your research. It is important to understand the process in order to understand why this is a more advanced type of research.

Watch [Peer review in 3 minutes \(3 mins\) on YouTube](#)

In summary, it is important to know how to research your speech properly and to reference those sources in a way that gives credibility to your topic.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Research: Finding and Citing Your Research](#)” In [Advanced Public Speaking](#) by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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University of Arkansas Library Research Guide. CRAAP Test for evaluating. <https://uark.libguides.com/BENG4933/Evaluation>

*CRAAP test developed by Meriam Library, California State University, Chico

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPEECH

Dynamic Presentations by Amanda Quibell

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Please visit the web version of [*Dynamic Presentations*](#) to access the complete book, watch videos or complete interactive. You may also use the links provided to access video content on the web.

In this section...

Each chapter represents a topic for the group presentation.

- [Metaphor, Simile, and Theme](#)
- [Vivid and Sensory Words Make Your Speech Come Alive](#)
- [Overcome Communication Apprehension by Hacking Your Brain](#)
- [Overcome Communication Apprehension by Hacking Your Body](#)
- [Delivery Advice: Do Not Imagine the Audience Naked! Managing Eye Contact, Movement, and Gestures](#)
- [Things That Do Not Belong In Your Speech: Curse Words, ISTS, Slang, and Bafflegab](#)
- [Fallacies–Warning! Deceptive, Hateful Speech Coming Your Way](#)

VIVID AND SENSORY WORDS MAKE YOUR SPEECH COME ALIVE



Photo by [RhondaK Native Florida Folk Artist](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

“I want pictures in my mind,” I tell my students. “Paint me pictures. Give me word pictures.” The more I can see, feel, taste, and smell what is happening in the speech, the more I am engaged. This chapter is about how to give your students a sensory experience when you speak. It is about using vivid and sensory words to engage the audience. I want to “show” you what this looks like by giving you several quality speeches to experience for yourself.

The tongue can paint
what the eyes can't see.
Chinese proverb.

Consider This

Which of these two sentences gets your attention?

The glass shattered into tiny pieces

or

the glass broke

If you are like most people, the sentence that says the “glass shattered into tiny pieces” captured your attention and caused you to visualize the breaking glass. You might have even thought of the last time you broke a glass. It works because it used vivid language.

Listen as Matthew Dicks explains what it is like to be homeless and taken in by a family that has a pet goat that chews on his hair at night and then he continues to tell his story of being robbed at gunpoint. Notice how you can “see” his story in your mind’s eye.

Watch [Live life like you are 100-years old – Matthew Dicks \(16 mins\) on YouTube](#)

In an experiment of investing in the market, researchers tested whether or not language would affect investor judgment. They tested vivid words versus pallid words. In this study, a vivid phrase was “sales *jumped*...analysts viewed this as very *impressive*” and the pallid phrase was “sales *increased*...analysts view this performance as *positive*.” The vivid phrase showed stronger results. In other words, how you tell people to invest can impact the outcome. This is just one of many studies that show the impact of vivid language on thoughts and behaviors.

In other research studies, vivid messages created greater desirability for the product, caused people to have more favorable beliefs toward an idea and even influenced judgments. Why do they work? Vivid messages work, in part, because they hold our attention.

For vividness to be effective, it must do all the following:

- a. Emotionally interesting.
- b. Vivid enough to produce sensations or visual images.
- c. Relatable. It must be consistent with the audience’s experiences and knowledge.
- d. Related to the central thesis.

At the center of it all, is the audience. The key to making vividness work is audience understanding. For example, A cenote is a pool of water made by a sinkhole that exposes groundwater. This water is usually very clear, very clean, and very cool. Unless you've been to a cenote, you may have no idea what a cenote is and therefore would have no idea when a speaker says the lake water was like the cool, clear, water of a cenote. Instead of evoking images, it only produces confusion. Vividness works when the audience can relate, and they can call up the sensations or visual images.

It is also important that the vivid statements relate to the thesis. Researchers Guadagno, Rhoads, and Sagrins tested why sometimes vividness worked and other times it did not. With testing, they found that vivid words persuaded only when the message was strong and the vivid words regarded the central thesis. When vivid information was introduced that did not relate to the main point, it became a distraction. It seems that vividness enhances persuasion, but only when purposefully used, otherwise it is just a distraction that undermines persuasion. Oh yeah, no surprise here, but vividness can't save a weak argument.

Angelina Jolie Speaks at World Refugee Day

Let's look at a strong speech that uses vividness.

- Stripped of home and country, refugees are buffeted from every ill wind that blows across this planet.
- They guided me into a small dirt house with no roof to keep out the scorching heat, and they dusted off the two old mats that they ate, slept and prayed on. And we sat and we talked, and they were just the loveliest women. And then with a few twigs and a single tin cup of water, they made the last of their tea and insisted on me to enjoy it.
- He had a dusty face, the brightest green eyes I have ever seen but such a sad look but she explained that he's always asking for more food. And it hurts her to say that they have nothing. And she asked if we would consider taking him, would we take her sons so he could eat. And she said it with tears in her eyes with such desperation.
- He sat on the dusty floor; he's been shot on the back and left paralyzed. And he crawled forward to shake my hand, he was no more than fifteen. He had big pretty eyes, big wide sparkling smile, and after all he'd been through, he's full of laughter and love. Later that night I asked whether he'd not been taken to a hospital or at least given a wheelchair and I was

told that the boy’s entire family had been killed so there was no one to look after him.

Watch [Angelina Jolie speaks out on World Refugee Day \(8 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Video source: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. (2009, June 20). *Angelina Jolie speaks out on World Refugee Day* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/q6msUKyiYic>

After you read this chapter, revisit this speech. While looking at the transcript, try to make a list of all the vivid and sensory words. Categorize them based on the sense they activate.

Use Sensory Words

One type of vividness comes from sensory words. Research demonstrates that we process those words faster than other words. By sensory words, I’m talking about words that have to do with seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching. For just a moment, imagine you are in Paris and you look up to see the top of the Eiffel tower where the structure touches the sky. Chances are, as you thought about this, your eyes went up. You sensed with your body the words that were being spoken. When you hear or read sensory words that you can relate to, your brain lights up. Your brain lights up in the same area that the actual experience would occur—it is as if you are experiencing the word and not just hearing it. When someone talks about the “sweet, gooey cookie pulled out of the oven, and the sweet aroma fills the air and you look down at the partially melted chocolate chips and are eager to take a bite.” This sentence caused many of you to taste and see the cookie and your brain lights up as if you are eating one. Words that evoke a mental image are the most likely to evoke a sensory image. The more you create “word pictures” that we see in the movie of our minds, the more likely we are to experience it with other senses.

What follows is a chart of the main senses and with examples of the words associated with that sense

The Power of Sensory Words

Tactile words describe the texture of how something feels. You can also use them to describe feelings and abstract concepts.

gritty, creepy, slimy, sticky, rough

Examples of touch words:

- *Two minutes into the interview, I knew his **abrasive** personality would be an issue if we hired him.*
- *With a forced smile, I put on the **itchy** Christmas sweater my grandmother bought me.*

Sound Sensory Words

Words related to hearing often describe the sound.

crashing, thumping, piercing, thundering, squeaking

Examples of hearing words:

- *He had a big, **booming** voice.*
- *The sound of **screeching** tires was soon followed by the **deafening** sound of a car horn.*

Sight Sensory Words

Visual words describe the appearance of something. They may indicate color, shape, or appearance.

gloomy, dazzling, bright, foggy, vibrant

Sight word examples:

- *Her **golden** hair looked **disheveled** thanks to the gust of wind.*
- *He was a **towering** presence.*

Taste and Sensory Words

Taste words are interesting because often they are a metaphor for something else. For example, a “bitter rejection” has nothing to do with taste.

zesty, tantalizing, sweet, stale

Examples of taste words:

- *It's a **bittersweet** situation.*
- *The **scrumptious** jalapeno poppers comforted Karl after his **bitter** rejection.*

Smell Sensory Words

Words related to smell describe — yes, you guessed it — how things smell. Often underutilized, sensory words connected with smell can be very effective.

putrid, flowery, stinky

Examples of smell words:

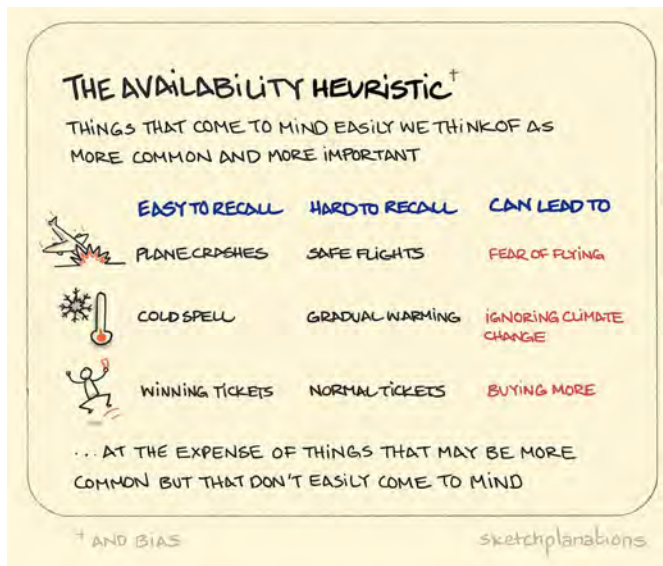
- The **pungent** smell was unmistakable: someone in this elevator was wearing Axe Body Spray.
- No matter the expiration date, it was clear from its **rancid** stench the milk had gone bad.

Many of these examples are from smartblogger.com and exchangedmarketing.com.

Notice how Brené Brown describes a situation—She has on white slacks and a pink sweater set and how she dropped her coffee on the tile floor, and it splashed on her. She goes on to say that she blamed her husband. She uses it to make a powerful point about blame and accountability and demonstrates for us the power of how vivid descriptions can draw us in and make us want to listen.

Watch [Brené Brown on blame \(3 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Considerations of Using Vividness



Things that come to mind easily we think of as more common and more important.. at the expense of things that may be more common but don't easily come to mind. For example: Plane crashes are easier to recall than safe flights and can lead to fear of flying. Cold spells are easier to recall than gradual warming and can lead to ignoring climate change. Winning tickets are easier to recall than normal tickets and can lead to buying more. [Image by sketchplanations](#), used under [CC BY-NC](#)

The easier that information is for me to think about, remember, and recall, the more that information influences my decisions. Your goal should be to give the information in such a way that people can process that information. The availability heuristic suggests that when making decisions we tend to base those decisions on things that come to our mind easily. If information is recent, vivid, and fits into our thought patterns, it is more available and therefore is more likely to influence our decision-making.

We are likely to think crime is a threat if there has been a recent break-in in our neighborhood. We are more likely to feel afraid if we watch a lot of crime shows or if there has been a featured news story on assaults. Since that information is recent in our mind and the stories were told to us in a vivid manner, we are more likely to pay attention to that information and then bring it to mind when someone suggests taking a self-defense course.

In this next video, the founder of charity water, Scott Harrison tells how he got involved in charity water and what his organization does. Watch this documentary and speech video as he talks about drinking from “scummy swamps.” And how he describes how the women are “breaking their backs to get it.” (You can stop watching at the statistics part –but I warn you it may be hard to stop). What is the point here? The point is for you to notice how he infuses speech, powerful visuals, and vivid words to persuade us to act and to help others to get clean water.

Watch [The Spring – The charity: water story \(20 mins\) on YouTube](#)

If you watched the video, you saw a worm in the water. Some of you likely had a visceral reaction. For many of you, it caused you to sympathize with the cause, for others, it may have gone too far, and you protected yourself by not watching or by making fun of the video.

If you try to take vividness too far, it can backfire on you. Thoughts that are too uncomfortable, might cause people to suppress the information or deny it altogether. This is particularly true when creating messages that instill fear.

The Extended Parallel Process Model looks at how people respond to messages that create fear as a way to drive positive health outcomes. For example, to get someone to wear a condom, a speaker might activate fear and make them afraid that they will get a sexually transmitted disease. A speaker might share statistics, gruesome stories, and even show slides of infections (flashback to high school health class). The challenge is that people have different reactions to fear-invoking situations—they either minimize their fear—“That’s not going to happen to me, I could tell if my partner has an infection” or they minimize the danger and wear a condom. So what makes the difference?

A speaker who is trying to use research and analogies that produce fear has to find the “sweet spot” in order to get the audience to react in a way that produces a positive health outcome. If the danger feels like it is too much, the listener will just panic or deny the danger. Describing things in too vivid of detail can often backfire and cause people to worry but do nothing or deny that the situation is real.

The goal should be to use just enough vividness that it is memorable and to direct examples towards the specific audience, so they are relatable. Most importantly, fear messages work best when coupled with a specific plan of action. If people feel like there is a do-able way to get rid of the fear, and they are capable of doing it, they are more likely to react.

To recap. For an audience to be impacted, the message has to be relatable. It should be vivid enough to be memorable and activate the senses—but not so vivid that it overwhelms the main message. Vivid descriptions should support the central message. If you are trying to persuade an audience and you use vividness to produce fear, you need to offer them specific, manageable ways to act. Vividness is one more tool in your public speaking toolbox. Use it wisely!

Key Takeaways

Remember this!

- For vivid words to work they must be emotionally interesting, vivid enough to produce sensations or visual images, relatable to the audience, and related to the central thesis.
- Vivid messages are easier to remember and can be more persuasive.
- When using fear appeals, make sure you could tie the fear with an action that the audience is capable of performing.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Professional Speechwriting: Vivid and Sensory Words Make Your Speech Come Alive](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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METAPHOR, SIMILE, AND THEME

It's time to take your speechwriting to the professional level. To do that, you need to learn how to effectively use metaphors and similes and you need to learn how to weave those into a theme.

Let's start with some definitions. Similes and metaphors both make comparisons. A simile makes an explicit comparison usually using like and as. According to Merriam Webster, a metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy. You can use a variety of metaphors throughout a speech, but if you stick to one consistent topic, you have a theme. A theme is where you pick a comparison, and you use it throughout your speech. This gives a sense of unity and overall elevates the level of your speech.



Tombstone of a Jewish woman depicting broken candles as a visual metaphor for the end of life. Photo by www.shabbat-goy.com is licensed under [CC BY 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)

What is needed for an effective metaphor?

An effective metaphor uses emotional phrases properly

According to an article in *Psychology Today*, “Metaphors are not just a literary technique; they are a very potent psychological technique.” In a study, people were told about climate change using a war metaphor or a race metaphor. Those hearing the war metaphor found the climate change situation more urgent and were more likely to increase their conservation behaviors.

Metaphors have a profound impact on how we think and act on social issues. In the study by Thibodeau and Boroditski, participants read about a crime-ridden city where the criminal element was a beast preying upon innocent citizens (animal metaphor), or was a disease that plagued the town (disease metaphor). When subjects were asked for a solution on how to solve the problem, those who heard about the animal metaphor supported strategies such as increasing police presence and imposing stricter penalties. Those who heard the disease metaphor favored seeking out the primary cause of the crime wave and bolstering the economy. The researchers concluded, “We find that exposure to even a single metaphor can induce substantial differences. People chose information that was likely to confirm and elaborate the bias suggested by the metaphor – an effect that

persisted even when people were presented with a full set of possible solutions.” In short, the metaphor influenced how they saw the problem and what type of solution would fit the problem.

Interestingly, while the metaphor influenced their opinions on the issues, they remembered the issue and not the metaphor. The researchers suggested that even when the metaphor is covert, it affected the subject’s decisions.

An effective metaphor uses something simple to help the audience understand something complex.

Metaphors take hard-to-understand ideas and compare them to simple-to-understand ideas. Take, for example, the ever famous, “Life is a box of chocolates.” It takes something abstract, in this case, love, and compares it to something familiar and understandable, a box of chocolates.

An effective metaphor is one that is understood by the listeners.

A good metaphor works because the audience understands the thing that is being compared. When I told my son, he sounded like a “broken record,” he had not idea what I was talking about. One speaker told me that he made a reference to the “one ring to rule them all” to realize that only half of the audience had never seen the Lord of the Rings movies. He said, “I used a metaphor of a movie they had never seen to explain a concept they didn’t understand. Any understanding they might have had of the concept was lost because their attention was now focused on trying to understand a movie. “

An effective metaphor fits the cultural context.

In a study, students were given an argument about whether their university should require a senior thesis. Football phrases such as “handoff,” “touchdown,” and “fumble” were used. The results suggested that those who liked sports found the metaphor more engaging than those who did not like sports. For the non-sports fan, the metaphor had no more effect than the arguments that contained no metaphor.

An effective metaphor fits the situation.

The right metaphor is one that fits the occasion. Metaphors such as “passed on” and “candle dimmed” are used in eulogy speeches. “Beginning a new chapter” and “starting a new journey” are used for graduation speeches. “Retirement is a blank sheet of paper. It is a chance to redesign your life into something new and different.” This quote by Patrick Foley is an example of how retirement metaphors work. Other retirement phrases may be “unshackled” or “beginning a new highway.”

[Check out this website about international metaphors for death](#)

The greatest thing by far
is to be a master of metaphor
Aristotle

The big idea here is that it must be the right metaphor for the subject and the audience. Metaphors can help you understand complex ideas and can take everyday ideas and make them more interesting. To some degree, metaphors help you show, not tell. A well-told metaphor can help you create visuals in the mind of your audience. When it comes to this advanced language technique, I like to show, not tell. Let's look at how metaphors have been used in speech, I'll start with examples of metaphors in presidential speeches.

Presidential Metaphors

Presidential speeches

Let's look at a few more examples of how presidents have used metaphors in their speeches.

- We are now engaged in a great Civil War, testing whether this nation or any nation **so conceived** and so dedicated can long endure. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address
- And you have changed the face of Congress, the Presidency, and the political process itself. Yes, you, my fellow Americans, have **forced the spring**. Now we must do the work the season demands." Bill Clinton Inaugural Address
- You can be the new majority who can lead this nation out of **along political darkness** – Democrats, Independents, and Republicans who are tired of the division and distraction that has **clouded** Washington; who know that we can disagree without being disagreeable; who understand that if we mobilize our voices to challenge the money and influence that's stood in our way and challenge ourselves to reach for something better, there's no problem we can't solve – no destiny we cannot fulfill. Barack Obama
- America was targeted for attack because *we're the* **brightest beacon** for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that **light** from shining. George W. Bush, Speech after 9/11 Attacks.

Persuasive Metaphor

Metaphors can be very persuasive. Picking a metaphor that the audience relates to is especially important—most people can relate to pizza so that is the comparison that this TED speaker chose. Al Vernacchio criticizes the use of baseball as a metaphor for sex where there is a winner and loser—scoring, getting to first base, etc. He

suggests instead that people think of sex as shared pleasure, discussion, and agreement—he suggests the metaphor of pizza. It’s an eight minute, easy to listen to speech, you won’t want to miss this.

Watch [Sex needs a new metaphor. Here’s one... \(8 mins\) on TED](#)

Metaphor in Leadership

Simon Lancaster says metaphors are one of the most powerful pieces of political and leadership communication because they move us towards things or make us recoil. He looks at phrases like the “financial storm” and the “dung heap of capitalism” as ways in which the use of words influences our perception of an issue.

(Watch the four-minute clip where he talks about metaphor. It is cued to start at the part where he talks about metaphor.)

Watch [Speak like a leader – Simon Lancaster \(18 mins\) on YouTube](#)

If you have time, watch the whole talk to see how he shares his six rhetorical techniques: Three breathless sentences, three repetitive sentences, balancing statements, metaphor, exaggerative statements, rhyming statements.

Enduring Metaphors

There are metaphors that seem to stick around through the years. You will see these come up a lot in literature, in songs, and in speeches. These are sometimes referenced as archetypal metaphors. According to communication scholar Michael Osborn, “archetypal metaphors are grounded in prominent features of experience, in objects, actions, or conditions which are inescapably salient in human consciousness.” Because the human experience aspect is so crucial to these metaphors, you tend to find them in some of the most significant speeches in history. The timelessness of these metaphors increases the likelihood that the speech will outlive its author.

Here are a few of the most prominent enduring metaphors. I’ll give you examples of each.

- Light, Dark
- Storm, Sea, Set Sail
- Disease
- Battle, war
- Seasons, Sunrise, Sunset
- Journey, Road

Seasons, Sunrise, Sunset

Winter in our Hearts

At the dawn of spring last year, a single act of terror brought forth the long, **cold winter in our hearts**. The people of Oklahoma City are mourning still.

Al Gore, Oklahoma Bombing Memorial Address

Winds of Change

The wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact.

Harold MacMillian, British Prime Minister

New Birth of Spring

This year a new **birth** will occur. The physical being that will be its **offspring** will be like the **new beginning** which occurs when the **spring** rains wash away the dead leaves of winter and give life to the summer green which, as an expression of the rhythm of the seasons, blankets our earth.

That **new birth** will signal the wonder that we have begun to construct a new social order.

Nelson Mandela, Address to the African National Congress

Light and Dark Metaphor

*“If you want a love message to be heard,
it has got to be sent out.*

*To keep a lamp burning,
we have to keep putting oil in it.”*

Mother Teresa

Only when it's **dark** enough can you see the stars.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I See the Promised Land Speech

The **light** has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the **light** that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The **light** that has **illumined** this country for these many years will **illumine** this

country for many more years, and a thousand years later that **light** will still be seen in this country, and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Eulogy to Mahatma Gandhi

The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, **sunlit** uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a **new Dark Age** made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the **lights** of perverted science

Winston Church Hill, The Finest Hour

John Kerry will be sworn in as president, and John Edwards will be sworn in as vice president, and this country will reclaim its promise, and **out of this long political darkness, a brighter day** will come.

Barack Obama, Democratic National Convention

Journey, Travel, Destination

I believe we can give our middle-class relief and provide working families with a **road** to opportunity.

I believe that we have a righteous wind at our backs and that as we stand on the **crossroads of history**, we can make the right choices, and meet the challenges that face us.

Barrack Obama, 2001 Democratic National Convention

Storm, Sea, Sail

Storm

That **storm** sweeps across the human habitat. Like the spring rains, it seeks to drive away the pestilences that continue to afflict the world of living beings, the universal malignancies which seem to have found a home in our diseased society.

Nelson Mandela, Address to African National Congress

Stormy Sea

It's been quite a journey this decade, and we held together through some **stormy seas**. And at the end, together, we are reaching our destination.

Ronald Reagan, Farewell Address

Navigate Choppy Waters

It's been my privilege to launch Baylor upon this exciting journey of Baylor 2012 and lead the university beyond the inertia of the status quo. Now that the **voyage** is well underway, it's time for someone new to **navigate** these sometimes **choppy waters** while continuing to aim for the carefully **charted destination** ahead.

President Robert B. Sloan, Baylor University

Watch [Barack Obama delivers powerful eulogy at John Lewis funeral \(41 mins\) on YouTube](#)

THINGS THAT DO NOT BELONG IN YOUR SPEECH: CURSE WORDS, ISTS, SLANG, AND BAFFLEGAB

Sometimes big words can mean so little.

I'm so sorry. If you were my student the semester after I graduated from graduate school, I really need to apologize. I need to apologize for using my graduate student vocabulary in your freshman course. I need to apologize for telling you about the detailed educational philosophy behind everything I did. I am so sorry I used the words “pedagogy” and “learning objectives” in the lectures about how to give a good speech.

In my defense, most new teachers do this. I can remember having a teacher who was finishing up her dissertation—she baffled me with her brilliant vocabulary and impressed me with her cerebral lectures. I have no idea what she said, but at least she sounded smart while saying it.

In this chapter, I am going to talk about why you should avoid big words and specialty language. In fact, I am going to share with you many other things you should avoid in your speech as you seek to get your point across to your audience.

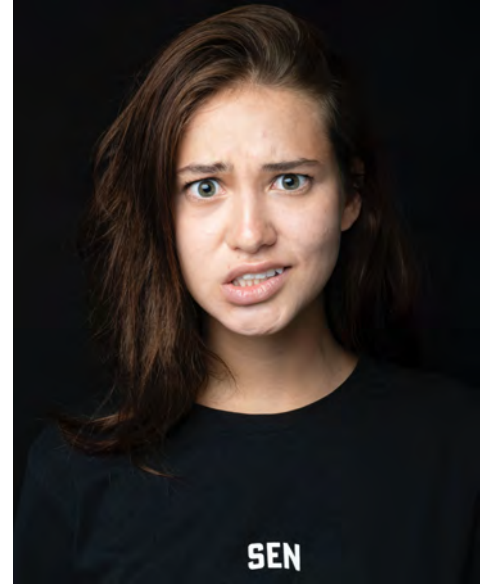


Photo by [Ospan Ali](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Beware of the Curse of Knowledge

When I was in graduate school I suffered from the curse of knowledge. Actor and communication expert, Alan Alda in his book, *If I Understood You, Would I Have This Look on my Face* says,

Once we know something, it's hard to unknow it, to remember what it's like to be a beginner. It keeps us from considering the listener. Using shorthand that is incomprehensible to the other person, or referring to a process they're unfamiliar with, we lock them out, and we don't even realize it because we can't believe we are the only person who knows this stuff.

The problem is people are “unable to ignore the additional information they possess,” according to economists Camerer, Loewenstein, and Weber. These researchers questioned whether or not it was beneficial

to know more when it came to sales. In short, their finding was that it is **not** beneficial. If you know too much information, it is hard not to use that information and too much information can be overwhelming. It is hard to remember what it was like before you had that knowledge. It is hard to put yourself in the mind of your audience who does not understand. Sometimes, knowledge is a curse.

Go to one of your friends and ask them to help you with a little experiment. Ask them to “guess this song” and then tap out the tune to the “Star-Spangled Banner” with your finger. Did they guess it? Chances are they can’t. Try another common song like “happy birthday.” Chances are that as the tapper, you are going to get frustrated because it is so obvious and so easy to guess but most people just won’t get it.

This is a mock-up of what a graduate student at Stanford did. Elizabeth Newton first asked how likely it would be that the person listening would guess the tapped song. They predicted the odds were about 50 percent. The guessers got it right only 2.5% of the time. What seemed obvious to the tapper was not obvious to the listener. You can see where this is going. To bring it back to the earlier study, a CEO who says she is “unlocking shareholder value” might just sound like random tapping to those unfamiliar with the phrase. Sometimes, knowledge is a curse.

In your speech, you must remember what it was like to not know and use your naivete in your speech. Part of this is to avoid big words, jargon, and slang. Let’s break these down one at a time.

Avoid Big Words (unless you need to impress people at an academic conference)

Why use a three-dollar word when a two-dollar word will do? Words like facetious, discombobulation, obfuscate, and cacophony make you sound smart, but they won’t make you understood. There is a time and place for your ‘big’ vocabulary, but it is rarely in your speech.

As with all things, context is key. If you are a graduate student or faculty member at an academic conference, you should whip out all those “three-dollar words.” You should also use those big words if you are called to be an expert witness. Dr. Robert Cialdini, a persuasion researcher, says professional witnesses who use big words are more persuasive. Jurors think, “That witness said an important word that I don’t understand, he must be smart. I’ll trust what he said to be true.” Since most of the time, you are not at an academic conference, nor are you called to be an expert witness, you should stick with the simple words.

Side note: If you plan on using a big word you are not familiar with, look up the proper pronunciation of the word. Practice saying the word multiple times and put a pronunciation key in your notes. Nothing kills your credibility like stumbling over big words.



A cartoon that says how to speak plainly. An owl says, “The ascent is proceeding as expected.” The bear says, “Up we go.” [speak plainly](#) by [Sketchplanations](#), licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

Avoid Bafflegab (Eschew Obfuscation)

According to Milton Smith, originator of the term bafflegab said,

Bafflegab is multiloquence characterized by consummate interfusion of circumlocution or periphrasis, inscrutability, incognizability, and other familiar manifestations of abstruse expatiation commonly used for promulgations implementing procrustean determinations by governmental bodies.

In short, it is using fancy words used to sound smart or to deliberately confuse your audience. William Lutz called it this

inflated language. Most of the time, your audience is confused and not impressed. My dad used to tell me not to confuse my audience or I would be “up the proverbial tributary of deification without and adequate means of propulsion.”

Consider This When Speaking English to a Group of International People

National Public Radio shared a program about the challenges to non-American English speakers. Consider the scenario where speakers from Germany, South Korea, Nigeria, and France are having a productive conversation in English. An American enters the conversation and says, “let’s take a holistic approach” and “you hit it out of the park”. Suddenly, understanding goes down. Research indicates, when an American enters the conversation, understanding goes down because they tend to use simple words and phrases that can be challenging for nonnative speakers.

Prepone That! Your Accent Is Funny! Readers Share Their ESL Stories

Sergio Serrano is a professor of engineering science and applied mathematics at Temple University. Having lived in North America for 40 years after growing up in Bogotá, Colombia, Serrano shares his experience speaking English in academic settings and dealing with accent stereotypes.

Sergio Serrano has participated in many international scientific conferences across the globe. “In a typical situation, a group of foreign researchers are discussing a complex technical issue with very precise and elaborate formal English,” Serrano says, “until an American joins the group.”

In our previous article about speaking English, we discussed research that found understanding goes down in a room of nonnative speakers when a native English speaker joins the conversation. The research found that communication is inhibited in part due to native speakers’ use of language not held in common, like culturally specific idioms.

But this scenario doesn’t fit with Serrano’s experiences of English, where nonnative English speakers who learned the language in a classroom are often more educated on grammar rules and complex technical terms than American native speakers.

For Serrano, when an American joins in a conversation among nonnative speaking scientists, the conversation does falter, but not because the American’s language is too complex.

“On the contrary, communication ends because [the foreign researchers] cannot explain to the American, in simple language, the advanced topics they were discussing. Yet, the American takes over the conversation.”

Complete excerpt from:

McCusker, C. (2021). Prepone that! Your accent is funny! Readers share their ESL stories. ***Goats and Soda: Stories of life in a Changing World, NPR***. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2021/05/16/995963311/prepone-that-your-accent-is-funny-readers-share-their-esl-stories>

Avoid Jargon (well, mostly)

Jargon is the specialized language of a group or profession. If you are part of the group and speaking to an audience made up of people from that group, then you should use jargon, in fact, it would be hard for you not to. If, however, there are outsiders in the audience, you should be sure to define unknown terms or exclude them altogether.

Just for fun, I asked my social circle to come up with jargon they might hear in their specialty, and here are a few of their replies.

- Contrás open to double f at the end of that crescendo.
(Tubas get very loud after the buildup—Marching band directions)
- Make sure you maintain cover when that pinwheel crosses the yard line.
(Make sure the drumline is lined up front to back as it spins over the football field’s yard line—Drum Corp directions)
- Soon, you will ETS and will no longer eat MRE’s and wear BDU’s. (Soon you will get out of the military and no longer have to eat dehydrated food and wear soldier uniforms—US Army.)
- The scuttlebutt is we won’t endex until next week. (Rumor has it this operation won’t be over until next

week—Marines)

Double Speak

William Lutz, the American linguist, coined the term doublespeak to mean language that deliberately obscures, disguises, distorts, or reverses the meaning of words.

“Doublespeak is a matter of intent. You can identify doublespeak by looking at who is saying what to whom, under what conditions and circumstances, with what intent, and what result. If a politician stands up and speaks to you and says, ‘I am giving you exactly what I believe,’ and then turns around and does the opposite, then you’ve got a pretty good yardstick. She was pretending to tell me something, and it turns out it wasn’t what she meant at all, she meant something different,” says Mr. Lutz.

Lutz claims doublespeak is distorting the language to the benefit of the speaker. Let’s talk about each of these in speechmaking: Jargon, euphemism, bureaucratese, and inflated language.

Jargon: We talked about that already as the special language of a group. If you are an insider, you should use it, but when you are not, you should avoid it altogether.

Euphemism: Words that are used in place of something offensive or unpleasant. When it comes to speechmaking, euphemisms aren’t always bad. For example, when giving a eulogy, most people prefer to say, “passed away” or “went on to a better place.” That type of euphemism is a form of politeness it moves on to be doublespeak when it is used to mislead. Lutz points to the pentagon using the phrase, “Incontinent ordinance” to mean bombs that fall on civilian targets, and “unlawful arbitrary detention” which means to be held without a trial. He also uses the example from when a bill was proposed asking for money for a “radiation enhancement device” it was talking about buying a neutron bomb.

Inflated Language: Inflated language is designed to make the simple seem complex or to give an air of importance to things, or situations. Instead of using the phrase invasion, the pentagon chose to say they had “predawn verticle insertion.” Sarcastic teachers will sometimes tell their students to “eschew obfuscation” (eschew=avoid; obfuscation=confusing and ambiguous language).

Bureaucratese: Lutz nicknames this “gobbledygook.” In short, it is piling on of words by either giving a bunch of large words or just a large quantity of words. Alan Greenspan testified before

that Senate Committee, “It is a tricky problem to find the particular calibration in timing that would be appropriate to stem the acceleration in risk premiums created by falling incomes without prematurely aborting the decline in the inflation-generated risk premiums.”

Avoid Slang (Most of the time)

Slang is the informal language of a particular group. Because it is seen as “informal,” it should be avoided in formal speeches like career speeches, academic speeches, and professional speeches. In less formal speeches, slang can be useful. If you are an insider to the group, slang can build credibility. Studies found that it created a more supportive classroom climate when a teacher used positive slang such as “cool” and “awesome,”

Use slang sparingly and with intent. Slang that is doesn’t fit the audience and context may rob you of your credibility and muddle the message’s meaning. When it comes to slang when in doubt, don’t.

Avoid Cliches (Like the Plague)

Clichés are overused expressions that have lost their meaning over time. Cliches can make you seem too lazy to come up with concrete words and some people find them annoying. If you are writing a formal essay, all experts say to avoid cliches. If you are making a formal academic presentation, avoid cliches. In speeches, sometimes they work, but other times the meaning gets lost.

Cliches are culturally bound so they may be misunderstood. Let’s take the cliché, “The devil’s in the details.” Does that mean details are bad like the devil is bad? Or does it mean the reason there are details is that the devil makes us have them? If you don’t know the actual meaning of the cliché it can be really confusing.

(The devils in the details mean that the details may take more effort than you think or there may be hidden problems).

Like everything in this chapter, context and audience matter. Some cliches may be just right for an audience so that is why researching your audience is important.

Avoid Cusswords (Most of the d@#! time)

To cuss or not to cuss, that is the question?

If you would have asked me that question, ten years ago, I would have advised you that under no circumstances should you ever swear in a speech. I have to be honest here, however, some of my favorite speeches use swear words. Dr. [Randy Pausch says curse words in the Last Lecture](#) and [Dr. Jerry Harvey's lecture on Abilene Paradox](#) just would not be the same without him telling you the cuss word spoken by his grandfather. When speakers say cuss words, they risk losing credibility points with the audience. When there are credibility points to spare, a well-placed swear word may actually make them seem more approachable. If, however, you are a speaker who is on the same level as your audience, you might not want to risk those credibility points.

Instead of thinking of swearing as uniformly harmful or morally wrong, more meaningful information about swearing can be obtained by asking what communication goals swearing achieves. Timothy Jay and Kristin Janschewitz, researchers who study taboo language.

If you want to swear in your speech, ask yourself “Why? What do I want to achieve?” Your goal as a speaker should be to get your message across to your audience. With that in mind, you should decide if there is someone in your audience who would be offended by your word and if that offense would cause them not to listen to your message. If that is the case, you should leave the swear word out.



Photo by [krakenimages](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

What Do You Think of a College Teacher Who Swears?

Researchers looked at what college students thought when their teachers said swear words. The impact on students was influenced by whether teachers were swearing to be funny, swearing at a person, or swearing about the class content. As you can imagine, students did not like a teacher to

swear at students. The other types of swearing caused mixed reactions. When asked, students felt like classroom swearing, made them feel:

- Closer to course content.
- More alert.
- Slightly offended or uncomfortable.
- Like the teachers was trying too hard.
- Like teacher seemed less in control.
- No change in how they felt about the teacher.

Students thought that swearing was part of the instructor's personality tended to cause them to perceive the teacher as verbally aggressive a trait associated with diminished student learning and student satisfaction.

Reflect on a college teacher you had that said curse words in class, did you like them more? Did they lose credibility points? Did you find them more approachable?

The Profanity President: Trump's Four-Letter Vocabulary

Read this excerpt from the New York Times about President Trump's cusswords in speeches. As you read, ask yourself whether you think swearing hurt or helped his credibility. If you were his political advisor, what would you tell him to do?

In a single speech on Friday alone, he managed to throw out a “hell,” an “ass” and a couple of “bullshits” for good measure. In the course of just one rally in Panama City Beach, Fla., earlier this month, he tossed out 10 “hells,” three “damns” and a “crap.” The audiences did not seem to mind. They cheered and whooped and applauded.

“I’d say swearing is part of his appeal,” said Melissa Mohr, the author of “Holy Sh*t: A Brief History of Swearing,” published in 2013. “It helps create the impression that he is saying what he thinks, ‘telling it like it is.’ We tend to believe people when they swear, because we interpret these words as a sign

of strong emotions. In his case, the emotion is often powerful anger, which his supporters seem to love.” New York Times

You are the political advisor, what would you advise him to do?

Can you think of other examples of swearing in political speeches?

How did reading those presidential swear words impact you?

Avoid the ISTS

Ists do not belong in your speech. Avoid racist, sexist, agist, heterosexist, ableist language. And while you are at it, make sure you know the preferred name for people groups.

The “right” word to use changes over time and changes based on context. When I started to write this chapter, I thought I would make a list of what words to say and what words not to say. It was going to be the definitive list of what to call people. I quickly realized that by the time this book was published, those words might change. So, now I am telling you that knowing the right term is an important part of your speech research.

As a speaker, it is your responsibility to use inclusive language and to choose your words in a way your audience feels included and respectful. It is your responsibility to research your subject and your audience and this includes how to use respectful language.

I found this guide from the University of South Carolina helpful: [Inclusive Language Guide from University of South Carolina Aiken.](#)

Discuss This

Read one of these articles and discuss how it applies to word choice and public speaking.

- [Seattle city gov’t bans the words “citizen” and “brown bag,” for obvious reasons](#)
- [Centuries-Old Law Against Cursing In Public Repealed By Virginia Legislators](#)
- [Supreme Court Sides with Teen Cheerleader in Free Speech Case Over Vulgar Snapchat Post](#)

Words That Significantly Hurt Politicians

The wrong word at the wrong time to the wrong audience can be problematic for a speaker. For a politician, it can be career changing. Here are a few examples of times politicians got it wrong.

If you are easily offended, you might skip this section.

You People

“Good and decent people all over this country, and particularly you folks, have got bars on windows. Drug use is absolutely devastating to our country and absolutely devastating to you and your people.” Ross Perot, presidential candidate.

Basket of Deplorables

“You know, to just be grossly generalistic, you could put half of Trump’s supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. Right? The racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic — you name it. And unfortunately, there are people like that. And he has lifted them up.” Hillary Clinton, Democratic candidate for the Presidency.

Legitimate Rape

In an interview for KTVI-TC, the question was posed “An abortion could be considered in the case of a tubal pregnancy, what about in the case of rape?” Politician Todd Akin replied. “If it’s a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down. But let’s assume that maybe that didn’t work or something: I think there should be some punishment, but the punishment ought to be of the rapist, and not attacking the child.” Todd Akin, Republican candidate for the Senate.

I’m Not a Witch

In an interview, Christina O’Donnell told Maher that she dabbled into witchcraft but never joined a coven. Later she made a campaign video: “I’m not a witch. I’m nothing you’ve heard. I’m you. None of us are perfect, but none of us can be happy with what we see all around us: politicians who think spending, trading favors, and back-room deals are the ways to stay in office. I’ll go to Washington and do what you’d do.” Republican Candidate, Christine McDonnell

(Fun fact, political coaches suggest you never repeat the accusation even to say I’m not because it reinforces it and makes it stick in the minds of listeners.)

Extremism

“I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.” Senator Barry Goldwater. (To use the word extremist always carries negative connotations.)

You Ain't Black

Joe Biden: “Well I tell you what, if you have a problem figuring out whether you're for me or Trump, then you ain't black.” Joe Biden, Democratic presidential candidate.

Crisis of Confidence

It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation. The erosion of our confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and the political fabric of America. The confidence that we have always had as a people is not simply some romantic dream or a proverb in a dusty book that we read just on the Fourth of July... Our people are losing that faith, not only in government itself but in the ability as citizens to serve as the ultimate rulers and shapers of our democracy. President Jimmy Carter (*Carter thought he would be respected for the honesty but all the negative words, made people feel bad*).

The Scream That Killed a Political Campaign

Anytime political mishaps come up, the Dean Scream is mentioned. It was the scream that seriously damaged his political campaign. This chapter is really about what words not to say, in this case, it is what sound not to make—beyond words.

Watch [2004: The scream that doomed Howard Dean \(1 mins\) on YouTube](#)

Avoid Powerless Language (It really makes you sound smart, don't you think?)

Powerless language consists of words or phrases that weaken the language and undermine credibility.

Powerless language results in the speaker being seen as less persuasive, less attractive, and less credible.

It is true that in social settings, you should be willing to use powerless language for the sake of cooperation, but in speeches, you should stick with sounding confident and powerful.

Examples of Powerless language

Problem	Definition	Example statements
Hedges	Statements that make a phrase sound less forceful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm <i>kinda</i> surprised at the research I found. • I <i>guess</i> I'd like to... • I <i>think</i> this point is important because
Hesitations	Words or sounds that are pauses in the speech like uh, um, er.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uh, I'd like to talk about... • W-w-w we can all agree. • I wish everyone would, er, uh consider this idea.
Intensifiers:	Words that do not add meaning but attempt to magnify the emotional content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm not <i>very</i> excited about... • The car is <i>really</i> expensive. • I'm <i>super</i> excited about this new... <p>“Substitute ‘damn’ every time you’re inclined to write ‘very’; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be.” Mark Twain</p>
Tag questions	Adding questions to the end of the sentence to make an assertion sound like a question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think this is a great idea, <i>don't you?</i> <p>It is OK to ask the audience questions. It becomes powerless language when you tag the question on so you don't sound certain of what you are saying.</p>
Disclaimers	Information given before a statement that signals a problem, a lack of understanding, or anticipates doubts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm not sure if I'm saying this right. • I probably shouldn't say this, but... • Don't get me wrong... • I know this sounds crazy but... • I'm no expert but...

Self Critical	Making negative statements about yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let me start by saying that I'm a terrible public speaker. • PowerPoint is not my thing, but here is a slide I made to illustrate.
Uptalk	Making voice go up at the end of a sentence making it sound like a question	(no example)

Powerless language is not always a bad thing, Dr. Fragale found that when doing group work, powerless language can make you appear more cooperative.

When people hear someone who is very confident and certain in the way that they speak, others think of that person as really dominant and ambitious and assertive, but they also think of that person as less warm, less collaborative and less cooperative. In groups that require a lot of teamwork, team members are looking for people who have good team skills, who care about other people. Those personality attributes are more important than how dominant or ambitious you are.

Oftentimes, you will have a group project that leads up to a speech. In this scenario, you should use your cooperative speech for working with the team and your assertive language in the speech.

At first glance, this whole chapter looks like it is dedicated to things to avoid. In reality, it is dedicated to getting you to think about one big thing—context. Context matters. Who makes up your audience, what the expectations of the occasion are, and who you are in relation to each will impact how you should design your speech. The most important thing in speechmaking is to figure out how to share your message in a way that the audience can listen to and receive your message.

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- The goal of your speech is to get your message across to your audience, by knowing the context, the occasion, and the audience you can avoid things that will cause them to not want to listen.
- Your credibility can be positively or negatively affected by your choice of words.

- Always be intentional with slang, jargon, and big words. Using them or not using them by choice in a way that connects with your audience.
- Always use inclusive language and adapt your vocabulary in a way your audience will feel respected and included.
- Beware of the curse of knowledge and realize that what is easy for you to understand may not be easy for your audience so adjust your speech accordingly

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[Things That Do Not Belong In Your Speech: Curse Words, ISTS, Slang, and Bafflegab](#)” In *Advanced Public Speaking* by Lynn Meade, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

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FALLACIES–WARNING! DECEPTIVE, HATEFUL SPEECH COMING YOUR WAY

A fallacy is an error in reasoning. It is a weak argument. To be more specific, a fallacy is an “argument” in which the premises given for the conclusion do not provide the needed degree of support. By becoming aware of the most common fallacies, you can avoid them in your own speech and detect them when others use them.

Fallacies undermine ethical communication.

- They distract us from the real issue.
- They “trick” us into faulty reasoning.
- They deceive us into believing bad conclusions.
- They keep us from having a good discussion of the topic at hand.



Learning to detect fallacies helps you fine tune your bs meter.
“BS-meter” by [awp101](#), licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA](#)

The venerable tradition of respectful argumentation, based on evidence, conducted with courtesy, and leading to the greater exposition of truth is a precious part of our heritage in this land of freedom.

James Shannon, the youngest college president in the US.

There are many fallacies. Here are some of the most common ones that occur in persuasive and political types of speeches.

Red Herring

A red herring fallacy gets its name from the sport of fox hunting. In foxhunting, riders on horses follow their dogs who are chasing a fox. Riders sometimes keep a fish, –a red herring–in their saddlebags. If they are ahead in the chase, they can stop and drag the fish across the fox’s scent and make the trail go a different direction. When the opponents’ dogs encounter the fishy smell, it distracts them from their mission of fox chasing.

A red herring fallacy occurs when a speaker distracts listeners with sensational, irrelevant material. Sometimes it happens when the speaker changes the subject and sometimes it happens when the speaker brings up irrelevant information to the topic. Why is this a problem? It is a problem because it sidetracks the argument at hand. It seeks to “win” an argument by diversion. Take this example, “We admit that voting to support school choice is a popular measure. But we also urge you to note that there are so many issues on this ballot that the whole thing is getting ridiculous.” The argument at hand is whether or not to vote for school choice but the speaker distracts us by bringing up the point that there are too many issues on the ballot. It may be true that there are too many issues on the ballot, but that doesn’t make the school choice something we should vote for or not.



Photo by [Nelson Ndongala](#), used under [Unsplash license](#)

Slippery Slope



“Slippery slope” by [Andreas Levers](#), licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

Oftentimes a speaker will argue one bad thing will result in many other bad things. This is done without proving these negative things will happen. A slippery slope causes the discussion to get off track. If you are not careful, you will find yourself arguing the ending claim and miss the real debate. Consider this example. In talking about gay marriage, Republican candidate for Governor, Rebecca Kleefisch went down a slippery slope that led to tables and dogs. “At what point are we going to OK marrying inanimate objects? Can I marry this table, or this, you know, clock? Can we marry dogs?”



Removal of Robert E Lee Statue from Column in New Orleans. May 2017. [Photo by Infrogmation of New Orleans](#), licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

When talking about the removal of public statues, President Trump went down a slippery slope. “This week it’s Robert E. Lee. I notice that Stonewall Jackson’s coming down. I wonder; is it George Washington next week, and is it, Thomas Jefferson, the week after? You know, you really do have to ask yourself, where does it stop?”

In speaking about the Iraq threat, President George W. Bush said, “I’m not willing to stake one American life on trusting Saddam Hussein. Failure to act would embolden other tyrants, allow terrorists access to new weapons and new resources, and make blackmail a permanent feature of world events. The United Nations would betray the purpose of its founding and prove irrelevant to the problems of our time. And through its inaction, the United States would resign itself to a future of fear.”

Discuss This

“Can people be persuaded?” is a very different question from ‘Can arguments be won?’ People change their minds about things all the time, but I’m not sure that anybody ever wins an argument. Persuasion is not a zero-sum game. It occurs when somebody moves, even slightly, away from one position and toward another. It is entirely possible for two (or more) people to move closer to each other’s positions during an argument without either one being able to claim victory over the other.

But we like to win, and we hate to lose, so the fact that people don’t usually win arguments doesn’t stop most of us from trying. And we all think we know what winning means: It means crushing opponents and making them cry. It means humiliating them in front of a crowd. And it means displaying our power and our rightness for all the world to see and acknowledge. And this means that we often end up trying to win by employing rhetorical strategies that are fundamentally incapable of persuading anybody of anything. And that looks a lot like losing.”

Source: Austin, M. (2019). *We must not be enemies: Restoring America’s civic tradition*. Rowman & Littlefield.

1. Would you agree, “I’m not sure that anybody ever wins an argument?” Why or why not?
2. How do fallacies interfere with the ability of one person to move closer to another?
3. Do you agree “we often end up trying to win by employing rhetorical strategies that are fundamentally incapable of persuading anybody of anything?”
4. When people resort to fallacies (attacks, diversions), is it “losing?”

Ad Hominem

We have a Congress
that spent money
like John Edwards
at a beauty shop.

Mike Huckabee (R)
Republican Presidential Candidate Debate

An Ad Hominem fallacy is one where the speaker attacks the person rather than the point. There are four major forms of attacking the person:

Ad hominem abusive: Instead of attacking a point, the argument attacks the person who made the assertion.

Democrat Alan Grayson described Republicans as “foot-dragging, knuckle-dragging Neanderthals who know nothing but ‘no.’”

Charley Reese from the Daily Iberian wrote, “That’s what abortion is – killing innocent humans for money. Abortionists are government licensed hit men.”

Ad hominem circumstantial: Instead of attacking the point, the person attacks the circumstances. They imply guilt by association.

Sara Palin, Republican Vice Presidential hopeful implied that Barak Obama was friends with terrorists. “Our opponent though is someone who sees America, it seems, as being so imperfect that he’s palling around with terrorists who would target their own country.”

Ad hominem tu quoque: The attacker suggests the person is a hypocrite and because they are a hypocrite, you can’t believe any point they make.

When Al Gore was traveling to speaking engagement on the topic of global warming, he was criticized for traveling by private jet. As President Obama was talking about gun control, speakers pointed out he was surrounded by secret service agents with guns. The argument itself should be discussed—gun control, climate change—the fact that the speaker may or may not be a hypocrite doesn’t mean the issue is right or wrong.

Poisoning the well: The speaker attacks the credibility of a person before they speak to bias listeners against the speaker. This fallacy is based on the belief that the enemy used to put tainted meat down into the town well so all the water that would come out of the well would be tainted and make people sick. The idea is that if a speaker taints a person’s credibility, then everything that comes out of their mouth is something harmful. Just because a person had poor judgment in one situation, doesn’t mean that they are incorrectly handling the topic at hand.

For a great overview of Ad Hominem, [watch **Ad Hominem \(Appeal to personal attack\) \(2 mins\) on YouTube**](#)

Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc

Talking to cashiers at fast-food restaurants causes obesity
(the more I talk to fast food cashiers, the heavier I get).

Author unknown

The fallacy here is the assumption that one thing caused another without proof of the link. When you study statistics, you will learn the phrase “correlation does not mean causation” which means just because two things seem to happen together, doesn’t mean that the one actually caused the other. Post hoc ergo propter hoc = after this therefore because of this and is a fallacy of false cause. Just because two things are consecutive, doesn’t mean that one caused the other. I do still believe that it rains every time I wash my car.

Sports fans have a lot of these— “my team lost Friday because I forgot to wear my lucky hat.”

Autism in children is often detected at the same ages as they are getting immunizations leading to the incorrect assumption that one causes the other. “Just the other day, two years old, two and a half years old, a child, a beautiful child went to have the vaccine, and came back, and a week later got a tremendous fever, got very, very sick, now is autistic.” Donald Trump

That’s Latin for ‘I’m old enough I should see a propterhoctologist’, right?
Mark Miller.

Faulty Analogy

Comparing things that are dissimilar in some important way

Former Arkansas Governor, Mike Huckabee (R) said at a Freedom Summit that he is beginning to believe there’s “More freedom in North Korea sometimes than there is in the United States. When I go to the airport, I have to get in the surrender position. People put hands all over me. And I have to provide a photo ID in a couple of different forms and prove that I really am not going to terrorize the airplane. But if I want to go vote, I don’t need a thing.” He was arguing why there needs to be government-required identification when voting but this comparison of airport inspection to a country with severe human rights violations is distracting and not a fair analogy.

“You know Obamacare is really I think the worst thing that has happened in this nation since slavery. And it is in a way, it is slavery in a way, because it is making all of us subservient to the government, and it was never about health care. It was about control.” Political candidate Ben Carson (R) at Values Voter Summit in Washington, D.C.

What do you think? Good metaphor or faulty analogy?

I grew up castrating hogs on an Iowa farm,
 so when I come to Washington,
 I'll know how to cut pork.
 Joni Ernst (R-IA)

Improperly used comparisons can be a problem. Andina Wise in an opinion piece in *Scientific American* highlights that discussing military metaphors to fight COVID-19 undermines the practice of medicine. She highlights the wartime rhetoric using words that: Doctors are *fighting* on the *frontlines* without sufficient *ammunition*. They are *battling the enemy and doctors from every specialty have been redeployed*. They are *at war*. She warns that using wartime rhetoric sends a “precarious message.”

To adopt a wartime mentality is fundamentally to allow for an all-bets-are-off, anything-goes approach to emerging victorious. And while there may very well be a time for slapdash tactics in the course of weaponized encounters on the physical battlefield, this is never how one should endeavor to practice medicine.

Watch [False analogies about cupcakes and obesity \(5 mins\) on YouTube](#), it includes some powerful and relevant examples of false analogies.

Non sequitur

Non sequitur is reasoning in which principles and observations are unrelated to each other or to the conclusion drawn. Literally means “it does not follow.” If I mix red paint and green paint will never make blue paint, that’s not logical. Similarly, a non sequitur is not a logical conclusion of the ideas they are combining.

**Snow in 50 states does not mean climate change is fake.
 It is not a logical conclusion**

“The liberals, the environmentalists, extremists, the Al Gores of the world
 were wrong on science – and today we know it...
 I’ve got a scoop shovel for you if you want to come any place
 in the 50 states in America —
 for the first time in the history of keeping records,
 there’s snowfall on the ground in all 50 states.
 It’s tough to make an argument

when the evidence is all around us
with the snowy white wonder and a crystal cathedral.”

Steve Kin, Republican from Iowa speaking at CPAC

Is Veggie Pizza Un-manly? Serving Up a Non-Sequitur

The more toppings a man has on his pizza,
I believe the more manly he is.
A manly man doesn't want it piled high with vegetables.
He would call that a sissy pizza.

Herman Cain, former presidential nominee
and CEO of Godfather's Pizza



Photo by [Nicolás Perondi](#),
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Hasty generalization

Drawing conclusions based on insufficient or non-representative observations.

People often commit hasty generalizations because of bias or prejudice. For example, someone who is a sexist might conclude that all women are unfit to fly jet fighters because one woman crashed one. People also commonly commit hasty generalizations because of laziness or sloppiness. It is very easy to simply leap to a conclusion and much harder to gather an adequate sample and draw a justified conclusion. Thus, avoiding this fallacy requires minimizing the influence of bias and taking care to select a sample that is large enough. Nizkor Project

Steve King assumes Mexicans are drug dealers: “For everyone who’s a valedictorian, there’s another 100 out there who weigh 130 pounds — and they’ve got calves the size of cantaloupes because they’re hauling 75 pounds of marijuana across the desert.” Representative Steve King, a Republican from Iowa making assumptions about immigrants from Mexico.

Herman Cain assumes Muslims are militants: “I would not be comfortable [with a Muslim in my administration] because you have peaceful Muslims and then you have militant Muslims, those that are trying to kill us. And so when I said I wouldn’t be comfortable, I was thinking about the ones that are trying to kill us, number one. Secondly, yes, I do not believe in sharia law in American courts. I believe in American laws in American courts. Period. There have been instances in New Jersey. There was an instance in Oklahoma where Muslims did try to influence court decisions with sharia law. I was simply saying very emphatically American laws in American courts.” Republican Tea Party Candidate, Herman Cain.

Either-or-thinking (Also Called False Dilemma)

Framing choices so that listeners think they have only two options and one of them is obviously preferred. I saw someone with a shirt on the other day that said, “America, love it or leave it.” It set up only two options. What if someone mostly loves America, but doesn’t like the health care system? What if they like America, but see that there is unfair distribution of wealth? What if they think another country has a better political system? Setting it up like there are only two choices when clearly most things have many shades of gray is creating a false dilemma.

”So, it is with conviction that I support this resolution as being in the best interests of our nation. A vote for it is not a vote to rush to war; it is a vote that puts awesome responsibility in the hands of our President and we say to him – use these powers wisely and as a last resort. And it is a vote that says clearly to Saddam Hussein – this is your last chance – disarm or be disarmed.” Hillary Clinton (D)

“Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.” George W. Bush (R) statement to Congress after 9/11.

We can either tax and regulate cannabis for adult use, reduce violence, and enrich our state, or we can continue a policy that enriches the cartels and has always has a racially biased pattern of enforcement. Ben Jealous candidate during a Democratic primary for Governor

“And the reason is because there really are only two alternatives here. Either the issue of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon is resolved diplomatically through a negotiation or it’s resolved through a force, through war.” Barack Obama (D)

Strawman



“Strawman” by [Kevin Lawver](#),
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Cropped by Lynn Meade.

“Another well known, and much used, device
is to misrepresent my position
and attack things I have never said.”
Rachel Carson

Strawman fallacy is where a speaker belittles or trivializes an argument to refute them easily. The speaker cannot defeat the real issue so they frame the issue as silly –they make a straw doll—a fake argument that looks a little like the real one that is easily defeated. Often the issue they attack has a semblance of the real issue but is different in significant ways.

Consider this example, President Obama introduced a provision that would allow Medicare to pay for counseling on end-of-life issues if the patient asked for it. Doctors could counsel patients about end-of-life care issues such as living wills and hospice care. Senator Chuck Grassley, Iowa Republican said in a town hall meeting. “In the House bill, there is counseling for end of life. You have every right to fear. You shouldn’t have counseling at the end of life, you should have done that 20 years before. Should not have a government-run plan to decide when to pull the plug on grandma.” Notice what happened, he changed counseling about end-of-life issues into pulling the plug on grandma. In this example, Grassley created the issue into something that sounds ridiculous and is easy to defeat.

Can You Find All the Fallacies?

We've been battling this socialist health care, the nationalization of health care, that is going to absolutely kill senior citizens. They'll put them on lists and force them to die early because they won't get the treatment as early as they need. [...] I would rather stop this socialization of health care because once the government pays for your health care, they have every right to tell you what you eat, what you drink, how you exercise, where you live. [...] But if we're going to pay 700 million dollars like we voted last Friday to put condoms on wild horses, and I know it just says an un-permanent enhanced contraception whatever the heck that is. I guess it follows that they're eventually get around to doing it to us. This is a statement by Representative Louie Gohmert (R-TX) from Texas in an interview with Alex Jones.

1. "Socialist health care" is a strawman
2. "Kill senior citizens" and "force them to die early" is a slippery slope and a Post hoc ergo propter hoc.
3. "One the government pays for your healthcare....tell you...eat, drink...live" is a Post hoc ergo propter hoc.
4. "Condoms on wild horses" is a red herring and a strawman
5. "They will get around to doing that to us" is a slippery slope and post hoc

Key Takeaways

Remember This!

- A fallacy is a weak argument in which the premises given do not provide needed support—it is a weak argument

- Red herring fallacy occurs when a speaker distracts listeners with sensational, irrelevant material.
- Slippery slope fallacy occurs when the speaker argues that one bad thing will result in many other bad things. This is done without proving that these negative things will happen.
- Ad Hominem fallacy here the speaker attacks the person rather than the point.
- A post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy is the assumption that one thing caused another without proof of the link.
- A faulty analogy is comparing things that are dissimilar in some important way.
- Non sequitur fallacy is reasoning in which principles and observations are unrelated to each other or to the conclusion drawn.
- Hasty generalization is drawing conclusions based on insufficient or non-representative observations.
- Either-or-thinking is framing choices so that listeners think they have only two options and one of them is obviously preferred.
- Strawman fallacy is where a speaker belittles or trivializes an argument to refute them easily

Attribution & References

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