Principles of Public Speaking

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KATIE GRUBER

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Introduction

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Principles of Public Speaking is a textbook focused on audience-centered communication, aiming to provide you with the concepts and skills necessary to effectively communicate in public. This is an Open Access, Creative Commons licensed textbook. This book functions differently than a traditional print text, so we encourage you to take a moment to familiarize yourself with how it works.

The way to navigate through this book is by using the "Contents" drop-down menu on the left side of the textbook screen. The text is divided into three sections – Speech Preparation, Speech Delivery, and Examples of Student Work.

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Textbook Information

In addition to inclusion of original work by the author, the content of this book is adapted and remixed from four openly licensed materials, including Principles of Public Speaking by Lumen Learning, Stand up, Speak out – University of Minnesota Libraries,

Speak Out, Call In: Public Speaking as Advocacy – University of Kansas Libraries, and Small Group Communication. We reformatted some of the original text by replacing, removing, and/or adding images. Otherwise, there were no significant alterations from the attributed sources. We have also incorporated helpful sites such as the National Communication Association and our experience as instructors of Public Speaking for over 15 years.

 For questions or revisions related to this book, please contact Katie.Gruber@mtsu.edu.

Textbook Format & Adoption

In addition to the open web version, this textbook is available in alternative formats, including a downloadable PDF for electronic use or printing.

If you are an instructor planning on adopting or adapting this book for a course, please let us know so that we can provide you with supplemental instructor resources such as test banks. Please contact Katie.Gruber@mtsu.edu for inquiries.

Recommended Reference

The following is a recommended reference in APA style for this book:

Gruber, K. G. (2022). *Principles of public speaking*. Pressbooks. https://mtsu.pressbooks.pub/principlesofpublicspeaking/

PART I

SPEECH PREPARATION

Welcome to Public Speaking

Given the demands for good communication skills as a citizen of the world and in the workplace, a course in public speaking is perhaps more important than ever. Unfortunately, there isn't a quick path to a great speech. Good speaking is developed through preparation and practice. And while practice may not make perfect, it does instill *confidence.*

A speech is a form of oral communication with two integral parts – ***content*** and ***delivery***. Both are critical for success. For example, the speech that has weak content, even if verbalized effectively, is of little value. In addition, the speech that has excellent content is often destroyed by poor delivery. While both parts of the speech are important, a successful speech must first have good content. This means a speaker must have a thorough knowledge of the subject. Knowledge of a subject is achieved through both personal experience and research; you will surely rely on both to accomplish every effective speech. You should allow yourself sufficient time to conduct the necessary research for each speech. If you wait until the last minute to begin research, the odds are you will not have enough time to obtain the necessary knowledge of your subject, let alone the time to practice and become familiar with the content of your speech for purposes of good delivery. In short, a speech is *a creative act whose content is comprised of multiple sources uniquely blended together to establish an individual's purpose.*

Additionally, preparing a speech is a *process* with several distinct steps. Only once you have prepared will you feel confident in delivery. The first part of this text will discuss preparing for each speech, while the second part reviews speech delivery. Finally, the third part of this text provides examples of student speeches.

Chapter One – The Importance of Public Speaking

Public Speaking in the Twenty-First Century

Public speaking is the process of designing and delivering a **message** to an audience. Effective public speaking involves understanding your audience and speaking goals, choosing elements for the speech that will engage your audience with your topic, and delivering your message skillfully. Good public speakers understand that they must plan, organize, and revise their material in order to develop an effective speech. This book will help you understand the basics of effective public speaking and guide you through the process of creating your own presentations. We'll begin by discussing the ways in which public speaking is relevant to you and can benefit you in your career, education, and personal life.

In a world where people are bombarded with messages through television, social media, and the Internet, one of the first questions you may ask is, "Do people still give speeches?" Well, type the words "public speaking" into Amazon.com or Barnesandnoble.com, and you will find more than two thousand books with the words "public speaking" in the title. Most of these and other books related to public speaking are not college textbooks. In fact, many books written about public speaking are intended for very specific audiences: *A Handbook of Public Speaking for Scientists and Engineers* (by Peter Kenny), *Excuse Me! Let Me Speak!: A Young Person's Guide to Public Speaking* (by Michelle J. Dyett-Welcome), *Professionally Speaking: Public Speaking for Health Professionals* (by Frank De Piano and Arnold Melnick), and *Speaking Effectively: A Guide for Air Force Speakers* (by John A. Kline). Although these different books address specific issues related to

nurses, engineers, or air force officers, the content is basically the same. If you search for "public speaking" in an online academic database, you'll find numerous articles on public speaking in business magazines (e.g., *BusinessWeek*, *Nonprofit World*) and academic journals (e.g., *Harvard Business Review*, *Journal of Business Communication*). There is so much information available about public speaking because it continues to be relevant even with the growth of technological means of communication. As author and speaker Scott Berkun writes in his blog, "For all our tech, we're still very fond of the most low tech thing there is: a monologue." [1]1People continue to spend millions of dollars every year to listen to professional speakers. For example, attendees of the 2010 TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) conference, which invites speakers from around the world to share their ideas in short, eighteen-minute presentations, paid six thousand dollars per person to listen to fifty speeches over a four-day period.

Technology can also help public speakers reach audiences that were not possible to reach in the past. Millions of people heard about and then watched Randy Pausch's "Last Lecture" online. In this captivating speech, Randy Pausch, a Carnegie Mellon University professor who retired at age forty-six after developing inoperable tumors, delivered his last lecture to the students, faculty, and staff. This inspiring speech was turned into a DVD and a best-selling book that was eventually published in more than thirty-five languages.[2]

We realize that you may not be invited to TED to give the speech of your life or create a speech so inspirational that it touches the lives of millions via YouTube; however, all of us will find ourselves in situations where we will be asked to give a speech, make a presentation, or just deliver a few words. In this chapter, we will first address why public speaking is important, and then we will discuss models that illustrate the process of public speaking itself.

1.

The Importance of Public Speaking

Oral communication skills were the number one skill that college graduates found useful in the business world, according to a study by sociologist Andrew Zekeri.[3] That fact alone makes learning about public speaking worthwhile. However, there are many other benefits of communicating effectively for the hundreds of thousands of college students every year who take public speaking courses. Let's take a look at some of the personal benefits you'll get both from a course in public speaking and from giving public speeches.

Benefits of Public Speaking Courses

In addition to learning the process of creating and delivering an effective speech, students of public speaking leave the class with a number of other benefits as well. Some of these benefits include

- developing critical thinking skills,
- fine-tuning verbal and nonverbal skills,
- overcoming fear of public speaking.

Developing Critical Thinking Skills

One of the very first benefits you will gain from your public speaking course is an increased ability to think critically. Problem solving is one of many critical thinking skills you will engage in during this course. For example, when preparing a persuasive speech, you'll have to think through real problems affecting your campus, community, or the world and provide possible solutions to those problems. You'll also have to think about the positive and negative consequences of your solutions and then communicate your ideas to others. At first, it may seem easy to come up with solutions for a campus problem such as a shortage of parking spaces: just build more spaces. But after thinking and researching further you may find out that building costs, environmental impact from loss of green space, maintenance needs, or limited locations for additional spaces make this solution impractical. Being able to think through problems and analyze the potential costs and benefits of solutions is an essential part of critical thinking and of public speaking aimed at persuading others. These skills will help you not only in public speaking contexts but throughout your life as well. As we stated earlier, college graduates in Zekeri's study rated oral communication skills as the most useful for success in the business world. The second most valuable skill they reported was problem-solving ability, so your public speaking course is doubly valuable!

Another benefit to public speaking is that it will enhance your ability to conduct and analyze research. Public speakers must provide credible evidence within their speeches if they are going to persuade various audiences. So your public speaking course will further refine your ability to find and utilize a range of sources.

Fine-Tuning Verbal and Nonverbal Skills

A second benefit of taking a public speaking course is that it will help you fine-tune your verbal and nonverbal communication skills. Whether you competed in public speaking in high school or this is your first time speaking in front of an audience, having the opportunity to actively practice communication skills and receive professional feedback will help you become a better overall communicator. Often, people don't even realize that they twirl their hair or repeatedly mispronounce words while speaking in public settings until they receive feedback from a teacher during a public speaking course. People around the United States will often pay speech coaches over one hundred dollars per hour to help them enhance their speaking skills. You have a built-in speech coach right in your classroom, so it is to your advantage to use the opportunity to improve your verbal and nonverbal communication skills.

Overcoming Fear of Public Speaking

An additional benefit of taking a public speaking class is that it will

help reduce your fear of public speaking. Whether they've spoken in public a lot or are just getting started, most people experience some anxiety when engaging in public speaking. Heidi Rose and Andrew Rancer evaluated students' levels of public speaking anxiety during both the first and last weeks of their public speaking class and found that those levels decreased over the course of the semester.[4] One explanation is that people often have little exposure to public speaking. By taking a course in public speaking, students become better acquainted with the public speaking process, making them more confident and less apprehensive. In addition, you will learn specific strategies for overcoming the challenges of speech anxiety. We will discuss this topic in greater detail in Chapter 20.

Benefits of Engaging in Public Speaking

Once you've learned the basic skills associated with public speaking, you'll find that being able to effectively speak in public has profound benefits, including

- influencing the world around you,
- developing leadership skills,
- becoming a thought leader.

Influencing the World around You

If you don't like something about your local government, then speak out about your issue! One of the best ways to get our society to change is through the power of speech. Common citizens in the United States and around the world, like you, are influencing the world in real ways through the power of speech. Just type the words "citizens speak out" in a search engine and you'll find numerous examples of how common citizens use the power of speech to make real changes in the world—for example, by speaking out against "fracking" for natural gas (a process in which chemicals are injected into rocks in an attempt to open them up for fast flow of natural gas or oil) or in favor of retaining a popular local sheriff. One of the amazing parts of being a citizen in a democracy is the right to stand up and speak out, which is a luxury many people in the world do not have. So if you don't like something, be the force of change you're looking for through the power of speech.

Instruction, Imitation, and Practice

The most successful model for teaching public speaking (and the one this class follows) relies on a mix of instruction, imitation, and practice.

- **Instruction** reinforces the lessons learned from the history of public speaking study. The instruction in this class draws most explicitly from the rhetorical tradition. We will study principles of argumentation, arrangement, and style.

- **Imitation** means that when studying a performance skill like speaking, we benefit by identifying and imitating the best practices of skilled speakers. I don't mean stealing or plagiarizing, I mean trying to link phrases together in a manner similar to a speaker we think sounds good. There are a number of speeches that you will watch this semester (online and in class). The intent of these speeches is to show you some best practices. You shouldn't simply watch a speech like you would a television show; you should *seek* to find some verbal or nonverbal behaviors that you would like to imitate. As Bandura noted with his Social Learning Theory (1977), we learn through *observation.*

- **Practice** is the most obvious leg of public speaking study. If you are going to get better at public speaking, you must be able to apply the lessons of instruction and imitation by practicing your speeches. The nice thing about public speaking is that you can practice it almost anywhere. However, your practice time is best spent by speaking in situations where you have an attentive audience (as opposed to a curious dog or a sleeping roommate).

Myths about Public Speaking

You can't learn to be a good public speaker; you have to be born a naturally good speaker. Everyone can become a better public speaker through study and practice. I love to ski. I wasn't born being a good skier; rather, I grew up skiing. I skied as often as I could, and I got better. The same is true of public speaking. You were born with the basic equipment needed for speaking in public—you just need some skill development.

I can only learn public speaking through practice alone. This misconception often works in conjunction with the misconception #1 and #3. I see this as a hugely egoistic argument since it assumes that only you know what good public speaking is and only you know how to improve. Let me return to the skiing analogy (though you could substitute any sports or skills analogy, like playing a musical instrument). Most people develop their skiing ability by simply skiing a lot. But if you want to get better, you need to seek outside information about the principles of skiing. That's why people pay a lot of money for ski lessons. Ski instructors can both model good skiing behaviors and they can talk about the physics of metal on snow and the physiology of your muscles on skis.

Public speaking is just delivery (speech content doesn't matter). This is like saying that a good essay is simply one that has good grammar or punctuation. A good essay should have good grammar and punctuation, but it also needs good content. The same holds true of a speech. When we listen to a speech, we judge the speaker according to what they say as well as how they say it. Think about presidential debates. After any presidential debate, pundits flood the airwaves and pick apart both content and delivery, but they spend far more time discussing what the candidates said.

Reading a speech is the best way to ensure a good speech. There may be similarities between writing and speaking, but they also differ in many important respects. A speech is an act of

communication with a specific audience. Reading a speech undermines this (and as we will see, can actually make you more nervous). If you were having a conversation with a friend about your classes and suddenly started reading a prepared set of comments, the conversation would sink. Why? A conversation is dynamic and relies on communicating with the other person. A speech is like a conversation in this way; you are engaging in a shared act of communication with the audience. Remember, this is a *public speaking* class, not a *public reading* class!

Rhetoric

A class on public speaking is essentially a rhetoric class. The word ***rhetoric*** is often used to indicate that the speaker is lying ("his record doesn't match his rhetoric") or that the speaker is filling air with meaningless talk ("let's move past all the rhetoric and get down to business"). It is true that term has gotten a lot of bad press over the past 2,000 years or so, but the study of rhetoric is the study of what is persuasive. We are certainly not the first group to study what goes into a dynamic and persuasive speech. The ancient Greeks and Romans spent a lot of time thinking and writing about good speaking. Throughout history, thinkers and charlatans alike have devoted a considerable amount of effort to figuring out what sounds good, looks good, and works to motivate various audiences.

Definitions of Rhetoric

Rhetorica. Pixabay. [1]

Since the study of rhetoric has been around for so many years, there are a number of different definitions for the word. Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering in any particular case the available means of persuasion." Plato held that rhetoric is "the art of winning the soul by discourse." The Roman thinker Quintilian suggested simply that rhetoric is the art of speaking well. John Locke however held a dimmer view of the art and wrote that rhetoric is a "powerful instrument of error and deceit." The contemporary writer Gerard Hauser suggests, "Rhetoric is communication that attempts to coordinate social action. For this

reason, rhetorical communication is explicitly pragmatic. Its goal is to influence human choices on specific matters that require immediate attention."**For the purposes of this class, we will define rhetoric as "the study and art of effective speaking."** This doesn't begin to capture all the ways in which rhetoric could be (and has been) defined, but it does focus our study on the aspects of rhetoric most relevant to our present concern.

Five Main Parts to Rhetoric

Earlier thinkers argued that the study and practice of rhetoric involved **five** main parts:

INVENTION: The first thing that must go into a good speech is good material. Invention means finding or thinking up good speech content. Basically, good speakers know what they're talking about. There are a number of different strategies that we will study to help prime the mental pump. Our focus in this class is on good arguments (solid claims supported with good evidence). Aristotle suggested that the speech content was either artistic (you had to think it up) or inartistic (it already existed). Proving your claims requires both inartistic and artistic proofs. We all know that good arguments require evidence, so let's look at the three proofs or appeals to your audience:

- **LOGOS**: We convince people through our use of *logic*. So, I can argue that it rained last night by pointing to the puddles on the ground. I use the evidence of rain puddles to make a claim about something that I didn't see, relying on the basic logical premise that "puddles generally indicate recent rain." This isn't the most contentious of arguments, you say. Very true, but the principle is the same. We use appeals to logic to help support our arguments. Economists make logical arguments all the time. They have evidence about current trends, but they argue

about where to invest money based on logic— they don't know 100% what the market will do, but they can try to figure out where to invest based on historical precedent, prevailing wisdom, and informal logic.

- **PATHOS**: We persuade people by appealing to their *emotions*. Of course, we are not simply logical animals, we have emotions, and these often shape how we see and understand the world. As Dale Carnegie once said, "*When dealing with people, let us remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity.*" Now an appeal to pathos doesn't mean that we simply tug at people's heart strings, or we try to scare them into acting our way. Of course this happens, but you would be hard pressed to call it good argumentation. Aristotle saw pathos as putting the audience in the right frame of mind. So, if you are arguing for something that might seem unfamiliar to your audience, you would be well advised to tell some personal stories that helped people understand the human element. The commercials you see asking for help in funding starving populations or the ASPCA commercials with Sarah McLachlan singing "In the Arms of the Angel," rely heavily on pathos. They are trying to evoke your compassion by showing you what the living conditions are like for many in need.
- **ETHOS**: We can persuade people by virtue of *good character*. Aristotle suggested that of the three artistic proofs, ethos was potentially the most persuasive. Do we trust the speaker's credibility as a person and on the topic? Do we trust that the speaker has our best interests at heart? We can gain ethos by doing all the research that a good speech needs and then demonstrating that ethos by being able to talk about the topic intelligently. We can "borrow" ethos by citing the best research available. Ultimately, though ethos must be earned by showing the audience that you are a credible source on this topic.

A good speech requires you to think about a host of different issues ranging from possible arguments, oppositional arguments, and all the different types of evidence you can use. A good speech also includes a mix of logos, pathos, and ethos. The process of sorting through all this material and deciding on the best for you case is the process of **invention**.

ARRANGEMENT: Once you determine what your speech will be about and what types of artistic and inartistic proofs you will use, then you need to think about the best possible way to arrange your speech. How much background information do you need to give? How should you arrange your main points? How long or short should the introduction be? In many ways, arranging a speech is more difficult than arranging an essay because a reader can jump around in an essay or go back to re-read, but an audience member must listen to the speaker's flow of information in chronological time. Given this, you must think about how your audience will hear and understand your speech.

STYLE: Once you know *what* you will say and the *order* in which you will say it, then you can begin to focus more on the details of exactly *how* you will say it. Some speeches are stylistically rich (Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is a famous example) while others are more stylistically plain (say, a business presentation), yet both have a type of style. The rhetorician Cicero talked about high, middle, and low styles in public speaking. We are probably familiar with the high style; many political orators use it for famous speeches. In the U.S. the State of the Union Address is usually delivered in a middle or high style. We are also probably familiar with the low style. If not, watch a television talk show; here the style is very casual. Ultimately, style is governed by the topic and the audience you are addressing. In this class, we are concerned most with the middle and middle-high style. You should think strategically about your style and how you audience will hear and understand your words.

MEMORY: This part of rhetoric was really important for speakers

in classical Greece and Rome because they delivered really long speeches (often in very high style). It remains important for us because a speech is spoken not read. If you don't practice your speech, you won't be familiar with it. If you aren't familiar with your speech, you will probably read it to us. This is not a public *reading* class, but a public *speaking*class. You should not try to memorize your speeches word for word. This will only exacerbate any fear you have of public speaking. However, you should know the main parts of your speech. This comes down to a matter of knowledge and practice. You need to know your material well enough so that you can talk about the topic intelligently (invention). You also need to practice enough so that you know how best to explain this topic to the audience (arrangement and style).

DELIVERY: The final part of a study of rhetoric is the one that people fear the most: standing up in front of an audience and actually delivering the speech. Of course, if you have the invention, arrangement, style, and memory parts down pat, the delivery part shouldn't give you too many headaches. That said, there are a number of delivery issues that can help or hurt your speech. We will study some of those delivery issues that are most distracting and those techniques that are most beneficial. However, the basic delivery approach we will focus on in this class is conversational delivery. This doesn't mean simply speaking as you would with your friends about any subject, but finding a style that looks good, sounds good, and helps your ethos.

Finally, as we move forward, consider the ways in which you will use public speaking in your personal life and your career. You cannot escape public speaking; our time together will be spent helping you to learn the subject of effective public address and will give you the tools necessary to effectively convey messages to others, whenever this time comes.

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Chapter Two – The Communication Process

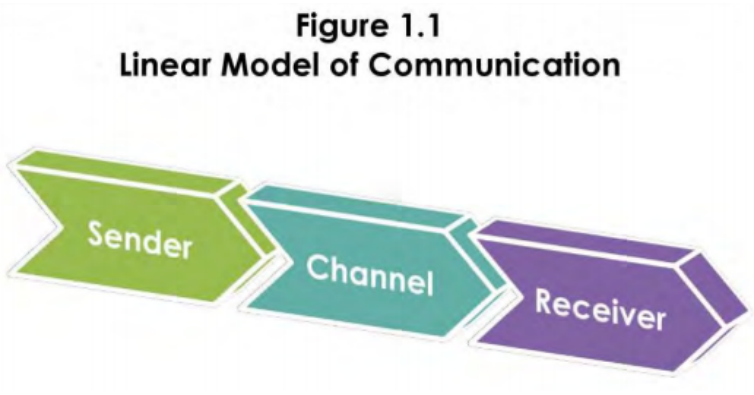
Models of Communication

It should be clear by now that public speaking happens all around us in many segments of our lives. However, to truly understand what is happening within these presentations, we need to take a step back and look at some of the key components of the communication process.

Linear Model of Communication

The first theoretical model of communication was proposed in 1949 by Shannon and Weaver for Bell Laboratories.[1] This three-part model was intended to capture the radio and television transmission process. However, it was later adapted to human communication and is now known as the linear model of communication. The first part of the model is the sender, and this is the person who is speaking. The second part of the model is the channel, which is the apparatus for carrying the message (i.e., the phone or TV). The third part of the model is the receiver, and this is the person who picks up the message. In this model, communication is seen as a one-way process of transmitting a message from one person to another person. This model can be found in Figure 1.1. If you think about situations when you communicate with another person face-to-face or when you give a speech, you probably realize that this model is inadequate — communication is much more complicated than firing off a message to others.

1. [2]
2. [1]



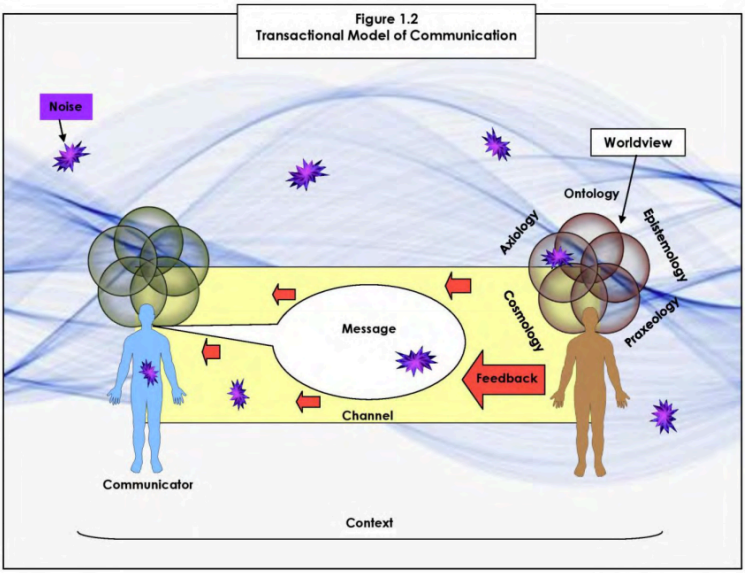
"Figure 1.1" by Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Transactional Model of Communication

Models of communication have evolved significantly since Shannon and Weaver first proposed their well- known conceptual model over sixty years ago. One of the most useful models for understanding public speaking is Barnlund's transactional model of communication.[3] In the transactional model, communication is seen as an ongoing, circular process. We are constantly affecting and are affected by those we communicate with. The transactional model has a number of interdependent processes and components, including the encoding and decoding processes, the communicator, the message, the channel and noise. Although not directly addressed in Barnlund's (2008) original transactional model,

3. [4]
4. [2]

participants' worldviews and the context also play an important role in the communication process. See Figure 1.2 for an illustration.



"*Figure 1.2*" *by Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.*

He who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying. ~ Friedrich Nietzsche

Elements of the Communication Process

Encoding and Decoding

Encoding refers to the process of taking an idea or mental image, associating that image with words, and then speaking those words in order to convey a message. So, if you wanted to explain to your aunt the directions to your new apartment, you would picture in your mind the landscape, streets and buildings, and then you would select the best words that describe the route so your aunt could find you.

Decoding is the reverse process of **listening** to words, thinking about them, and turning those words into mental images. If your aunt were trying to find her way to your apartment, she would listen to your words, associate these words with streets and landmarks that she knows, and then she would form a mental map of the way to get to you.

Communicator

The term **communicator** refers to all of the people in the interaction or speech setting. It is used instead of sender and receiver, because when we are communicating with other people, we are not only sending a message, but we are also receiving messages from others simultaneously. When we speak, we observe others' **nonverbal behavior** to see if they understand us and we gauge their emotional state. The information we gain from these observations is known as **feedback**. Over the telephone, we listen to paralinguistic cues, such as pitch, tone, volume and fillers (i.e., "um," "uh," "er," "like," and so on). This means that communication is not a one-way process. Even in a public speaking situation, we watch and listen to audience members' responses. If audience members are interested, agree, and understand us, they may lean forward in their seats, nod their heads, have positive or neutral facial expressions, and provide

favorable vocal cues (such as laughter, "That's right," "Uh huh," or "Amen!"). If audience members are bored, disagree, or are confused by our message, they may be texting or looking away from us, shake their heads, have unhappy or confused expressions on their faces, or present oppositional vocal cues (like groans, "I don't think so," "That doesn't make sense," or "You're crazy!"). Thus, communication is always a transactional process—a give and take of messages.

Message

The **message** involves those verbal and nonverbal behaviors, enacted by communicators, that are interpreted with meaning by others. The verbal portion of the message refers to the words that we speak, while the nonverbal portion includes our characteristics of our voice and other non-vocal components such as personal appearance, posture, gestures and body movements, eye behavior, the way we use space, and even the way that we smell. For instance, the person who gets up to speak wearing a nice suit will be interpreted more positively than a person giving the exact same speech wearing sweats and a graphic t-shirt. Or if a speaker tries to convince others to donate to a charity that builds wells in poor African villages using a monotone voice, she will not be as effective as the speaker who gives the same speech but speaks with a solemn tone of voice. If there is ever a conflict between the verbal and the non-verbal aspects of a message, people will generally believe the nonverbal portion of the message. To test this, tighten your muscles, clench your fists at your sides, pull your eyebrows together, purse your lips, and tell someone in a harsh voice, "NO, I'm NOT angry!" See if they believe your words or your nonverbal behavior.

The message can also be intentional or unintentional. When the message is intentional, this means that we have an image in our mind that we wish to communicate to an audience or a person

in a conversation, and we can successfully convey the image from our mind to others' minds with relative accuracy. An unintentional message is sent when the message that we wish to convey is not the same as the message the other person receives. Let's say you are returning from an outing with your significant other and they ask, "Did you have a good time?" You *did* have a good time but are distracted by a TV commercial when asked, so you reply in a neutral tone, "Sure, I had fun." Your significant other may interpret your apathetic tone of voice and lack of eye contact to mean that you did not enjoy the evening, when in fact you actually did. Thus, as communicators, we cannot always be sure that the message we wish to communicate is interpreted as we intended.

Channel

The **channel** is very simply the means through which the message travels. In face-to-face communication the channel involves all of our senses, so the channel is what we see, hear, touch, smell and perhaps what we taste. When we're communicating with someone online, the channel is the computer; when texting the channel is the cell phone; and when watching a movie on cable, the channel is the TV. The channel can have a profound impact on the way a message is interpreted. Listening to a recording of a speaker does not have the same psychological impact as listening to the same speech in person or watching that person on television. One famous example of this is the 1960 televised presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. According to History.com (2012), on camera, Nixon looked away from the camera at the reporters asking him questions, he was sweating and pale, he had facial hair stubble, and he wore a grey suit that faded into the set background. "Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley reportedly said [of Nixon], 'My God, they've embalmed him before he even died."[1] Kennedy, on the other hand, looked into the camera, was tanned, wore a dark suit that made him stand out from the background, and appeared to be calm after spending the entire weekend with aides practicing in a hotel room. Most of those who listened to the radio broadcast of the debate felt that it was a tie or that Nixon had won, while 70% of those watching the televised debate felt that Kennedy was the winner.

1. [2]
2. [3]

"Kennedy Nixon Debate" by United Press International. Public domain.

Noise

The next aspect of the model of communication is noise. **Noise** refers to anything that interferes with message transmission or reception (i.e., getting the image from your head into others' heads). There are several different types of noise. The first type of noise is **physiological noise**, and this refers to bodily processes and states that interfere with a message. For instance, if a speaker has a headache or the flu, or if audience members are hot or they're hungry, these conditions may interfere with message accuracy. The second type of noise is psychological noise. **Psychological noise** refers to mental states or emotional states that impede message transmission or reception. For example, if someone has just broken up with a significant other, or if they're worried about their grandmother who is in the hospital, or if they are thinking about their shopping list, this may interfere with communication processes as well. The third type of noise is

actual **physical noise,** and this would be simply the actual sound level in a room. Loud music playing at a party, a number of voices of people talking excitedly, a lawnmower right outside the window, or anything that is overly loud will interfere with communication. The last type of noise is cultural noise. **Cultural noise** refers to message interference that results from differences in peoples' worldviews. Worldview is discussed in more detail below but suffice it to say that the greater the difference in worldview, the more difficult it is to understand one another and communicate effectively.

Worldview

"The 2nd most famous face in Pushkar" by Shreyans Bhansali. CC-BY-NC-SA.

Most people don't give a lot of thought to the communication process. In the majority of our interactions with others, we are operating on automatic pilot. Although the encoding and decoding process may appear to be fairly straightforward, it is actually much more complicated than it seems. The reason for this is because we all have different worldviews. **Worldview** is the overall framework through which an individual sees, thinks about, and interprets the world and interacts with it. There are five core components to our worldview.

1. **Epistemology** is the way that we acquire knowledge and/or what counts as knowledge. Think about the process of conducting research. Thirty years ago, to find a series of facts one had to use a card catalogue and scour the library stacks for books. Now researchers can access thousands of pages of information via their computer from the comfort of their own home. Epistemology is linked to public speaking because it governs audience members' preferred learning styles and who or what they consider to be credible sources.
2. **Ontology** refers to our belief system, how we see the nature of reality or what we see as true or false. We may (or may not) believe in aliens from outer space, that butter is bad for you, that the Steelers will win the Superbowl, or that humans will be extinct in 200 years. Speech writers should be careful not to presume that audience members share the same beliefs. If a speaker claims that illness can be aided with

prayer, but several people in the audience are atheists, at best the speaker has lost credibility and at worst these audience members could be offended.

3. Axiology represents our value system, or what we see as right or wrong, good or bad, and fair or unfair. One of the ways that you can tell what people value is to ask them what their goals are, or to ask them what qualities they look for in a life partner. Our values represent the things that we hope for—they do not represent reality. Values can have an impact on multiple levels of the public speaking process, but in particular values impact speaker credibility and effectiveness in persuasion. For instance, some cultures value modest dress in women, so a female speaker wearing a sleeveless blouse while speaking could cause her to lose credibility with some audience members. Or if audience members value the freedom to bear arms over the benefits of government regulation, a speaker will have a difficult time convincing these audience members to vote for stricter gun control legislation.

4. Cosmology signifies the way that we see our relationship to the universe and to other people. Cosmology dictates our view of power relationships and may involve our religious or spiritual beliefs. Controversial speech topics (like universal health care and the death penalty) are often related to this aspect of worldview as we must consider our responsibilities to other human beings and our power to influence them. Interestingly, cosmology would also play a role in such logistical points as who is allowed to speak, the order of speakers on a schedule (e.g., from most to least important), the amount of time a speaker has to speak, the seating arrangement on the dais, and who gets the front seats in the audience.

5. **Praxeology** denotes our preferred method of completing everyday tasks or our approach to solving problems. Some speech writers may begin working on their outlines as soon as they know they will need to give a speech, while others may wait until a few days before their speech to begin preparing (we do not recommend this approach). Praxeology may also have an impact on a speaker's preference of delivery style, methods of arranging main points, and choice of slideware (i.e., Power Point versus Prezi).

"NFL Superfans" by HMJD02. CC-BY-SA.

> *It is always good to explore the stuff you don't agree with, to try and understand a different lifestyle or foreign worldview. I like to be challenged in that way, and always end up learning something I didn't know.* – Laura Linney

It is important to understand worldview because it has a profound impact on the encoding and decoding process, and consequently on our ability to be understood by others. Try this simple experiment. Ask two or three people to silently imagine a dog while you imagine a dog at the same time. "Dog" is a very **concrete word** (a word that describes a tangible object that can be perceived through the senses), and it is one of the first words children in the United States learn in school. Wait a few seconds and then ask each person what type of dog they were thinking of. Was it a Chihuahua? A greyhound? Golden retriever? Rottweiler? Or some other dog? Most likely each person you asked had a different image in his or her mind than you had in yours. This is our worldview at work.

To further illustrate, you may tell a co-worker, "I can't wait to go home this weekend—we are having lasagna!" Seems like a fairly clear-cut statement, doesn't it? Unfortunately, it is not. While "lasagna" is also a concrete word, our worldviews cause us to interpret each word in the statement differently. Where is "home?" Who is making the meal? What ingredients will be used in the lasagna? Is this dish eaten as a regular meal or for a special occasion? Will there be leftovers? Are friends invited? Since everyone who has eaten lasagna has had a different experience of the cuisine, we all acquire a different image in our mind when we hear the statement "…we are having lasagna!"

"Lasagna" by David K. CC-BY-SA.

Complicating matters is the fact that the more abstract the word becomes, the more room there is for interpretation. **Abstract words** (words that refer to ideas or concepts that are removed from material reality) like "peace," "love," "immoral," "justice," "freedom," "success," and "honor" can have a number of different meanings; each of which is predicated on one's worldview. Communicators have their own unique worldviews that shape both the encoding and decoding processes, which means that we can never be completely understood by another person. People from the Midwest may call carbonated beverages "pop," while those from the East Coast may say "soda," and those from Georgia may say "coke." Even when simple terms are used like "oak tree" or "fire hydrant," each listener will form a different mental image when decoding the message. Never take communication for granted, and never assume your listener will understand you. It takes hard work to make yourself understood by an audience.

Context is worth 80 IQ points.- Alan Kay

Context

"Talking technique" by The U.S. Army. CC-BY.

The last element of the communication process is the **context** in which the speech or interaction takes place. In the 1980's context was taught as the actual physical setting where communication occurred, such as in a place of worship, an apartment, a workplace, a noisy restaurant, or a grocery store. People communicate differently in each one of these places as there are unwritten rules of communication (called **norms**) that govern these settings. More recently the concept of context has evolved and expanded to include the type of relationships we have with others and the communicative rules that govern those relationships. So, you do not speak the same way to your best friend as you do to a small child, your parent, your boss, your doctor or a police officer. And you may speak to your best friend differently in your apartment than you do in your parents' home, and your communication may also change when you are both out with friends on the weekend. In sum, the context refers to the norms that govern communication in different situations and relationships.

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Chapter Three – Ethical Implications

Defining Ethics

> *But I want to say one thing to the American people. I want you to listen to me. I'm going to say this again:* ***I did not have sexual relations with that woman****, Miss Lewinsky. I never told anybody to lie, not a single time; never. These allegations are false. And I need to go back to work for the American people. Thank you.* – President Bill Clinton, 1998

Some of the early leaders in philosophy—Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato—spoke extensively about morality and ethical principles. Aristotle is frequently cited as a central figure in the development of ethics as we discuss them today in the communication discipline. Aristotle claimed that a person who had ethos, or credibility, was not only able to convey good sense and good will, but also good morals. Great philosophers have debated the merits of living well, doing good, and even communicating skillfully. Smitter describes early Greeks and Romans as teachers of public speaking; these philosophers argued that public communication is "a means of civic engagement" and ethics are "a matter of virtue."

Ethics and ethical communication are not only an important part of our lives and our decision-making but also are crucial to the public speaking process. In 2011, when Representative Anthony Weiner faced accusations of sending sexually explicit photographs, he vehemently denied any wrongdoing and claimed that he had been set up. Shortly after, his denial turned to an admission and apology. This scandal called into question the ethics of Rep. Weiner, yet it was also his lack of ethical communication that exacerbated the situation.

> *Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.* – Aristotle

Ethics and Ethical Standards

Morality is the process of discerning between right and wrong. **Ethics** involves making decisions about right and wrong within a dilemma. For example, you might claim that stealing is morally wrong. But is stealing morally wrong when a mother steals a loaf of bread to feed her four starving children? It's this scenario that requires an understanding of ethics. In a moral dilemma, we apply ethics to make choices about what is good or bad, right or wrong. Sometimes, ethical dilemmas are simple. Other times, they require complex choices, such as the decision to report your immediate boss for misrepresenting expenses or the decision to move your grandmother into a retirement community. These scenarios are more complex than simple choices between right and wrong. Instead, these examples are ethical dilemmas because two "right" choices are pitted against one another. It's good to report an unethical supervisor, but it's also good to keep your job. It's good that your grandmother feels independent, but it's also positive for her to receive extra assistance as her health deteriorates.

As public speakers, we make ethical choices when preparing and delivering a speech. We can easily be faced with a moral dilemma over what information to provide or how to accurately represent that information. Knowing the speaking setting, the audience, and our knowledge of the topic, we are able to confront ethical dilemmas with a strong moral compass. This process is made easier by our ethical standards. Ethical standards, or moral principles, are the set of rules we abide by that make us "good" people and help us choose right from wrong. The virtuous standards to which we adhere influence our ethical understanding. For instance, followers of Buddha believe that communication should be careful—good

communication should exhibit restraint, responsibility, and kindness.[1]

> *If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.* – Dalai Lama

This stance informs one's ethical standards. In fact, Merrill (2009) explains that the holy Dalai Lama, the Buddhist spiritual leader, believes compassion is even more essential than truth. Therefore, it is justifiable to be untruthful when the deception is part of the process of caring for another. This example illustrates how one's belief system influences one's ethical standards. These ethical standards are the guidelines we use to interpret rightness and wrongness in life, in relationships, and in public speaking. Wallace claims that "ethical standards of communication should place emphasis upon the means used to secure the end, rather than upon achieving the end itself."[3] This argument suggests that speakers must consider moral standards through every step of the speech process.

1. [2]
2. [1]
3. [4]
4. [2]

"Emerald Buddha" by WPPilot. CC-BY-SA.

"Questions of right and wrong arise whenever people communicate."[5] Once we have identified our ethical standards, we can apply these to make sure that we are communicating ethically. Ethical communication is an exchange of responsible and trustworthy messages determined by our moral principles. Ethical communication can be enacted in written, oral, and non-verbal communication. In public speaking, we use ethical standards to determine what and how to exchange messages with our audience. As you read further in this chapter, you will begin to understand the guidelines for how ethical communication should occur in the public speaking process.

Ethical Speaking

5. [6]
6. [3]

In January 2012, an Australian politician, Anthony Albanese, presented a speech to the National Press Club. Several people criticized this speech, saying that he stole lines from Michael Douglas's character (the U.S. President) in the movie **The American President**. *Several specific lines from Albanese's speech did seem to mirror Douglas's monologue, with only the names changed. The Liberal Party federal director, Brian Loughnane, claimed that this shows Albanese is "unoriginal and devoid of ideas." Others stated that he should be embarrassed and should apologize to the Parliament.*[1]

What do you think about Albanese's speech? Was this a simple mishap? A funny prank? Something more serious? What do you think this says about Albanese's character? His reputation as a politician? Assessing your attitudes and values toward this situation is the same as considering how ethics play a role in public speaking.

Ethical public speaking is not a one-time event. It does not just occur when you stand to give a 5-minute presentation to your classmates or co-workers. Ethical public speaking is a process. This process begins when you begin brainstorming the topic of your speech. Every time you plan to speak to an audience—whether it is at a formal speaking event or an impromptu pitch at your workplace—you have ethical responsibilities to fulfill. The two most important aspects in ethical communication include your ability to remain honest while avoiding plagiarism and to set and meet responsible speech goals.

> *Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people.* – Spencer Johnson

1. [2]
2. [4]

Be Honest and Avoid Plagiarism

Credible public speakers are open and honest with their audiences. Honesty includes telling your audience why you're speaking and what you'll address throughout your speech (thesis statement). For instance, one example of dishonest speech is when a vacation destination offers "complimentary tours and sessions" which are really opportunities for a salesperson to pitch a timeshare to unsuspecting tourists. In addition to being clear about the speech goal, honest speakers are clear with audience members when providing supporting information.

One example of dishonest public communication occurred in the music industry, where many cases of illegal melody lifting exist. For example, a famous Beach Boys song titled *Surfin' USA* is actually a note-for-note rendition of a 1958 Chuck Berry song. Though it may be common, the practice of not properly crediting an author for their work is unethical. Other examples of deceitful communication include political speeches that intentionally mislead the public. For instance, a former White House press aide, Scott McClellan, claims that President Bush misled the American people about reasons for the Iraqi war. McClellan claims that the President had manipulated sources in order to gain support for the war. Such claims can be damaging to one's reputation. Thus, responsible public speakers must actively avoid plagiarism and remain committed to honesty and integrity at all costs.

Mimi & Eunice, "Thief" by Nina Paley. CC-BY-SA.

Identify Your Sources

The first step of ethical speech preparation is to take notes as you research your speech topic (Chapter 7 will thoroughly discuss research). Careful notes will help you remember where you learned your information. Recalling your sources is important because it enables speaker honesty. Passing off another's work as your own or neglecting to cite the source for your information is considered **plagiarism**. This unethical act can result in several consequences, ranging from a loss in credibility to academic expulsion or job loss. Even with these potential consequences, plagiarism is unfortunately common. In a national survey, 87 percent of students claimed that their peers plagiarized from the Internet at least some of the time.[3] This statistic does not take into account whether or not the plagiarism was intentional, occurring when speakers knowingly present information as their own; or unintentional, occurring when careless citing leads to information being uncredited or miscredited. However, it is important to note that being unaware of how to credit sources should not be an excuse for unintentional plagiarism. In other words, speakers are held accountable for intentional and unintentional plagiarism. The remainder of this section discusses how to ensure proper credit is given when preparing and presenting a speech.

> *A liar should have a good memory.* – Quintilian

There are three distinct types of plagiarism—global, patchwork, and incremental plagiarism.[5] **Global plagiarism**, the most obvious form of plagiarism, transpires when a speaker presents a speech that is

3. [4]
4. [5]
5. [6]
6. [6]

not their own work. For example, if a student finds a speech on the Internet or borrows a former speech from a roommate and recites that speech verbatim, global plagiarism has occurred. Global plagiarism is the most obvious type of theft. However, other forms of plagiarism are less obvious but still represent dishonest public speaking.

> *If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.* – Mark Twain

"Rainbow Dahlia quilt" by Holice E. Turnbow. CC-BY-SA.

Sometimes a student neglects to cite a source simply because they forgot where the idea was first learned. Shi explains that many students struggle with plagiarism because they've reviewed multiple texts and changed wording so that ideas eventually *feel* like their own. Students engage in "'patchwriting' by copying from a source text and then deleting or changing a few words and altering the sentence structures."[7] **Patchwork plagiarism** is plagiarism that occurs when one "patches" together bits and pieces from one or more sources and represents the end result as one's own. An example of patchwork plagiarism is if you create a speech by pasting together parts of another speech or author's work. If you have ever seen a "patchwork" quilt, you will see the key similarities.

The third type of plagiarism is **incremental plagiarism,** or when most of the speech is the speaker's original work, but quotes or other information have been used without being cited. Incremental plagiarism can occur if, for example, you provide a statistic to support your claim, but do not provide the source for that statistic. Another example would be if a student included a direct quote from former president Ronald Reagan without letting the audience know that those were Reagan's exact words. Understanding the different types of plagiarism is the first step in ensuring that you prepare an honest speech.

7. [8]
8. [7]

Table 3.1: Purdue OWL APA Guide for Citing Sources[9]

Cite	Don't Cite
Words or ideas presented in a magazine, book, newspaper, song, TV program, movie, Web page, computer program, letter, advertisement, or any other medium.	Writing your own lived experiences, your own observations and insights, your own thoughts, and your own conclusions about a subject.
Information you gain through interviewing or conversing with another person, face to face, over the phone, or in writing.	When you are writing up your own results obtained through lab or field experiments.
When you copy the exact words or a unique phrase.	When you use your own artwork, digital photographs, video, audio, etc.
When you reprint any diagrams, illustrations, charts, pictures, or other visual materials.	When you are using common knowledge—things like folklore, common sense observations, myths, urban legends, and historical events (but **not** historical documents).
When you reuse or repost any electronically available media, including images, audio, video, or other media.	When you are using generally accepted facts, e.g. pollution is bad for the environment.

Decide When to Cite

When speaking publicly you must orally cite all information that isn't general knowledge. For example, if your speech claims that the sun is a star, you do not have to cite that information since it's general knowledge. If your speech claims that the sun's temperature is 15.6 million Kelvin,[11] then you should cite that source aloud.

9. [10]
10. [8]
11. [12]
12. [9]

Ethical speakers are not required to cite commonly known information (e.g., skin is the largest human organ; Barack Obama was elected President of the U.S. in 2008). However, any information that isn't general knowledge must be orally cited during a speech. The same is true in the text of a speech outline: cite all non-general information.

The OWL, an online writing lab at Purdue University, provides an excellent guide for when you need to cite information (see Table 3.1). Understanding when to include source material is the first step in being able to ethically cite sources. The next step in this process is to determine how to appropriately cite sources orally and in written materials.

Cite Sources Properly

You've learned the importance of citing sources. Now that you know why written and oral citations are important to the ethical process of public speaking, let's focus on *how* to cite supporting speech material. Studies show that oftentimes students do not cite a source because they're unsure of how or when to cite a reference. Shi's study describes some typical responses for why students did not cite sources, such as "I couldn't remember where I learned the information," or "I had already cited that author and didn't want the audience to think all of my information was from some outside source." Though these rationales are understandable, they are not ethical.

Understand Paraphrasing and Direct Quotations

It is important to understand the process for paraphrasing and directly quoting sources in order to support your speech claims.

First, what is the difference between paraphrasing and directly quoting a source? If you research and learn information from a source—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), for instance— and then share that information in your *own* words; you don't use quotation marks; but you do credit the CDC as your source. This is known as a **paraphrase**—a sentence or string of sentences that shares learned information in your own words. A **direct quote** is any sentence or string of sentences that conveys an author's idea word-for-word. According to the APA (American Psychological Association), when writing speech content, you must include quotation marks around an author's work when you use his or her keywords, phrases, or sentences. This would be relevant for a speech outline, a handout, or a visual aid. It is also important to specify a direct quote when you are orally citing during your speech. This indicates to the audience that you are using the original author's exact words. While it is acceptable to use the phrases "begin quote" and "end quote" to indicate this to your audience, such phrases can be distracting to the audience. One way to clearly and concisely indicate a direct quote is to take a purposeful pause right before and after the quoted material. This differentiates between your words and the source material's words. See Table 3.2 for examples of how to paraphrase and directly quote an author, both in written speech materials and for an oral citation.

Table 3.2: Written and Oral Source Citations[13][14]

	Written Citations	Oral Citations
Original Text	You cannot do a nonstop flight to the second half of life by reading lots of books about it, including this one. Grace must and will edge you forward.	Your best defense against influenza—and its possible complications—is to receive an annual vaccination. In fact, CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older get an annual flu vaccination.
Paraphrase for Written Speech Materials	It is through the practice of showing grace that we grow and develop as individuals (Rohr, 2011).	The CDC (2008) suggests that people get a vaccination at least once a year to avoid the flu.
Direct Quote for Written Speech Materials	According to Rohr (2011), "Grace must and will edge you forward" (p. 2).	There is something you can do to avoid the flu. The CDC states that, "Your best defense against influenza—and its possible complications—is to receive an annual vaccination" (para. 6).
Oral Citation for Paraphrase	In Rohr's 2011 book, *Falling upward: A spirituality for the halves of life*, he discussed how we show grace to others which allows us to grow and develop as individuals.	According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website (2008), people should get a preventative vaccination at least once a year to avoid the flu.
Oral Citation for Direct Quote	Rohr (2011), in his book *Falling upward: A spirituality for the two halves of life*, stated that [pause] "Grace must and will edge you forward" [pause].	On their website, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2008) states that, [pause] "your best defense against influenza—and its possible complications—is to receive an annual vaccination" [pause].

13. [15]
14. [16]
15. [10]
16. [11]

Develop Accurate Citations

Ethical speakers share source information with the audience. On written materials, such as handouts or speech outlines, citations are handled much like they would be in any essay; that is, likely in parenthesis. Oral citations, however, provide source information to audience members who will likely not *see* your written speech. In all citations, enough information should be given so that the audience can easily find the source.

You may choose to briefly describe the author before citing him or her to lend credibility to your supporting information. Writing style guidebooks, such as APA or MLA (Modern Language Association), teach that a source's credentials are not necessary in the text of your paper. We can interpret that the same is true for providing oral citations in a speech–the author's occupation, the source website, or the journal name are not required but may be helpful verbal cues to explain the legitimacy of your chosen source. You should provide enough information so that an audience member can locate the source. For instance, it might be useful to describe the doctor as a leading pediatrician–after which you would state the doctor's last name, year of publication, and the quote or paraphrase. To orally paraphrase a Langer quote, you might say to your audience:

I really agree with Langer who wrote in her 1989 book Mindfulness, *that our world is constructed from the categories we build in our mind. I find that I interpret the world based on my initial understanding of things and have to mindfully force myself to question the categories and biases I've formally created in my head.*

Note, the Langer paraphrase provides the author's last name, year of publication, and the title of the book should an audience member want to find the orally cited source.

Ethical speakers provide written, oral, *and* visual citations. Visual aids, discussed in Chapter 14, include posters, objects, models, PowerPoints, and handouts. Visual aids are used to enhance your

speech message. Visual aids, just like speech content, must be displayed ethically for the audience. In other words, if you use a poster to display a famous quote, then you should cite the author on your poster (see Figure 3.1). Similarly, you should cite sources on your PowerPoint *throughout the presentation*. It is not sufficient to include a "Sources" or "References" slide at the end of your PowerPoint because that does not accurately link each author to his or her work. Instead, ethical presenters provide an author reference on the slide in which the cited content is shown (see Figure 3.2).

Speakers should also carefully select and correctly cite images displayed in their visual aid. Images should be relevant to the keywords used on your PowerPoint slide. In other words, captions are not necessary because the image can stand alone; images you display should obviously correlate with your speech content (a caption is typically used because the picture *needs* explanation). In other words, the presence of a caption typically means your image does not directly correspond with the verbal speech material. Images should support, not distract, from the verbal or visual message. Hence, there is no need for blinking, rotating, or otherwise distracting visual aids.[17] Images should be simple and relevant. All pictures should be cited, unless the presenter uses a personal, clipart, or purchased stock image. To cite an image, simply include the credit (or web link) to that picture; note, however, the font size of the link should be reduced so that it is visible to the audience without distracting from the content in your visual aid. Seeing an image link should not be distracting to audience members.

It's also important to understand how copyright law might affect what and how you include information in your speech and on your visual aid. The fair use provision allows for copyrighted information to be shared if it is used for educational benefits, news reporting, research, and in other situations. Nolo explains, "In its most general

17. [18]
18. [12]

sense, a fair use is any copying of copyrighted material done for a limited and 'transformative' purpose, such as to comment upon, criticize, or parody a copyrighted work. Such uses can be done without permission from the copyright owner."[19] In order to determine if the use of content falls under the fair use provision, there are four factors to consider:

1. How will this be used?
2. What is to be used?
3. How much will be used?
4. What effect does this have?[21]

You can find more about these four factors at the U.S. Copyright website.

"Question copyright" by Ttog~commonswiki. CC-BY-SA.

19. [20]
20. [13]
21. [22]
22. [14]

Ethical citing includes crediting authors in the text of your written speech materials, acknowledging authors aloud during your speech, and citing images and sources on your visual aid. However, ethics in public speaking encompass more than crediting source material. It's also necessary to strive for responsible speech goals.

> *Ethics and equity and the principles of justice do not change with the calendar.* – David Herbert Lawrence

Set Responsible Speech Goals

Jensen coined the term "rightsabilities" to explain how a communicator must balance tensions between speaker rights and responsibility to others. Ensuring that you have responsible speech goals is one way to achieve ethical communication in public speaking. There are several speech goals that support this mission. This section will focus on five goals: 1) promote diversity, 2) use inclusive language, 3) avoid hate speech, 4) raise social awareness, and 5) employ respectful free speech.

Promote Diversity

"U.S. Air Force" by Tech. Sgt. Keith Brown. Public domain.

One important responsibility speakers have is fostering **diversity,** or an appreciation for differences among individuals and groups. Diversity in public speaking is important when considering both your audience and your speech content. Promoting diversity allows audience members who may be

different from the speaker to feel included and can present a perspective to which audience members had not previously been exposed. Speakers may choose a speech topic that introduces a multicultural issue to the audience or can promote diversity by choosing language and visual aids that relate to and support listeners of different backgrounds. Because of the diversity present in our lives, it is necessary to consider how speakers can promote diversity.

One simple way of promoting diversity is to use both sexes in your hypothetical examples and to include co-cultural groups when creating a hypothetical situation. For example, you can use names that represent both sexes and that also stem from different cultural backgrounds. Ethical speakers also encourage diversity in races, socioeconomic status, and other demographics. These choices promote diversity. In addition, ethical speakers can strive to break stereotypes. For instance, if you're telling a hypothetical story about a top surgeon in the nation, why not make the specialized surgeon a female from a rural area? Or make the hypothetical secretary a man named Frank? You could also include a picture in your visual aid of the female surgeon or the male secretary at work. Ethical speakers should not assume that a nurse is female or that a firefighter is male. Sexist language can alienate your audience from your discussion.[1]

> *Excellence is the best deterrent to racism or sexism.* – Oprah Winfrey

1. [2]
2. [15]

Use Inclusive Language

Avoiding sexist language is one way to use inclusive language. Another important way for speakers to develop responsible language is to use inclusionary pronouns and phrases. For example, novice speakers might tell their audience: "One way for you to get involved in the city's *Clean Community Program* is to pick up trash on your street once a month." Instead, an effective public speaker could exclaim: "One way for all of us to get involved in our local communities is by picking up trash on a regular basis." This latter statement is an example of **"we" language**—pronouns and phrases that unite the speaker to the audience. "We" language (instead of "I" or "You" language) is a simple way to build a connection between the speaker, speech content, and audience. This is especially important during a persuasive speech as "we" language establishes trust, rapport, and goodwill between the speaker and the audience. Take, for example, the following listener relevance statements in a persuasive speech about volunteering:

"You" language: *You may say that you're too busy to volunteer, but I don't agree. I'm here to tell you that you should be volunteering in your community.*

"We" language: *As college students, we all get busy in our daily lives and sometimes helpful acts such as volunteering aren't priorities in our schedules. Let's explore how we can be more active volunteers in our community.*

In this exchange, the "you" language sets the speaker apart from the audience and could make listeners defensive about their time and lack of volunteering. On the other hand, the "we" language connects the speaker to the audience and lets the audience know that the speaker understands and has some ideas for how to fix the problem. This promotes a feeling of inclusiveness, one of the responsible speech goals.

Avoid Hate Speech

Another key aspect of ethical speaking is to develop an awareness of spoken words and the power of words. The NCA Credo of Ethical Communication highlights the importance of this awareness: "We condemn communication that degrades individuals and humanity through distortion, intimidation, coercion, and violence, and through the expression of intolerance and hatred."[3] Words can be powerful—both in helping you achieve your speech goal and in affecting your audience in significant ways. It is essential that public speakers refrain from hate or sexist language. Hate speech, according to Verderber, Sellnow, and Verderber, "is the use of words and phrases not only to demean another person or group but also to express hatred and prejudice."[5] **Hate language** isolates a particular person or group in a derogatory manner. Michael Richards, famous for the role of Cosmo Kramer on *Seinfeld*, came under fire for his hate speech during a comedy routine in 2006. Richards used several racial epithets and directed his hate language towards African-Americans and Mexicans.[7] Richards apologized for his outbursts, but the damage to his reputation and career was irrevocable. Likewise, using hate speech in any public speaking situation can alienate your audience and take away your credibility, leading to more serious implications for your grade, your job, or other serious outcomes. It is your responsibility as the speaker to be aware of sensitive material and be able to navigate language choices to avoid offending your audience.

3. [4]
4. [16]
5. [6]
6. [17]
7. [8]
8. [18]

No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world. – Robin Williams

Raise Social Awareness

Speakers should consider it their ethical responsibility to educate listeners by introducing ideas of racial, gender, or cultural diversity, but also by raising **social awareness**, or the recognition of important issues that affect societies. Raising social awareness is a task for ethical speakers because educating peers on important causes empowers others to make a positive change in the world. Oftentimes when you present a speech, you have the opportunity to raise awareness about growing social issues. For example, if you're asked to present an informative speech to your classmates, you could tell them about your school's athletic tradition ***or*** you could discuss *Peace One Day*—a campaign that promotes a single day of worldwide cease-fire, allowing crucial food and medicine supplies to be shipped into warzone areas.[9] If your assignment is to present a persuasive speech, you could look at the assignment as an opportunity to convince your classmates to (a) stop texting while they drive, (b) participate in a program that supports US troops by writing personal letters to deployed soldiers or (c) buy a pair of TOMS (tomsshoes.com) and find other ways to provide basic needs to impoverished families around the world. Of course, those are just a few ideas for how an informative or persuasive speech can be used to raise awareness about current social issues. It is your responsibility as a speaker to share information that provides knowledge or activates your audience toward the common good.[11]

9. [10]
10. [19]
11. [12]

"Raising John T. Williams Memorial Totem Pole" by Joe Mabel. CC-BY-SA.

One way to be successful in attaining your speech goal while also remaining ethical is to consider your audience's moral base. Moon identifies a principle that allows the speaker to justify his or her perspective by finding common moral ground with the audience.[13] This illustrates to the audience that you have goodwill but allows you to still use your moral base as a guide for responsible speech use. For example, even though you are a vegetarian and believe that killing animals for food is murder, you know that the majority of your audience does not feel the same way. Rather than focusing on this argument, you decide to use Moon's principle and focus on animal cruelty. By highlighting the inhumane ways that animals are raised for food, you appeal to the audience's moral frame that abusing animals is wrong—something that you and your audience can both agree upon.

> *If we lose love and self-respect for each other, this is how we finally die.* – Maya Angelou

12. [20]
13. [14]
14. [21]

Employ Respectful Free Speech

We live in a nation that values freedom of speech. Of course, due to the First Amendment, you have the right and ability to voice your opinions and values to an audience. However, that freedom of speech must be balanced with your responsibility as a speaker to respect your audience. Offending or degrading the values of your audience members will *not* inform or persuade them. For example, let's say you want to give a persuasive speech on why abortion is morally wrong. It's your right to voice that opinion. Nevertheless, it's important that you build your case without offending your audience members— since you don't know everyone's history or stance on the subject. Showing disturbing pictures on your visual aid may not "make your point" in the way you intended. Instead, these pictures may send audience members into an emotional tailspin (making it difficult for them to hear your persuasive points because of their own psychological noise). Freedom of speech is a beautiful American value, but ethical speakers must learn to balance their speech freedom with their obligation to respect each audience member.

> *Fortunately for serious minds, a bias recognized is a bias sterilized.* – Benjamin Haydon

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A Note about Plagiarism

KATIE GRUBER

In the previous chapter, we discussed the importance of creating your own work and avoiding **plagiarism.**

There are numerous cases where songs were covered or sampled without explicit permission, or *plagiarized*. As noted in the previous chapter, while Chuck Berry co-wrote the song with the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson, he was not originally credited on the record's release in 1963. Similarly, George Harrison was sued for lifting the melody of the Chiffon's "He's So Fine" in 1976 for his song "My Sweet Lord". The judge ruled that Harrison was guilty of "subconscious plagiarism." Harrison was ordered to pay $587,000 (in 1976 dollars, which amounts to nearly 3 million in 2022 dollars). This case still stands as one of the longest legal battles in American history, since it lasted over 20 years. To read more about this and other copyright infringement cases, visit Songs on Trial: 12 Landmark Music Copyright Cases – Rolling Stone and George Washington University – Music Copyright Infringement Resource.

If you, too, are an audiophile, you may have already been familiar with the previous example, or Vanilla Ice's *Ice, Ice, Baby* sampling from Queen & David Bowie's *Under Pressure*. Were there any on the Rolling Stone list that you hadn't heard of?

Chapter Four – Listening

Hearing Versus Listening

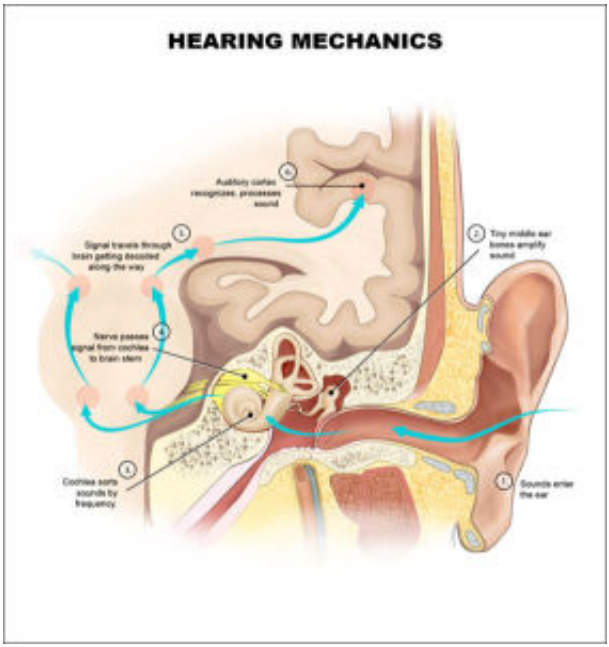
A mother takes her four-year-old to the pediatrician reporting she's worried about the girl's hearing. The doctor runs through a battery of tests, checks in the girl's ears to be sure everything looks good, and makes notes in the child's folder. Then, she takes the mother by the arm. They move together to the far end of the room, behind the girl. The doctor whispers in a low voice to the concerned parent: "Everything looks fine. But she's been through a lot of tests today. You might want to take her for ice cream after this as a reward." The daughter jerks her head around, a huge grin on her face, "Oh, please, Mommy! I love ice cream!" The doctor, speaking now at a regular volume, reports, "As I said, I don't think there's any problem with her hearing, but she may not always be choosing to listen."

"Doctor Aunt" by Eden, Janine and Jim. CC-BY.

Hearing is something most everyone does without even trying. It is a physiological response to sound waves moving through the air at up to 760 miles per hour. First, we receive the sound in our ears. The wave of sound causes our eardrums to vibrate, which engages our brain to begin processing. The sound is then transformed into nerve impulses so that we can perceive the sound in our brains. Our auditory cortex recognizes a sound has been heard and begins to process the sound by matching it to previously encountered sounds in a process known as **auditory association**.[1] Hearing has kept our species alive for centuries. When you are asleep but wake in a panic having heard a noise downstairs, an age-old self-preservation

1. [2]
2. [1]

response is kicking in. You were asleep. You weren't listening for the noise—unless perhaps you are a parent of a teenager out past curfew—but you hear it. Hearing is unintentional, whereas **listening** (by contrast) requires you to pay conscious attention. Our bodies hear, but we need to employ intentional effort to actually listen.



"Hearing Mechanics" by Zina Deretsky. Public domain.

We regularly engage in several different types of listening. When we are tuning our attention to a song we like, or a poetry reading, or actors in a play, or sitcom antics on television, we are listening for pleasure, also known as **appreciative listening**. When we are listening to a friend or family member, building our relationship with another through offering support and showing empathy for her feelings in the situation she is discussing, we are engaged

in **relational listening**. Therapists, counselors, and conflict mediators are trained in another level known as **empathetic or therapeutic listening**. When we are at a political event, attending a debate, or enduring a salesperson touting the benefits of various brands of a product, we engage in critical listening. This requires us to be attentive to key points that influence or confirm our judgments. When we are focused on gaining information whether from a teacher in a classroom setting, or a pastor at church, we are engaging in **informational listening**.[3]

Yet, despite all these variations, Nichols called listening a "lost art."[5] The ease of sitting passively without really listening is well known to anyone who has sat in a boring class with a professor droning on about the Napoleonic wars or proper pain medication regimens for patients allergic to painkillers. You hear the words the professor is saying, while you check Facebook on your phone under the desk. Yet, when the exam question features an analysis of Napoleon's downfall or a screaming patient fatally allergic to codeine you realize you didn't actually listen. Trying to recall what you heard is a challenge, because without your attention and intention to remember, the information is lost in the caverns of your cranium.

Listening is one of the first skills infants gain, using it to acquire language and learn to communicate with their parents. Bommelje suggests listening is the activity we do most in life, second only to breathing.[7] Nevertheless, the skill is seldom taught.

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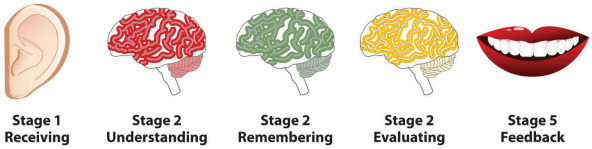
Stages of Listening



Author Joseph DeVito has divided the listening process into five stages: receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding (DeVito, 2000).

Receiving

Receiving is the intentional focus on hearing a speaker's message, which happens when we filter out other sources so that we can isolate the message and avoid the confusing mixture of incoming stimuli. At this stage, we are still only hearing the message. Notice in the "Stages of Listening" figure above that this stage is represented by the ear because it is the primary tool involved with this stage of the listening process.

One of the authors of this book recalls attending a political rally for a presidential candidate at which about five thousand people were crowded into an outdoor amphitheater. When the candidate finally started speaking, the cheering and yelling was so loud that the candidate couldn't be heard easily despite using a speaker system. In this example, our coauthor had difficulty receiving the message because of the external noise. This is only one example of

the ways that hearing alone can require sincere effort, but you must hear the message before you can continue the process of listening.

Understanding

In the understanding stage, we attempt to learn the meaning of the message, which is not always easy. For one thing, if a speaker does not enunciate clearly, it may be difficult to tell what the message was—did your friend say, "I think she'll be late for class," or "my teacher delayed the class"? Notice in the "Stages of Listening" figure that stages two, three, and four are represented by the brain because it is the primary tool involved with these stages of the listening process.

Even when we have understood the words in a message, because of the differences in our backgrounds and experience, we sometimes make the mistake of attaching our own meanings to the words of others. For example, say you have made plans with your friends to meet at a certain movie theater, but you arrive and nobody else shows up. Eventually you find out that your friends are at a different theater all the way across town where the same movie is playing. Everyone else understood that the meeting place was the "west side" location, but you wrongly understood it as the "east side" location and therefore missed out on part of the fun.

The consequences of ineffective listening in a classroom can be much worse. When professors advise students to get an "early start" on speeches, they probably hope that students will begin research right away and move on to developing a thesis statement and

outlining the speech as soon as possible. However, students in your class might misunderstand the instructor's meaning in several ways. One student might interpret the advice to mean that as long as she gets started, the rest of the assignment will have time to develop itself. Another student might instead think that to start early is to start on the Friday before the Monday due date instead of Sunday night.

So much of the way we understand others is influenced by our own perceptions and experiences. Therefore, at the understanding stage of listening we should be on the lookout for places where our perceptions might differ from those of the speaker.

Remembering

Remembering begins with listening; if you can't remember something that was said, you might not have been listening effectively. Wolvin and Coakley note that the most common reason for not remembering a message after the fact is because it wasn't really learned in the first place (Wolvin & Coakley, 1996). However, even when you are listening attentively, some messages are more difficult than others to understand and remember. Highly complex messages that are filled with detail call for highly developed listening skills. Moreover, if something distracts your attention even for a moment, you could miss out on information that explains other new concepts you hear when you begin to listen fully again.

It's also important to know that you can improve your memory of a message by processing it meaningfully—that is, by applying it

in ways that are meaningful to you (Gluck, et al., 2008). Instead of simply repeating a new acquaintance's name over and over, for example, you might remember it by associating it with something in your own life. "Emily," you might say, "reminds me of the Emily I knew in middle school," or "Mr. Impiari's name reminds me of the Impala my father drives."

Finally, if understanding has been inaccurate, recollection of the message will be inaccurate too.

Evaluating

The fourth stage in the listening process is evaluating, or judging the value of the message. We might be thinking, "This makes sense" or, conversely, "This is very odd." Because everyone embodies biases and perspectives learned from widely diverse sets of life experiences, evaluations of the same message can vary widely from one listener to another. Even the most open-minded listeners will have opinions of a speaker, and those opinions will influence how the message is evaluated. People are more likely to evaluate a message positively if the speaker speaks clearly, presents ideas logically, and gives reasons to support the points made.

Unfortunately, personal opinions sometimes result in prejudiced evaluations. Imagine you're listening to a speech given by someone from another country and this person has an accent that is hard to understand. You may have a hard time simply making out the speaker's message. Some people find a foreign accent to be interesting or even exotic, while others find it annoying or even

take it as a sign of ignorance. If a listener has a strong bias against foreign accents, the listener may not even attempt to attend to the message. If you mistrust a speaker because of an accent, you could be rejecting important or personally enriching information. Good listeners have learned to refrain from making these judgments and instead to focus on the speaker's meanings.

Responding

Responding sometimes referred to as feedback—is the fifth and final stage of the listening process. It's the stage at which you indicate your involvement. Almost anything you do at this stage can be interpreted as feedback. For example, you are giving positive feedback to your instructor if at the end of class you stay behind to finish a sentence in your notes or approach the instructor to ask for clarification. The opposite kind of feedback is given by students who gather their belongings and rush out the door as soon as class is over. Notice in the "Stages of Listening" figure that this stage is represented by the lips because we often give feedback in the form of verbal feedback; however, you can just as easily respond nonverbally.

We have two ears and one tongue so that we would listen more and talk less. – Diogenes

Formative Feedback

Not all response occurs at the end of the message. Formative feedback is a natural part of the ongoing transaction between a speaker and a listener. As the speaker delivers the message, a listener signals his or her involvement with focused attention, note-taking, nodding, and other behaviors that indicate understanding or failure to understand the message. These signals are important to the speaker, who is interested in whether the message is clear and accepted or whether the content of the message is meeting the resistance of preconceived ideas. Speakers can use this feedback to decide whether additional examples, support materials, or explanation is needed.

Summative Feedback

Summative feedback is given at the end of the communication. When you attend a political rally, a presentation given by a speaker you admire, or even a class, there are verbal and nonverbal ways of indicating your appreciation for or your disagreement with the messages or the speakers at the end of the message. Maybe you'll stand up and applaud a speaker you agreed with or just sit staring in silence after listening to a speaker you didn't like. In other cases, a speaker may be attempting to persuade you to donate to a charity,

so if the speaker passes a bucket and you make a donation, you are providing feedback on the speaker's effectiveness. At the same time, we do not always listen most carefully to the messages of speakers we admire. Sometimes we simply enjoy being in their presence, and our summative feedback is not about the message but about our attitudes about the speaker. If your feedback is limited to something like, "I just love your voice," you might be indicating that you did not listen carefully to the content of the message.

Hearing Impaired

Arguably, even audience members who do not possess the physiological mechanisms to hear can "listen." Stage one (Receiving) is different because it happens through different channels (e.g., sign language, subtitles, nonverbal cues), but Stages two (Understanding/ Remembering), three (Evaluating), and four (Feedback) remain the same.

Types of Listening

We regularly engage in several different types of listening. When we are tuning our attention to a song we like, or a poetry reading, or actors in a play, or sitcom antics on television, we are listening for pleasure, also known as **appreciative listening**. When we are listening to a friend or family member, building our relationship with another through offering support and showing empathy for her feelings in the situation she is discussing, we are engaged in **relational listening**. Therapists, counselors, and conflict mediators are trained in another level known as **empathetic or therapeutic listening**. When we are at a political event, attending a debate, or enduring a salesperson touting the benefits of various

brands of a product, we engage in **critical listening**. This requires us to be attentive to key points that influence or confirm our judgments. When we are focused on gaining information whether from a teacher in a classroom setting, or a pastor at church, we are engaging in **comprehensive listening**.[9]

Yet, despite all these variations, Nichols called listening a "lost art."[11] The ease of sitting passively without really listening is well known to anyone who has sat in a boring class with a professor droning on about the Napoleonic wars or proper pain medication regimens for patients allergic to painkillers. You hear the words the professor is saying, while you check Facebook on your phone under the desk. Yet, when the exam question features an analysis of Napoleon's downfall or a screaming patient fatally allergic to codeine you realize you didn't actually listen. Trying to recall what you heard is a challenge, because without your attention and intention to remember, the information is lost in the caverns of your cranium.

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Barriers to Effective Listening

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10. [2]
11. [12]
12. [3]
13. [14]
14. [4]

We get in our own way when it comes to effective listening. While listening may be the communication skill we use foremost in formal education environments, it is taught the least (behind, in order, writing, reading, and speaking).[1] To better learn to listen it is first important to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses as listeners. We routinely ignore the barriers to our effective listening; yet anticipating, judging, or reacting emotionally can all hinder our ability to listen attentively.

"Visitors NAO Rozhen Telescope" by Daniel. CC-BY-SA.

1. [2]
2. [5]

Anticipating

Anticipating, or thinking about what the speaker is likely to say, can detract from listening in several ways. On one hand, the listener might find the speaker is taking too long to make a point and try to anticipate what the final conclusion is going to be. While doing this, the listener has stopped actively listening to the speaker. A listener who knows too much, or thinks they do, listens poorly. The only answer is humility, and recognizing there is always something new to be learned.

Anticipating what *we* will say in response to the speaker is another detractor to effective listening. Imagine your roommate comes to discuss your demand for quiet from noon to 4 p.m. every day so that you can nap in complete silence and utter darkness. She begins by saying, "I wonder if we could try to find a way that you could nap with the lights on, so that I could use our room in the afternoon, too." She might go on to offer some perfectly good ideas as to how this might be accomplished, but you're no longer listening because you are too busy anticipating what you will say in response to her complaint. Once she's done speaking, you are ready to enumerate all of the things she's done wrong since you moved in together. Enter the Resident Assistant to mediate a conflict that gets out of hand quickly. This communication would have gone differently if you had actually listened instead of jumping ahead to plan a response.

> *An expert is someone who has succeeded in making decisions and judgments simpler through knowing what to pay attention to and what to ignore.* – Edward de Bono

Judging

Jumping to conclusions about the speaker is another barrier to effective listening. Perhaps you've been in the audience when a

speaker makes a small mistake; maybe it's mispronouncing a word or misstating the hometown of your favorite athlete. An effective listener will overlook this minor gaffe and continue to give the speaker the benefit of the doubt. A listener looking for an excuse not to give their full attention to the speaker will instead take this momentary lapse as proof of flaws in all the person has said and will go on to say.

This same listener might also judge the speaker based on superficialities. Focusing on delivery or personal appearance—a squeaky voice, a ketchup stain on a white shirt, mismatched socks, a bad haircut, or a proclaimed love for a band that no one of any worth could ever profess to like—might help the ineffective listener justify a choice to stop listening. Still, this is always a choice. The effective listener will instead accept that people may have their own individual foibles, but they can still be good speakers and valuable sources of insight or information.

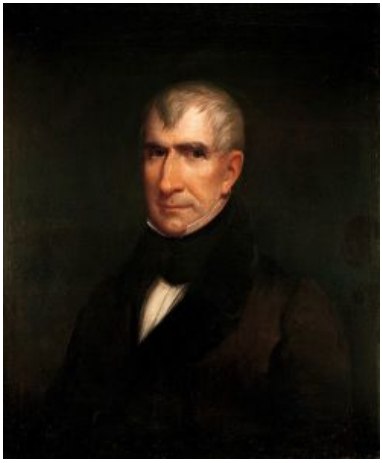
Reacting Emotionally

When the speaker says an emotional trigger, it can be even more difficult to listen effectively. A guest speaker on campus begins with a personal story about the loss of a parent, and instead of listening you become caught up grieving a family member of your own. Or, a presenter takes a stance on drug use, abortion, euthanasia, religion, or even the best topping for a pizza that you simply can't agree with. You begin formulating a heated response to the speaker's perspective, or searing questions you might ask to show the holes in the speaker's argument. Yet, you've allowed your emotional response to the speaker interfere with your ability to listen effectively. Once emotion is involved, effective listening stops.

> *Bore, n. A person who talks when you wish him to listen.* – Ambrose Bierce

Encouraging Effective Listening

William Henry Harrison was the ninth President of the United States. He's also recognized for giving the worst State of the Union address—ever. His two-hour speech delivered in a snowstorm in 1841 proves that a long speech can kill (and not in the colloquial "it was so good" sense). Perhaps it was karma, but after the President gave his meandering speech discussing ancient Roman history more than campaign issues, he died from a cold caught while blathering on, standing outside without a hat or coat.[1]



"William Henry Harrison" by James Reid Lambdin. Public domain.

Now, when asked what you know about Abraham Lincoln, you're likely to have more answers to offer. Let's focus on his Gettysburg Address. The speech is a model of brevity. His "of the people, by the people, for the people" is always employed as an example of parallelism, and he kept his words simple. In short, Lincoln considered his listening audience when writing his speech.

> *The habit of common and continuous speech is a symptom of mental deficiency. It proceeds from not knowing what is going on in other people's minds.* – Walter Bagehot

When you sit down to compose a speech, keep in mind that you are **writing for the ear** rather than the eye. Listeners cannot go back and reread what you have just said. They need to grasp your message in the amount of time it takes you to speak the words. To

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help them accomplish this, you need to give listeners a clear idea of your overarching aim, reasons to care, and cues about what is important. You need to inspire them to want to not just hear but engage in what you are saying.

Make Your Listeners Care

Humans are motivated by ego; they always want to know "what's in it for me?" So, when you want to want to get an audience's attention, it is imperative to establish a reason for your listeners to care about what you are saying.

Some might say Oprah did this by giving away cars at the end of an episode. But that only explains why people waited in line for hours to get a chance to sit in the audience as her shows were taped. As long as they were in the stands, they didn't need to listen to get the car at the end of the show. Yet Oprah had audiences listening to her for 25 years before she launched her own network. She made listeners care about what she was saying. She told them what was in that episode for them. She made her audience members feel like she was talking to them about their problems and offered solutions that they could use—even if they weren't multibillionaires known worldwide by first name alone.

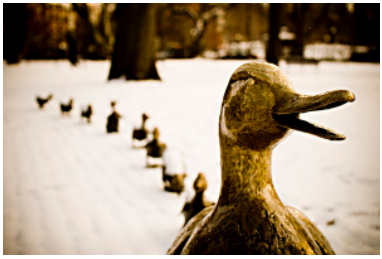
Audiences are also more responsive when you find a means to tap their **intrinsic motivation**, by appealing to curiosity, challenging them, or providing contextualization.[3] You might appeal to the audience's curiosity if you are giving an informative speech about a topic they might not be familiar with already. Even in a narrative speech, you can touch on curiosity by cueing the audience to the significant thing they will learn about you or your topic from the

3. [4]
4. [7]

story. A speech can present a challenge too. Persuasive speeches challenge the audience to think in a new way. Special Occasion speeches might challenge the listeners to reflect or prompt action. Providing a listener with contextualization comes back to the what's in it for me motivation. A student giving an informative speech about the steps in creating a mosaic could simply offer a step-by-step outline of the process, or she can frame it by saying to her listener, "by the end of my speech, you'll have all the tools you need to make a mosaic on your own." This promise prompts the audience to sit further forward in their seats for what might otherwise be a dry how-to recitation.

Cue Your Listeners

Audiences also lean in further when you employ active voice. We do this in speaking without hesitation. Imagine you were walking across campus and saw the contents of someone's room dumped out on the lawn in front of your dorm. You'd probably tell a friend: "The contents of Jane's room were thrown out the window by Julie." Wait, that doesn't sound right. You're more likely to say: "Julie threw Jane's stuff out the window!" The latter is an example of active voice. You put the actor (Julie) and the action (throwing Jane's stuff) at the beginning. When we try to speak formally, we can fall into passive voice. Yet, it sounds stuffy, and so unfamiliar to your listener's ear that he will struggle to process the point while you've already moved on to the next thing you wanted to say.



"Make way for ducklings" by lee. CC-BY-NC-ND.

> *Twice and thrice over, as they say, good is it to repeat and review what is good.* – Plato

Knowing that your audience only hears what you are saying the one time you say it, invites you to employ repetition. Listeners are more likely to absorb a sound when it is repeated. We are often unconsciously waiting for a repetition to occur so we can confirm what we thought we heard.[5] As a result, employing repetition can emphasize an idea for the listener. Employing repetition of a word, words, or sentence can create a rhythm for the listener's ear. Employing repetition too often, though, can be tiresome.

If you don't want to repeat things so often you remind your listener of a sound clip on endless loop, you can also cue your listener through vocal emphasis. Volume is a tool speakers can employ to gain attention. Certainly parents use it all of the time. Yet, you probably don't want to spend your entire speech shouting at your audience. Instead, you can modulate your voice so that you say something important slightly louder. Or, you say something more softly, although still audible, before echoing it again with greater volume to emphasize the repetition. Changing your pitch or volume can help secure audience attention for a longer period of time, as we welcome the variety.

Pace is another speaker's friend. This is not to be confused with the moving back and forth throughout a speech that someone might do nervously (inadvertently inducing motion sickness in his audience). Instead, it refers to planning to pause after an important point or question to allow your audience the opportunity to think about what you have just said. Or, you might speak more quickly (although still clearly) to emphasize your fear or build humor in a long list of concerns while sharing an anecdote. Alternately, you could slow down for more solemn topics or to emphasize the words

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in a critical statement. For instance, a persuasive speaker lobbying for an audience to stop cutting down trees in her neighborhood might say, “this can’t continue. It’s up to you to do something.” But imagine her saying these words with attention paid to pacing and each period representing a pause. She could instead say, “This. Can’t. Continue. It’s up to you. Do something.”

Convince Them to Engage

Listeners respond to people. Consider this introduction to a speech about a passion for college football:

It's college football season! Across the nation, the season begins in late summer. Teams play in several different divisions including the SEC, the ACC, and Big Ten. Schools make a lot of money playing in the different divisions, because people love to watch football on TV. College football is great for the fans, the players, and the schools.

"Clemson Tigers football running down the hill" by Jim Ferguson. CC-BY.

Now, compare it to this introduction to another speech about the same passion:

When I was a little boy, starting as early as four, my father would wake me up on Fall Saturdays with the same three words: "It's Game Day!" My dad was a big Clemson Tigers fan, so we might drive to Death Valley to see a game. Everyone would come: my mom, my grandparents, and friends who went to Clemson too. We would all tailgate before the game—playing corn hole, tossing a foam football, and watching the satellite TV. Even though we loved Clemson football best, all college football was worth watching. You never knew when there would be an upset. You could count on seeing pre-professional athletes performing amazing feats. But, best of all, it was a way to bond with my family, and later my friends.

Both introductions set up the topic and even give an idea of how the speech will be organized. Yet, the second one is made more interesting by the human element. The speech is *personalized*.

The college football enthusiast speaker might continue to make the speech interesting to his listeners by appealing to commonalities. He might acknowledge that not everyone in his class is a Clemson fan, but all of them can agree that their school's football team is fun to watch. Connecting with the audience through referencing things the speaker has in common with the listeners can function as an appeal to **ethos**. The speaker is credible to the audience because he is like them. Or it can work as an appeal to **pathos**. A speaker might employ this emotional appeal in a persuasive speech about Habitat for Humanity by asking her audience to think first about the comforts of home or dorm living that they all take for granted.

> *If you engage people on a vital, important level, they will respond.* – Edward Bond

In speaking to the audience about the comforts of dorm living, the speaker is unlikely to refer to the "dormitories where we each reside." More likely, she might say, "the dorms we live in." As with electing to use active voice, speakers can choose to be more conversational than they might be in writing an essay on the same topic.

The speaker might use contractions, or colloquialisms, or make comparisons to popular television shows, music, or movies. This will help the listeners feel like the speaker is in conversation with them—admittedly a one-sided one—rather than talking at them. It can be off-putting to feel the speaker is simply reciting facts and figures and rushing to get through to the end of their speech, whereas listeners respond to someone talking to them calmly and confidently. Being conversational can help to convey this attitude even when on the inside the speaker is far from calm or confident. Nevertheless, employ this strategy with caution. Being too

colloquial, for instance using "Dude" throughout the speech, could undermine your credibility. Or a popular culture example that you think is going to be widely recognized might not be the common knowledge you think it is, and could confuse audiences with non-native listeners.

> *Choice of attention—to pay attention to this and ignore that—is to the inner life what choice of action is to the outer. In both cases, a man is responsible for his choice and must accept the consequences, whatever they may be.* – W. H. Auden

Ethical Listening

Just as you hope others are attentive to your speech, it is important to know how to listen ethically—in effort to show respect to other speakers.

Jordan stood to give his presentation to the class. He knew he was knowledgeable about his chosen topic, the Chicago Bears football team, and had practiced for days, but public speaking always gave him anxiety. He asked for a show of hands during his attention getter, and only a few people acknowledged him. Jordan's anxiety worsened as he continued his speech. He noticed that many of his classmates were texting on their phones. Two girls on the right side were passing a note back and forth. When Jordan received his peer critique forms, most of his classmates simply said, "Good job" without giving any explanation. One of his classmates wrote, "Bears SUCK!"

As we can see from the example above, communicating is not a one-way street. Jordan's peers were not being ethical listeners. All individuals involved in the communication process have ethical responsibilities. An ethical communicator tries to "understand and respect other communicators before evaluating and responding to their messages."[1] As we have learned, listening is an important part of the public speaking process. Thus, this chapter will also outline ethical listening. This section explains how to improve your listening skills and how to provide ethical feedback. Hearing happens physiologically, but listening is an art. The importance of ethical listening will be discussed first.

Develop Ethical Listening Skills

The act of hearing is what our body does physically; our ear takes in sound waves. However, when we interpret (or make sense of)

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those sound waves, that's called **listening**. Think about the last time you gave a speech. How did the audience members act? Do you remember the people that seemed most attentive? Those audience members were displaying traits of ethical listening. An **ethical listener** is one who actively interprets shared material and analyzes the content and speaker's effectiveness. Good listeners try to display respect for the speaker. Communicating respect for the speaker occurs when the listener: a) prepares to listen and b) listens with his or her whole body.

One way you can prepare yourself to listen is to get rid of distractions.[1] If you've selected a seat near the radiator and find it hard to hear over the noise, you may want to move before the speaker begins. If you had a fight with your friend before work that morning, you may want to take a moment to collect your thoughts and put the argument out of your mind—so that you can prevent internal distraction during the staff meeting presentation. As a professional, you are aware of the types of things and behaviors that distract you from the speaker; it is your obligation to manage these distractions before the speaker begins.

"Bored Students" by cybrarian77. CC-BY-NC.

In order to ethically listen, it's also imperative to listen with more than just your ears—your critical mind should also be at work.

1. [2]
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According to Sellnow,[3] two other things you can do to prepare are to avoid prejudging the speaker and refrain from jumping to conclusions while the speaker is talking. Effective listening can only occur when we're actually attending to the message. Conversely, listening is interrupted when we're pre-judging the speaker, stereotyping the speaker, or making mental counterarguments to the speaker's claims. You have the right to disagree with a speaker's content but wait until the speaker is finished and has presented his or her whole argument to draw such a conclusion.

Ethical listening doesn't just take place inside the body. In order to show your attentiveness, it is necessary to consider how your body is listening. A listening posture enhances your ability to receive information and make sense of a message.[5] An attentive listening posture includes sitting up and remaining alert, keeping eye contact with the speaker and his or her visual aid, removing distractions from your area, and taking notes when necessary. Also, if you're enjoying a particular speaker, it's helpful to provide positive nonverbal cues like head-nodding, occasional smiling, and eye-contact. These practices can aid you in successful, ethical listening. However, know that listening is sometimes only the first step in this process—many times listeners are asked to provide feedback.

> *Constructive criticism is about finding something good and positive to soften the blow to the real critique of what really went on.* – Paula Abdul

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Provide Ethical Feedback

Ethical speakers and listeners are able to provide quality feedback to others. **Ethical feedback** is a descriptive and explanatory response to the speaker. Brownell explains that a response to a speaker should demonstrate that you have listened and considered the content and delivery of the message. [7] Responses should respect the position of the speaker while being honest about your attitudes, values, and beliefs. Praising the speaker's message or delivery can help boost his or her confidence and encourage good speaking behaviors. However, ethical feedback does not always have to be positive in nature. Constructive criticism can point out flaws of the speaker while also making suggestions. Constructive criticism acknowledges that a speaker is not perfect and can improve upon the content or delivery of the message. In fact, constructive criticism is helpful in perfecting a speaker's content or speaking style. Ethical feedback always explains the listener's opinion in detail. Figure 4.3 provides examples of unethical and ethical feedback.

7. [8]
8. [13]

Figure 4.3: Unethical and Ethical Feedback

Unethical Feedback	• I really enjoyed your speech. • Your speech lacks supportive information. • You are the worst public speaker ever.
Ethical Feedback	• I really enjoyed your speech because your topic was personally interesting to me. • Your speech lacked supportive information. You didn't cite any outside information. Instead, your only source was you. • I believe your speech was ineffective because you were clearly unprepared and made no eye contact with the audience.

As you can see from the example feedback statements (Figure 3.3), ethical feedback is always explanatory. Ethical statements *explain* why you find the speaker effective or ineffective. Another guideline for ethical feedback is to "phrase your comments as personal perceptions" by using "I" language (Sellnow, 2009, p. 94). Feedback that employs the "I" pronoun displays personal preference regarding the speech and communicates responsibility for the comments. Feedback can focus on the speaker's delivery, content, style, visual aid, or attire. Be sure to support your claims—by giving a clear explanation of your opinion—when providing feedback to a speaker. Feedback should also support ethical communication behaviors from speakers by asking for more information and pointing out relevant information.[9] It is clear that providing ethical feedback is an important part of the listening process and, thus, of the public speaking process.

> A *man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon this world.*
> – Albert Camus

9. [10]
10. [14]

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A Note about Listening

KATIE GRUBER

You have just read about the process of listening; it should be apparent by now that this is an *active* process which takes effort.

Additionally, it's likely you are reading this text for your public speaking class… consider that for every speech that you deliver, you're listening to numerous others — the speeches of your classmates! In a class full of 25 students, for example, you're listening to 24 speeches for every *one* that you give. Remember we learn not only through *doing* but through observation – use that time to learn from others!

Here are additional resources that demonstrate the power of listening:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://mtsu.pressbooks.pub/principlesofpublicspeaking/?p=25#oembed-1

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here: https://mtsu.pressbooks.pub/principlesofpublicspeaking/?p=25#oembed-2

Chapter Five – Determining a Topic and Purpose

When you're preparing to speak, finding an argument, perspective, or topic can feel overwhelming. "Where should I start?" "What do I care about?" "Why should the audience care?" are all questions that you'll likely encounter.

These are important queries, and we don't want to downplay the difficulty in selecting an argument and formulating an idea that is worthwhile to the audience. Finding an argument that fits the context, is timely, well-reasoned, and interesting can be difficult. Oftentimes, when we sit down to think about ideas, brainstorm, and jot down some insights, our page feels oddly blank. "What should we talk about?" "Where do we start?" are common questions that race through our minds. You might experience this, too, and feel confused about how to begin selecting an argument or sorting through information to locate an interesting idea.

When you begin searching for an argument, you aren't alone; you have tons of informational avenues that can direct you to different topics that are relevant in the world.

In fact, you're experiencing interesting information all the time! You are constantly absorbing, sorting, and curating information and ideas. Think about your social media accounts. If you're like us, you likely scroll through and click on articles that seem unique or insightful; you "like" or comment in response to posts that draw you in. There's a constant flow of information (and potential speech topics).

In this chapter, we explore how to select and formulate the main argument for a speech. It's often uncommon to snap our fingers and know exactly what our argument will be, and that's OK! This chapter will take you through brainstorming and beginning to write a clear and narrow argument that is specific to your public speaking

context. It's our goal to encourage curiosity, and we hope that you'll accept the challenge.

By the end of this chapter, you will have deeper critical thinking skills that lead you from broad topic ideas to specific arguments and thesis statements. Before brainstorming a topic can begin, however, you must zero in on the context.

Context is Key

Your context should always guide your preparatory process, including selecting an argument to present. The context defines why you're there, how long you're there for, when, and with whom.

By answering the "why" – i.e. "Why am I here?" – you can determine your general purpose for speaking: informing, persuading, or entertaining. While arguments can often be adapted to fit many purposes, it's always important to begin any project by knowing the parameters and overarching goals – in this case, why am I speaking? For example, are you trying to:

- Solve a problem
- Reduce uncertainty
- Increase awareness
- Honor someone

Selecting a final topic before considering the context means "placing the cart before the horse," so to speak. Your context will inform the general purpose which will guide your specific argument.

It's important, too, to stay appraised of the other contextual factors, particularly the time. How much time you have to speak will influence how broad or narrow your argument can be. If you have 3 minutes, for example, you must have a specific and focused take-away for the audience within that short amount of time. Alternatively, a 20-minute speech provides more flexibility. There

may be some ideas or arguments that aren't feasible within certain time constraints. Additionally, being aware of larger cultural conversations and dialogues can assist in selecting arguments that are timely and relevant for your audience. In other words, it allows you to find information that is having an impact on your community/communities right now, and that information becomes significant to share.

If you aren't sure how to locate such arguments, stay tuned! Below, we tackle brainstorming as a mechanism to locate potential arguments.

Selecting a Broad Subject Area

Once you know what the basic constraints are for your speech, you can then start thinking about picking a topic. The first aspect to consider is what subject area you are interested in examining. A subject area is a broad area of knowledge. Art, business, history, physical sciences, social sciences, humanities, and education are all examples of subject areas. When selecting a topic, start by casting a broad net because it will help you limit and weed out topics quickly.

Furthermore, each of these broad subject areas has a range of subject areas beneath it. For example, if we take the subject area "art," we can break it down further into broad categories like art history, art galleries, and how to create art. We can further break

down these broad areas into even narrower subject areas (e.g., art history includes prehistoric art, Egyptian art, Grecian art, Roman art, Middle Eastern art, medieval art, Asian art, Renaissance art, modern art). As you can see, topic selection is a narrowing process.

Narrowing Your Topic

Narrowing your topic to something manageable for the constraints of your speech is something that takes time, patience, and experience. One of the biggest mistakes that new public speakers make is not narrowing their topics sufficiently given the constraints. In the previous section, we started demonstrating how the narrowing process works, but even in those examples, we narrowed subject areas down to fairly broad areas of knowledge.

Think of narrowing as a funnel. At the top of the funnel are the broad subject areas, and your goal is to narrow your topic further and further down until just one topic can come out the other end of the funnel. The more focused your topic is, the easier your speech is to research, write, and deliver. So, let's take one of the broad areas from the art subject area and keep narrowing it down to a manageable speech topic. For this example, let's say that your general purpose is to inform, you are delivering the speech in class to your peers, and you have five to seven minutes. Now that we have the basic constraints, let's start narrowing our topic. The broad area we are going to narrow in this example is Middle Eastern art. When examining the category of Middle Eastern art, the first thing you'll find is that Middle Eastern art is generally grouped into four distinct

categories: Anatolian, Arabian, Mesopotamian, and Syro-Palestinian. Again, if you're like us, until we started doing some research on the topic, we had no idea that the historic art of the Middle East was grouped into these specific categories. We'll select Anatolian art, or the art of what is now modern Turkey.

You may think that your topic is now sufficiently narrow, but even within the topic of Anatolian art, there are smaller categories: pre-Hittite, Hittite, Uratu, and Phrygian periods of art. Let's narrow our topic again to the Phrygian period of art (1200–700 BCE). Although we have now selected a specific period of art history in Anatolia, we are still looking at a five-hundred-year period in which a great deal of art was created. One famous Phrygian king was King Midas, who according to myth was given the ears of a donkey and the power of a golden touch by the Greek gods. As such, there is an interesting array of art from the period of Midas and its Greek counterparts representing Midas. At this point, we could create a topic about how Phrygian and Grecian art differed in their portrayals of King Midas. We now have a topic that is unique, interesting, and definitely manageable in five to seven minutes. You may be wondering how we narrowed the topic down; we just started doing a little research using the Metropolitan Museum of Art's website (MET Museum).

Overall, when narrowing your topic, you should start by asking yourself four basic questions based on the constraints discussed earlier in this section:

1. Does the topic match my intended general purpose?
2. Is the topic appropriate for my audience?
3. Is the topic appropriate for the given speaking context?
4. Can I reasonably hope to inform or persuade my audience in the time frame I have for the speech?

Brainstorming Ideas. Photo by Alena Darmel.[3]

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is the process and practice of searching to find ideas or information. When you brainstorm, you are generating ideas to overcome a barrier or confront a problem. The problem you're confronting is,

"What can I talk about that will sustain the audience's attention and have an impact?" For speeches, brainstorming assists in locating

and narrowing information to an accurate idea that supports the development of a well-reasoned argument.

Like we mentioned in the introduction, you are already sorting through vast amounts of information daily. We are confronted with so many ideas, research findings, memes, tweets, advertisements, and podcasts (to name a few); we develop personal strategies to find information that is meaningful and worthwhile to us.

Brainstorming is a practice that formalizes that sorting process. It asks you to make those choices more deliberately and consciously. The key to successful brainstorming is openness – you must be open to finding, locating, and narrowing down information.

Arguments are Advocacies

Topic selection and argument construction are key parts of formulating an advocacy. Speeches are meaningful and impactful communication acts. When you speak, you are supporting an idea, cause, or policy. You should approach brainstorming purposefully and intentionally with a framework in mind that "What I select matters." Because what you select matters.

In addition, your advocacy may begin broadly, but your goal is to tailor that advocacy down to a workable argument. It's helpful to think about your topics as orbiting an advocacy. For example, you may be interested in environmental advocacy, where environmentalism is a large and broad topic. But "environmentalism" isn't a workable speech argument –

it's way too big! With research, critical thinking, and expertise, you'll narrow that broad advocacy umbrella down to a workable argument – a thesis statement – and craft the remainder of your speech with that specific argument in mind.

We suggest two broad brainstorming strategies, and let's start with the first: exploratory research.

Exploratory Research

Exploratory research encompasses brainstorming strategies that spark curiosity. When you explore, you are going on an adventure, and exploratory research is similar. You are sorting information to find broad topics or ideas (that you'll narrow down later). Conducting a personal inventory and exploring online are two great exploratory brainstorming strategies.

Personal Inventory

An old adage states, "Write about what you know."

To write what you know, begin by conducting a **personal inventory** – a process of tracking ideas, insights, or topics that you have experience with or interest in. Retail stores do regular inventories to know what is actually stocked in the business. You have much more going on in your brain and background than you can be conscious of at any one time. Being asked the right kinds of prompts can help you find ideas. Look over Table 5.1 for some prompting questions when conducting a persona inventory.

Table 5.1 Personal Inventory	
What's your major?	What are things that you experience that give you pause?
What are your hobbies?	What unique skills do you possess?
What online sites do commonly click through?	What social problems interest you?
What goals do you have?	What communities do you belong to? What have they been discussing?
What are barriers that you've experienced in working toward those goals?	What kind of values do you hold dear?
What's your major?	What community problems have caught your attention?
What are your hobbies?	What posts do you commonly share?

This may not be an inventory that you complete in one sitting. In fact, it's worthwhile to jot down a few things that catch your attention throughout the day or for a series of days. Once complete, the inventory may seem long and intrusive, but digging a little deeper may help you find ideas and directions that are unique to you. Generating your list based on these questions and prompts will get you excited about your topic and talking about it to your audience.

Let's work through a hypothetical application of the personal inventory. Imagine brainstorming for a speech, and you write the following in response to Table 5.1:

Major: Economics (for now)

Goals: Complete my degree with honors; travel to Brazil

Barriers to achieving those goals: Procrastination, assigned class schedules, expensive college and fees, problems with gaining a visa

As you look over these broad ideas, your next step is to highlight

topics that pique your interest or are a priority. You might highlight "expensive college" as a barrier that could prohibit you from completing your economics degree on time. After all, if you are unable to afford college (or are worried about loans), you may take a semester break or drop out. Also, as an economics major, you become more interested in exploring college affordability.

As the personal inventory implies, good speech topic ideas often begin with the speaker. After all, if a speaker is intrigued by an idea, that passion is more likely to translate to an audience. But it doesn't end there. Remember, we are just brainstorming! It's still necessary to research and read about a topic or problem from multiple viewpoints and sources. If we only begin from ourselves, we often fail to see or learn about different perspectives, other important areas, or problems. Exploring online can help in narrowing your topic and deciding if it's a relevant argument for your audience and community.

Photo by Pixabay.[5]

Explore Online

A second brainstorming technique is online exploration—searching

digital information with an open mind. You can use your personal inventory as guidance or, if you're stuck, you can read information online for ideas that spark curiosity. There are ample online locations to find an array of information, from Google News to Twitter.

When you search, look far and wide. It's common to search and seek out information that we're looking for, but brainstorming isn't about finding what you already know; It's about finding what you don't. Use different search engines and social media platforms for help.

As you search, skim. Remember that this is an exploratory phase (we'll talk more about in-depth research in Chapter 7), so you don't need to read every article that pops up on a search engine. Write down words. Write down phrases. Ask yourself questions about those words and phrases to determine how relevant and interesting they could be.

For example, if you continued brainstorming about "expensive college" – an idea on your hypothetical personal inventory—you might find a series of posts, articles, and insights that a) help you learn more and b) help narrow down the topic. You'd learn that, under the broad category of college affordability, there are a range of topics that influence students, including: student loan interest rates, textbook cost, private loans, and the depletion of Pell grants. You could attack any of these issues, of course, but some are more complicated than others. Textbooks seem like they could be a potential topic. Perhaps you recently experienced purchasing expensive college textbooks. Perhaps you loaned a friend money after their textbook bill made it difficult to pay rent. After reflecting, books seem ripe for advocacy.

Whenever you are exploring a topic online, it is important to remember that if you have one good source, you probably have several. The trick is being able to use that one good article to track down multiple sources. For example, a *Vox* article about textbooks, titled "The High Cost of College Textbooks, Explained," provides opportunities for more online exploration. Below is a list of ideas

or concepts to click on or research in other tabs. Look for these in every article as you brainstorm. Pretty soon, you will probably have a dozen or more tabs open, meaning you will have much more expertise and a deeper understanding of your topic.

- **Hyperlinks**: journalists do not cite their sources with footnotes, endnotes, or internal citations like you do for class. Instead, they hyperlink their sources to make it easier for you to track down their evidence.
- **Big Ideas**: You can easily Google main topics of an article to see how other people are talking about it. This will allow you to see more than one perspective on a topic and to cross-check your original article against other writers.
- **People**: From the author to the people they talked to or about, look up people to read their credentials and determine if they are qualified to write or talk about the relevant topic.
- **Jargon:** If you find any words that are unfamiliar, look them up. This will help you understand the argument better and make certain the author actually knows what they are writing about. Plus, it will give you some words to use for mind-mapping.

Before we move further into narrowing and mapping our topic, let's conclude this section by busting a few myths about online information.

Myth #1: Wikipedia is bad. You've likely heard that "you can absolutely not cite Wikipedia [in a formal essay or speech]." While, yes, Wikipedia is a collaborative encyclopedia, meaning that anyone can technically add to its content, its pages can be useful for ***brainstorming***. We recommend using Wikipedia in two ways.

First, search Wikipedia for their internally-cited material. If you've used Wikipedia recently, you know that the content includes references to other sources that validate the findings. Use those! The references are helpful in locating (often) credible sources for your own research on a topic.

Second, use Wikipedia to clarify complex ideas. Because

Wikipedia is a community-based and collaborative encyclopedia, technical language is commonly translated to allow better comprehension. If you aren't sure about an idea, search Wikipedia for help (but verify the information through other sources, too).

While we don't recommend using Wikipedia *as* the source, their content can direct you toward reputable research and clarify difficult concepts.

Myth #2: Information is neutral. It's easy to believe that, because something is published online, it's a neutral and reputable source. Sadly, that's not the case. In our digital information age, virtually anyone can be an author, and that's great! But it also reduces the reliability of information that's being posted.

You've likely heard about "fake news," but we'll use the term **propaganda** – biased or misleading information that promotes a particular agenda. Propaganda is junk science, and it can't be trusted as reliable. For example, you might notice a meme that posts a Harriett Tubman quote in support of strict immigration reform. Digging deeper, you'd likely find that the quote was misrepresented or made up to support an anti-immigrant agenda.

Advertising more subtly influences information. That's because many information sorting sites, including Google, use an algorithm that's specific to you. If you and a friend search the same thing, your search results may differ, especially after the first page.

Does that mean you can't use Google? Of course not. We do! But you should be aware that targeted sites may be rising to the top, and when you search, dig deep and search multiple pages.

Using a Mind Map

After conducting exploratory research to dig a little deeper, a mind map is a second brainstorming strategy to narrow and isolate a topic. A **mind map** is a visual tool that allows you to chart and expand key topic ideas or concepts.

As you mind map, use the following tips:

- Start with a big idea.
- Break this big concept down into smaller ideas until you can't break them down anymore.
- Look up synonyms or like words.
- Write down any words you find during your research to tap into the larger conversation.

Figure 5.2 is an example of a mind map based on "college affordability." You can see how the topic narrowed from college affordability to textbook costs. The mind map also includes words that were used in the *Vox* article, such as "open textbooks." Jotting down ideas and language that are used in source information will provide insight into common wording used by topic experts. Keep in mind, if you do not like mind maps, make a list or develop some alternative method, but make certain to keep track of everything.

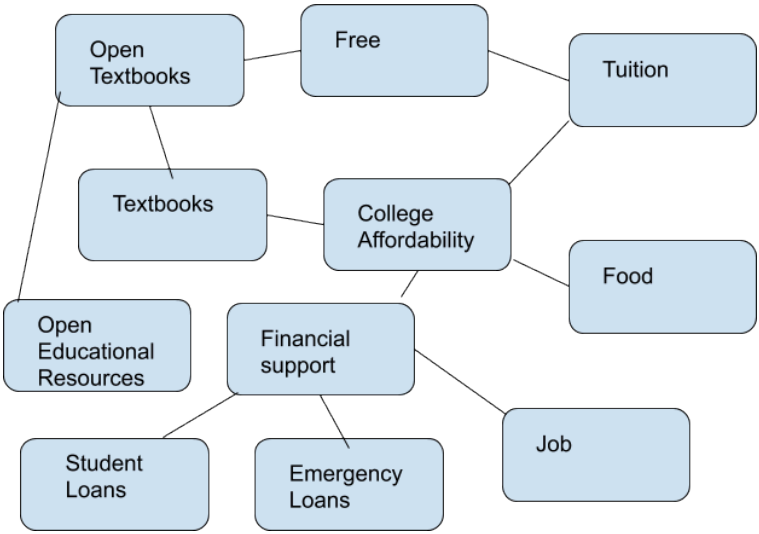

Figure 5.2

You can create a mind map using a program like Popplet, Powerpoint, Word, or Google Docs. We usually just grab a blank sheet of paper and a pen, though.

As you expand topics through a mind map, the narrower that your argument becomes. Instead of a broad approach to "college affordability," you now have options to explore textbook costs, open textbooks, or open educational resources.

We promise this will not be a waste of your time. Writing down your ideas and thoughts will help you identify keywords for further searching, so you won't have to come up with words on the fly. As you search, you can easily scratch off words that fail to get you any information, mark the words that seem to get you exactly what you need, or jot down new words you stumble across as you search. All of this will save you time in the long run because it won't leave you searching for just the right word or trying the wrong word over and over.

Formulating a Specific Purpose Statement

After identifying your general purpose (to inform, to persuade, or to entertain) and brainstorming key topic ideas, you can start to move in the direction of the specific purpose.

A **specific purpose statement** builds on your general purpose (such as to inform) and makes it more specific (as the name suggests). So, if you're giving a persuasive speech, your general purpose will be to persuade your audience about, for example, the rising cost of textbooks. Written together, your specific purpose would read, "to persuade my audience to support campus solutions to rising textbook costs."

Your general purpose and audience will influence how to write your specific purpose statement (see Table 5.3 below.)

General Purpose	Audience	Topic
To inform	my audience	**about** the usefulness of scrapbooking to save a family's memories.
To persuade	a group of kindergarten teachers	**to** adopt a new disciplinary method for their classrooms.
To entertain	a group of executives	**by** describing the lighter side of life in "cubicle-ville."
To inform	community members	**about** the newly proposed swimming pool plans that have been adopted.
To persuade	my peers in class	**to** vote for me for class president.
To entertain	the guests attending my mother's birthday party	**by** telling a humorous story followed by a toast.

Table 5.3 demonstrates how to move from the general purpose to the specific purpose while keeping your audience in mind.

So far, so good, right? Before moving to your thesis, be aware these common pitfalls for writing specific purpose statements.

Being Too Broad

Specific purpose statements sometimes try to cover far too much and are too broad. You are funneling a broad topic to a specific argument, so don't stop at the topic. Instead, ask, "am I trying to do too much?"

Consider this specific purpose statement: *To explain to my classmates the history of ballet.*

This subject could result in a three-hour lecture, maybe even a whole course. You will probably find that your first attempt at a specific purpose statement will need refining.

These examples are much more specific and much more manageable given the limited amount of time you will have:

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

To explain to my classmates the difference between Russian and French ballet.

To explain to my classmates how ballet originated as an art form in the Renaissance.

To explain to my classmates the origin of the ballet dancers' clothing.

Often, broadness is signaled by the use of "and," where a specific statement is making two arguments.

These examples cover two different topics:

To explain to my audience how to swing a golf club and choose the best golf shoes.

To persuade my classmates to be involved in the Special Olympics and vote to fund better classes for the intellectually disabled.

Too Specialized

The second problem with specific purpose statements is the opposite of being too broad, in that some specific purposes statements are so focused that they might only be appropriate for people who are already extremely interested in the topic or experts in a field. For example:

To inform my classmates of the life cycle of a new species of lima bean (botanists, agriculturalists).

To inform my classmates about the Yellow 5 ingredient in Mountain Dew (chemists, nutritionists).

To persuade my classmates that JIF Peanut Butter is better than Peter Pan. (organizational chefs in large institutions).

Speech topics. Photo by Henri Mathieu-Saint-Laurent.[4]

Formulating a Thesis

While you will not actually say your specific purpose statement during your speech, you will need to clearly state what your focus and main points are going to be. Your specific purpose is still not your main argument. It's part of the funnel as you move to your

main argument, or thesis statement. A **thesis statement** is a single, declarative statement that outlines the purpose of your speech.

The point of your thesis statement is to reveal and clarify the main argument of your speech.

This part of the process is important because it's where your topic becomes an argument. Like we mentioned in the introduction, you will funnel your advocacy down to a specific argument that fits the context and goals of your speech.

However, as you are processing your ideas and approach, you may still be working on them. Sometimes those main points will not be clear to you immediately. As much as we would like these writing processes to be straightforward, sometimes we find that we have to revise our original approach. This is why preparing a speech the night before you are giving it is a really, really bad idea. You need lots of time for the preparation and then the practice.

Sometimes you will hear the writing process referred to as "**iterative.**" This word means, among other things, that a speech or document is not always written in the same order as the audience finally experiences it. You may have noticed that we have not said anything about the introduction of your speech yet. Even though that is the first thing the audience hears, it may be one of the last parts you actually compose. It is best to consider your speech flexible as you work on it, and to be willing to edit and revise. If your instructor asks you to turn the outline in before the speech, you should be clear on how much you can revise after that. Otherwise, it helps to know that you can keep editing your speech until you deliver it, especially while you practice.

Here are some examples that pair the general purpose, specific purpose statements and thesis statements.

General Purpose: To inform

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

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

General Purpose: To persuade
Specific Purpose: To persuade my political science class that labor unions are no longer a vital political force in the U.S.
Thesis: Although for decades in the twentieth century labor unions influenced local and national elections, in this speech I will point to how their influence has declined in the last thirty years.

General Purpose: To persuade
Specific Purpose: To motivate my audience to oppose the policy of drug testing welfare recipients.
Thesis: Many voices are calling for welfare recipients to have to go through mandatory, regular drug testing, but this policy is unjust, impractical, and costly, and fair-minded Americans should actively oppose it.

General Purpose: To inform
Specific Purpose: To explain to my fellow civic club members why I admire Representative John Lewis.
Thesis: John Lewis has my admiration for his sacrifices during the Civil Rights movement and his service to Georgia as a leader and U.S. Representative.

Notice that in all of the above examples that neither the specific purpose nor the central idea ever exceeds one sentence. You may divide your central idea and the preview of main points into two sentences or three sentences, depending on what your instructor directs. If your central idea consists of more than three sentences, then you probably are including too much information and taking up time that is needed for the body of the speech.

For thesis statements, remember the following few guidelines:

- Do not write the statement as a question.
- Use concrete language ("I admire Beyoncé for being a talented performer and businesswoman"), and avoid subjective terms ("My speech is about why I think Beyoncé is the bomb") or jargon and acronyms ("PLA is better than CBE for adult learners.")

Remember that your thesis statement cements your main argument – it's the foundation to building the speech. A clear and focused thesis statement define the speech, and we'll continue building the research and content around your argument.

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Chapter Six – Analyzing your Audience

In contemporary public speaking, the audience that you are addressing is the entire reason you are giving the speech; accordingly, the audience is therefore the most important component of all speechmaking. It cannot be said often or more forcefully enough: *know your audience*! Knowing your audience—their beliefs, attitudes, age, education level, job functions, language, and culture—is the single most important aspect of developing your speech strategy and execution plan. Your audience isn't just a passive group of people who come together by happenstance to listen to you. Your audience is assembled for a very real and significant reason: they want to hear what you have to say. So, be prepared.

> *Spectacular achievement is always preceded by unspectacular preparation.* – Robert H. Schuller

We analyze our audience because we want to discover information that will help create a bond between the speaker and the audience. We call this bond "identification." Aristotle loosely called it "finding a common ground." This isn't a one-way process between the speaker and the audience; rather, it is a two-way transactional process. When you ask an audience to listen to your ideas, you are inviting them to come partway into your personal and professional experience as a speaker. And, in return, it is your responsibility and obligation to go partway into their experience as an audience. The more you know and understand about your audience and their psychological needs, the better you can prepare your speech and your enhanced confidence will reduce your own speaker anxiety.[1]

This chapter is dedicated to understanding how a speaker connects with an audience through **audience analysis.** This analysis comes through 1) the situational analysis, (2) the demographic analysis, (3) the psychological analysis, (4) the multicultural analysis, and (5) the topic interest and prior knowledge analysis. Additionally, when collecting information about an audience, this is accomplished through direct observation, analysis by inference, and data collection.[3]

1. [2]
2. [1]
3. [4]
4. [2]

Lecture audience. Photo by ICSA. [20]

Approaches to Audience Analysis

Situational Analysis

The situational audience analysis category considers the situation for which your audience is gathered. This category is primarily concerned with why your audience is assembled in the first place.[1] Are they willingly gathered to hear you speak? Have your audience members paid to hear you? Or are your audience members literally "speech captives" who have somehow been socially or systematically coerced into hearing you? These factors are decisively important because they place a major responsibility upon you as a speaker, whichever is the case. The entire tone and agenda of your speech rests largely upon whether or not your audience even wants to hear from you.

Many audiences are considered captive audiences in that they have no real choice regarding the matter of hearing a given speech. In general, these are some of the most difficult audiences to address because these members are being forced to listen to a message, and do not have the full exercise of their own free will. Consider for a moment when you have been called to a mandatory work meeting. Were you truly happy to listen to the speaker, in all honesty? Some might say "yes," but usually most would rather be doing something else with their time. This is an important factor to keep in mind when preparing your speech: some people simply do not want to listen to a speech they believe is compulsory.

1. [2]
2. [3]

Untitled by Konrad-Adenauer-Gemeinschaftshauptschule Wenden. CC-BY-NC-SA.

The voluntary audience situation, in stark contrast, is completely different. A voluntary audience is willingly assembled to listen to a given message. As a rule, these audiences are much easier to address because they are interested in hearing the speech. To visualize how this works, reflect upon the last speech, concert, or show you've chosen to attend. While the event may or may not have lived up to your overall expectations, the very fact that you freely went to the occasion speaks volumes about your predisposition to listen to—and perhaps even be persuaded by—the information being presented.

Sometimes audiences are mixed in their situational settings, too. Take the everyday classroom situation, for instance. While students choose to attend higher education, many people in the college classroom environment sadly feel as if they are still "trapped" in school and would rather be elsewhere. On the other hand, some students in college are truly there by choice, and attentively seek out knowledge from their teacher-mentors. What results from this mixed audience situation is a hybrid captive-voluntary audience, with those who are only partially interested in what is going on in the classroom and those who are genuinely involved. You literally get to hone your speech skills on both types of audiences, thereby learning a skill set that many never get to exercise. You should begin this wonderful opportunity by considering ways to inform, persuade, and humor a mixed situation audience. Think of it as a learning occasion, and you'll do just fine.

Demographic Analysis

The second category of audience analysis is **demography,** or when you consider all of the pertinent elements defining the makeup

and **demographic** characteristics of your audience.[1] From the Greek prefix *demo* (of the people), we come to understand that there are detailed accounts of human population characteristics, such as age, gender, education, occupation, language, ethnicity, culture, background knowledge, needs and interests, and previously held attitudes, beliefs, and values. Demographics are widely used by advertising and public relations professionals to analyze specific audiences so that their products or ideas will carry influence. However, all good public speakers consider the demographic characteristics of their audience, as well. It is the fundamental stage of preparing for your speech. Table 6.1 shows some examples of demographics and how they may be used when developing your speech. Of course, this is not an all-inclusive list. But it does help you get a good general understanding of the demographics of the audience you will be addressing.

"Wiki Conference 2011" by Sucheta Ghoshal. CC-BY-SA.

Consider for a moment how valuable it would be to you as a public speaker to know that your audience will be mostly female, between the ages of 25 and 40, mostly married, and Caucasian. Would you change your message to fit this demographic? Or would you keep your message the same, no matter the audience you were addressing? Chances are you would be more inclined to talk to issues bearing upon those gender, age, and race qualities. Frankly, smart speakers shift their message to adapt to the audience. And, simply, that's the purpose of doing demographics: to embed within

1. [2]
2. [4]

your message the acceptable parameters of your audience's range of needs.

This, of course, raises an extremely important ethical issue for the modern speaker. Given the ability to study demographic data and therefore to study your audience, does a speaker shift the message to play to the audience entirely? Ethically, a speaker should not shift the message and should remain true to their motives. Only you will be able to alleviate the tension between your need to adapt to an audience and the need to remain true to form.[3]

Oftentimes, you will know the demographics of your class, simply because you have been around your classmates for some time. However, when this information is not known beforehand, this information is gathered by the questionnaire sampling method, and is done formally before a speaking event. Examples of questionnaires are in the next section on data collection.

3. [4]
4. [5]

Table 6.1: Tailoring a Speech to Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Do's and Don'ts
Ethnicity	Don't try to use words or phrases to "cuddle up" to one race or another. You would lose some credibility if you made a point in your speech and then said, "So get jiggy with it" or "You could enjoy that with your afternoon tea ceremony."[5]
Age	Stay away from jargon from one age range or another, like "OMG" or "the cat's pajamas"[6]
Sex/Gender	Use words that are not sex/gender specific. Instead of policeman, fireman, and stewardess, use police officer, firefighter, and flight attendant. Do not use one sex/gender pronoun, like assuming a teacher is a "she" and a dentist is a "he."[7]
Income	Some people in your audience will have more money than others. If you keep fit by maintaining membership in a prominent gym and you take classes there also, don't assume everyone else can afford to do so. You can tell your audience what you do but give them options like parking far from the store and working out with a yoga or Pilates CD at home.
Occupation	Unless you are speaking at a convention where everyone in your audience works in the same field, make your speech more explanatory. Your audience has not had extensive training in medical terms nor legal terms. So you need to explain what you are talking about, without using the big words which would make your audience feel confused, stupid, and put down.
Religion	Realize that your audience will likely have a wide variety of religions represented, and some people may have no religious or spiritual beliefs. So, you can say that you choose to read the Bible every night for 10 minutes, but do not suggest that *everyone* choose a religious reading for pre-sleep relaxation.[8]

5. [9]
6. [10]
7. [11]
8. [12]
9. [6]
10. [7]

Table 6.1: Tailoring a Speech to Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Do's and Don'ts
Education Level	Even if you are speaking to an audience of college freshmen, not everyone has had the same educational experiences. For example, some of the people in your class may have completed a high school equivalency program like the GED, some may be high school students who are taking a college class, some may have gone to secondary school in another country, some may have been homeschooled, and some may have gone to a private honors-based prep school. You need to be careful not to talk down to your audience and not to use fancy sentences and words to try to impress your audience. Gauging the right level of communication for your speech is an important challenge.

11. [8]
12. [9]

Psychological Analysis

Unless your selected speech topic is a complete mystery to your audience, your listeners will already hold "attitudes, beliefs, and values" toward the ideas you will inevitably present. As a result, it is always important to know where your audience stands on the issues you plan to address ahead of time. The best way to accomplish this is to sample your audience with a quick questionnaire or survey prior to the event. This is known as the third category of audience analysis, or **psychological description**. When performing a description, you seek to identify the audience's attitudes, beliefs, and values.[1] They are your keys to understanding how your audience thinks.

Attitudes

In basic terms, an **attitude** is a learned disposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a person, an object, an idea, or an event.[3] Attitudes come in different forms. You are very likely to see an attitude present itself when someone says that they are "pro" or "anti" something. But, above all else, attitudes are learned and not necessarily enduring. Attitudes can change, and sometimes do, whereas beliefs and values do not shift as easily. A sample list of attitudes can be found in Table 6.2.

1. [2]
2. [10]
3. [4]
4. [11]

Table 6.2: Examples of Attitudes
Pro-/Anti-war
Pro-diversity
Anti-affirmative action
Pro-choice
Pro-life
Pro-/Anti-gambling
Pro-/Anti-prostitution
Pro-/Anti-capital punishment
Pro-/Anti-free trade
Pro-/Anti-outsourcing
Pro-/Anti-welfare
Pro-/Anti-corporate tax cuts
Pro-/Anti-censorship

These are just a small range of issues that one can either be "for" or "against." And, while we are simplifying the social scientific idea of an attitude considerably here, these examples serve our purposes well. Remember, attitudes are not as durable as beliefs and values. But, they are good indicators of how people view the persons, objects, ideas, or events that shape their world.

Beliefs

Beliefs are principles[5] or assumptions about the universe.

Beliefs are more durable than attitudes because beliefs are hinged to ideals and not issues. For example, you may believe in the

5. [6]
6. [12]

principle: "what goes around comes around." If you do, you believe in the notion of karma. And so, you may align your behaviors to be consistent with this belief philosophy. You do not engage in unethical or negative behavior because you believe that it will "come back" to you. Likewise, you may try to exude behaviors that are ethical and positive because you wish for this behavior to return, in kind. You may not think this at all and believe quite the opposite. Either way, there is a belief in operation driving what you think. Some examples of beliefs are located in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Examples of Beliefs
The world was created by God.
Marijuana is an addictive gateway drug.
Ghosts are all around us.
Smoking causes cancer.
Anyone can acquire HIV.
Evolution is fact, not fiction.
Marijuana is neither addictive nor harmful.
Ghosts are products of our imagination.
Smoking does not cause cancer.
Only high-risk groups acquire HIV.

Values

A value, on the other hand, is a guiding belief that regulates our attitudes.[7] Values are the core principles driving our attitudes. If you probe into someone's attitudes and beliefs far enough, you

7. [8]
8. [13]

will inevitably find an underlying value. Importantly, you should also know that we structure our values in accordance to our own value hierarchy, or mental schema of values placed in order of their relative individual importance. Each of us has our own values that we subscribe to and a value hierarchy that we use to navigate the issues of the world. But we really aren't even aware that we have a value hierarchy until some of our values come in direct conflict with each other. Then, we have to negotiate something called **cognitive dissonance**, or the mental stress caused by the choice we are forced to make between two considerable alternatives.

For example, let's assume that you value "having fun" a great deal. You like to party with your friends and truly enjoy yourself. And, in this day and age, who doesn't? However, now that you are experiencing a significant amount of independence and personal freedom, you have many life options at your disposal. Let's also say that some of your close personal friends are doing drugs. You are torn. Part of you wants to experience the "fun" that your close friends may be experiencing; but, the more sane part of you wants to responsibly decline. In honesty, you are juxtaposed between two of your own values—having "fun" and being responsible. This real life example is somewhat exaggerated for your benefit. Realize that we make decisions small and grand, based on our value hierarchies. Some basic values common to people around the world can be found in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Examples of Values

Inner harmony	Enjoyment	Belonging
Friendship	Trust	Equality
Control	Family	Security
Peace	Wisdom	Tradition
Unity	Achievement	Power
Generosity	Conformity	Intelligence
Leadership	Creativity	Responsibility
Health	Independence	Loyalty

> *Values aren't buses… They're not supposed to get you anywhere. They're supposed to define who you are.* – Jennifer Crusie

Multicultural Analysis

Demography looks at issues of race and ethnicity in a basic sense. However, in our increasingly diverse society, it is worthy to pay particular attention to the issue of speaking to a multicultural audience. Odds are that any real-world audience that you encounter will have an underlying multicultural dimension. As a speaker, you need to recognize that the perspective you have on any given topic may not necessarily be shared by all of the members of your audience.[9] Therefore, it is imperative that you become a culturally effective speaker. Culturally effective speakers develop the capacity to *appreciate other cultures* and *acquire the necessary skills* to speak effectively to people with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Keep these in mind when writing a speech for a diverse audience.

Language

Many people speak different languages, so if you are translating words, do not use slang or jargon, which can be confusing. You could add a visual aid (a poster, a picture, a PowerPoint slide or two) which would show your audience what you mean – which instantly translates into the audience member's mind.[11]

9. [10]
10. [14]
11. [12]

"Audience Applause at MIT meeting in Beijing" by Philip McMaster. CC-BY-NC.

Ethnocentricity

Remember that in many cases you will be appealing to people from other cultures. Do not assume that your culture is dominant or better than other cultures. That assumption is called **ethnocentrism**, and ethnocentric viewpoints have the tendency to drive a wedge between you and your audience.[13]

> *Christian, Jew, Muslim, shaman, Zoroastrian, stone, ground, mountain, river, each has a secret way of being with the mystery, unique and not to be judged.* – Rumi

12. [15]
13. [14]
14. [16]

Values

Not only do individuals have value systems of their own, but societies promote value systems, as well. Keep in mind the fact that you will be appealing to value hierarchies that are socially-laden, as well as those that are individually-borne.

Communication Styles

While you are trying to balance these language, cognition, cultural, and value issues, you should also recognize that some cultures prefer a more animated delivery style than do others. The intelligent speaker will understand this and adapt his or her verbal and nonverbal delivery accordingly.

Interest and Knowledge Analysis

"25th March 2011" by Grace Flora. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Finally, if the goal of your speech is to deliver a unique and stirring presentation (and it should be), you need to know ahead of time if your audience is interested in what you have to say and has any prior knowledge about your topic. You do not want to give a boring or trite speech. Instead, you want to put your best work forward, and let your audience see your confidence and preparation shine through. Additionally, you don't want to make a speech that your audience already knows a lot about. So, your job here is to

"test" your topic by sampling your audience for their topic interest and topic knowledge. Defined, topic interest is the significance of the topic to a given audience; often related to the uniqueness of a speaker's topic. Likewise, topic knowledge is the general amount of information that the audience possesses on a given topic. These are not mere definitions listed for the sake of argument; these are essential analytical components of effective speech construction.

> *Anyone who teaches me deserves my respect, honoring and attention.* – Sonia Rumzi

Unlike multicultural audience analysis, evaluating your audience's topic interest and topic knowledge is a fairly simple task. One can do this through informal question and answer dialogue, or through an actual survey. Either way, it is best to have some information, rather than none at all. Imagine the long list of topics that people have heard over and over and over. You can probably name some yourself, right now, without giving it much thought. If you started listing some topics to yourself, please realize that this is the point of this section of this module; your audience is literally thinking the same exact thing you are. Given that, topic preparation is strategically important to your overall speech success.

Again, do not underestimate the power of asking your audience whether or not your topic actually interests them. If you find that many people are not interested in your topic, or already know a lot about it, you have just saved yourself from a potentially mind-numbing exercise. After all, do you really want to give a speech where your audience could care less about your topic—or even worse— they know more about the topic than you do yourself? Not at all! The purpose of this section is to help you search for the highly sought-after public speaking concept called **uniqueness**, which is when a topic rises to the level of being singularly exceptional in interest and knowledge to a given audience.

We know that you wish to excel in giving your speech, and indeed you shall. But first, let's make sure that your audience is engaged

by your topic and hasn't already heard the subject matter so much that they, themselves, could give the speech without much (if any) preparation.

One final note: There's an old adage in communication studies that reasons: "know what you know; know what you don't know; and, know the difference between the two." In other words, don't use puffery to blind your audience about your alleged knowledge on a particular subject. Remember, there is likely to be someone in your audience who knows as much about your topic, if not more, than you do. If you get caught trying to field an embarrassing question, you might just lose the most important thing you have as a speaker: your credibility. If you know the answer, respond accordingly. If you do not know the answer, respond accordingly. But, above all, try and be a resource for your audience. They expect you to be something of an expert on the topic you choose to address.

> *Given the choice between trivial material brilliantly told versus profound material badly told, an audience will always choose the trivial told brilliantly.* – Robert McKee

So now you may be saying to yourself: "Gee, that's great! How do I go about analyzing my particular audience?" First, you need to know that there are three overarching methods (or "**paradigms**") for doing an audience analysis: audience analysis by direct observation, audience analysis by inference, and audience analysis through data collection. Once you get to know how these methods work, you should be able to select which one (or even combination of these methods) is right for your circumstances.

Nothing has such power to broaden the mind as the ability to investigate systematically and truly all that comes under thy observation in life. – Marcus Aurelius

Direct Observation

Audience analysis by direct observation, or direct experience, is, by far, the simplest of the three paradigms for "getting the feel" of a particular audience. It is a form of qualitative data gathering. We perceive it through one or more of our five natural senses—hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, and smelling. Knowledge that we acquire through personal experience has more impact on us than does knowledge that we learn indirectly. Knowledge acquired from personal experience is also more likely to affect our thinking and will be retained for a longer period of time. We are more likely to trust what we hear, see, feel, taste, and smell rather than what we learn from secondary sources of information.[1]

All you really need to do for this method of observation is to examine your audience. If you are lucky enough to be able to do this

1. [2]
2. [17]

before speaking to your audience, you will be able to gather some basic reflective data (How old are they? What racial mix does this audience have? Does their non-verbal behavior indicate that they are excited to hear this speech?) that will help you arrange your thoughts and arguments for your speech.[3]

One excellent way to become informed about your audience is to ask them about themselves. In its most basic form, this is data collection. Whenever possible, have conversations with them—interact with members of your audience—get to know them on a personal level (Where did you go to school? Do you have siblings/pets? What kind of car do you drive?) Through these types of conversations, you will be able to get to know and appreciate each audience member as both a human being and as an audience member. You will come to understand what interests them, convinces them, or even makes them laugh. You might arouse interest and curiosity in your topic while you also gain valuable data.

"MobileHCI 2008 Audience" by Nhenze. CC-BY-SA.

For example, you want to deliver a persuasive speech about boycotting farm-raised fish. You could conduct a short attitudinal survey to discover what your audience thinks about the topic, if they eat farm-raised fish, and if they believe it is healthy for them. This information will help you when you construct your speech because you will know their attitudes about the subject. You would be able to avoid constructing a speech that potentially could do the opposite of what you intended.

Another example would be that you want to deliver an informative

3. [4]
4. [18]

speech about your town's recreational activities and facilities. Your focus can be aligned with your audience if, before you begin working on your speech, you find out if your audience has senior citizens and/or high school students and/or new parents.

Clearly this cannot be done in every speaking situation, however. Often, we are required to give an **unacquainted-audience presentation**. Unacquainted-audience presentations are speeches when you are completely unfamiliar with the audience and its demographics. In these cases, it is always best to try and find some time to sit down and talk with someone you trust (or even several people) who might be familiar with the given audience. These conversations can be very constructive in helping you understand the context in which you will be speaking.

Not understanding the basic demographic characteristics of an audience, or further, that audience's beliefs, values, or attitudes about a given topic makes your presentation goals haphazard, at best. Look around the room at the people who will be listening to your speech. What types of gender, age, ethnicity, and educational-level characteristics are represented? What are their expectations for your presentation? This is all-important information you should know before you begin your research and drafting your outline. Who is it that I am going to be talking to?

> *If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?* – Albert Einstein

Inference

Audience analysis by inference is merely a logical extension of your observations drawn in the method above. It is a form of critical thinking known as inductive reasoning, and another form of qualitative data gathering. An inference is when you make a reasoned tentative conclusion or logical judgment on the basis of

available evidence. It is best used when you can identify patterns in your evidence that indicate something is expected to happen again or should hold true based upon previous experiences. A good speaker knows how to interpret information and draw conclusions from that information. As individuals we make inferences—or reasonable assumptions—all the time. For example, when we hear someone speaking Arabic, we infer that they are from the Middle East. When we see this person carrying a copy of The Koran, we infer that they are also a follower of the Muslim faith. These are reasoned conclusions that we make based upon the evidence available to us and our general knowledge about people and their traits.

When we reason, we make connections, distinctions, and predictions; we use what is known or familiar to us to reach a conclusion about something that is unknown or unfamiliar for it to make sense. Granted, of course, inferences are sometimes wrong. Here's a familiar example: You reach into a jar full of jelly beans, and they turn out to be all black. You love black jelly beans. You reach back into the jar and take another hand full, which turn out to be, again, all black. Since you can't see the jelly beans inside the jar you make an assumption based on empirical evidence (two handfuls of jelly beans) that all of the jelly beans are black. You reach into the jar a third time and take a hand full of jelly beans out, but this time they aren't any black jelly beans, but white, pink, and yellow. Your conclusion that all of the jelly beans were black turned out to be fallacious.

Data Sampling

"Here's a Jellybean for You" by KaCey97078. CC-BY.

Unlike audience analysis by direct observation and analysis by inference, audience analysis by data sampling uses statistical evidence to quantify and clarify the characteristics of your audience. These characteristics are also known as variables,[5] and are assigned a numerical value so we can systematically collect and classify them. They are reported as statistics, also known as quantitative analysis or quantitative data collection. Statistics are numerical summaries of facts, figures, and research findings. Audience analysis by data sampling requires you to survey your audience before you give your speech. You need to know the basics of doing a survey before you actually collect and interpret your data.

> *If you make listening and observation your occupation, you will gain much more than you can by talk.* – Robert Baden-Powell

Basic Questionnaire

There are a great number of survey methods available to the speaker. However, we will cover three primary question types within the basic questionnaire because they are utilized the most. The

5. [6]
6. [19]

basic questionnaire is a series of questions advanced to produce demographic and attitudinal data from your audience.

Clearly, audience members should not be required to identify themselves by name on the basic questionnaire. Anonymous questionnaires are more likely to produce truthful information. Remember, all you are looking for is a general read of your audience; you should not be looking for specific information about any respondent concerning your questionnaire in particular. It is a bulk sampling tool, only.

"Man With a Clipboard" by Elizabeth M. CC-BY.

While you can easily gather basic demographic data (examples of demographic questions are shown in the chart following this section), we need to adjust our questions a bit more tightly, or ask more focused questions, in order to understand the audience's "predispositions" to think or act in certain ways. For example, you can put an attitudinal extension on the basic questionnaire (examples of attitudinal questions are shown in Figure 6.1).

These questions probe more deeply into the psyche of your audience members and will help you see where they stand on certain issues. Of course, you may need to tighten these questions to get to the heart of your specific topic. But, once you do, you'll have a wealth of data at your disposal that, ultimately, will tell you how to work with your target audience.

Likert-type Testing

Figure 6.1: Examples of Survey Questions

Demographic Questions

1. Academic level in college
    1. freshman
    2. sophomore
    3. junior
    4. senior
2. Marital status
    1. single
    2. married
    3. divorced
    4. widowed
3. Age
    1. less than 18 years old
    2. 18–30 years old
    3. 31–45 years old
    4. over 46 years of age

Attitudinal Questions

1. I regard myself as
    1. conservative
    2. liberal
    3. socialist
    4. independent
2. I believe that abortion
    1. should be illegal
    2. should remain legal
    3. should be legal only in cases of rape
    4. not sure
3. I think that prayer should be permitted in public schools
    1. yes
    2. no
    3. undecided

Likert-Type Questions

Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each question.

1. Unsolicited email should be illegal.
   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree
2. Making unsolicited email illegal would be fundamentally unfair to businesses.
   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree
3. I usually delete unsolicited email before even opening it.
   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree

The final method of ascertaining audience attitudes deals with

Likert-type testing. Likert-type testing is when you make a statement and ask the respondent to gauge the depth of their sentiments toward that statement either positively, negatively, or neutrally. Typically, each scale will have 5 weighted response categories, being +2, +1, 0, -1, and -2. What the Likert-type test does, that other tests do not do, is measure the *extent* to which attitudes are held. See how the Likert-type test does this in the example on "unsolicited email" in Figure 6.1.

A small Likert-type test will tell you where your audience, generally speaking, stands on issues. As well, it will inform you as to the degree of the audience's beliefs on these issues. The Likert-type test should be used when attempting to assess a highly charged or polarizing issue, because it will tell you, in rough numbers, whether or not your audience agrees or disagrees with your topic.

No matter what kind of data sampling you choose, you need to allow time to collect the information and then analyze it. For example, if you create a survey of five questions, and you have your audience of 20 people complete the survey, you will need to deal with 100 survey forms. At high levels such as political polling, the audience members quickly click on their answers on a webpage or on a hand-held "clicker," and the specific survey software instantly collects and collates the information for researchers. If you are in a small community group or college class, it is more likely that you will be doing your survey "the old-fashioned way"–so you will need some time to mark each individual response on a "master sheet" and then average or summarize the results in an effective way to use in your speechwriting and speech-giving.

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A Note about Your Audience

KATIE GRUBER

Remaining audience-centered is key to an effective and influential speech. If you do not consider your audience at every step of your preparation, you have failed to make it *important* to your audience and thus they have little reason to listen to you.

Consider this, too: speakers should adapt to their audience *before* they speak and *during* their speech. Consider the **feedback** your audience gives you during your speech — are they falling asleep? Are they excited? On their phones? Talking with neighbors? Listening intently? If your audience is asleep, you'll certainly want to try a different approach! If they are listening intently, keep going!

If you have ever seen the popular 1990's sitcom *Friends*, then you may be familiar with the Courteney Cox character, Monica. She is a Type A, always-cleaning, control freak, right? Consider the following scene, when she and her husband Chandler, played by the late Matthew Perry, are trying to have a baby and he tries to get her "in the mood" and makes a mess: Friends – The One with the Fertility Test.

Additionally, Seth Rogen and Barbara Streisand play a son and mother taking a road trip across the country, trying to sell his cleaning product to retailers in the movie *Guilt Trip* (2012). He has failed repeatedly, and his well-meaning mother has repeatedly told him to adapt to his audience, making it *important* to them. In this penultimate scene of the movie, he finally takes her advice and wins over the buyer: The Guilt Trip – Best Sales Pitch.

Finally, in the 1990's comedy *Tommy Boy*, starring the late Chris Farley, you will see the same try-and-fail sales pitch. Here is just one example of Tommy failing to adapt to his audience: Tommy Boy (1995) – Desktop Demo. However, Tommy isn't a completely lost

cause. In the following scene, he is successful: Tommy Boy (1995) – Salesman.

Until you make it *important* to your audience and relate it to their lives, you will not *influence* them!

Chapter Seven – Conducting Research

What does the word "research" conjure up for you? Do you think about sitting in a library and sorting through books or searching online? Do you picture a particular type of person?

While these images aren't incorrect (of course libraries are connected with research), "research" can feel like an intimidating process. When does it begin? Where does it happen? When does it stop?

It's helpful to understand what **research** is – the process of discovering new knowledge and investigating a topic from different points of view. Research is a *process*; it's an ongoing dialogue with information. But, as you know, not all information is neutral, and not all information is ethical. Part of the research process, then, is evaluating information to determine what knowledge is ethical and best suited for your argument.

This chapter will focus on the research process and the development of **critical thinking** skills—or decision-making based on evaluating and critiquing information— to identify, sort, and evaluate (mostly) scholarly information. To begin, we outline why research matters, followed by insights about locating information, evaluating information, and avoiding plagiarism.

Why Research?

Research gets a bad rap. It can feel like a boring, tedious, and overwhelming process. In our current information age, we are guilty of conducting a quick search, finding what we want to read, and moving on. Many of us rarely sit down, allocate time, and commit to

digging deep and researching different perspectives about an idea or argument.

But we should.

When conducting research, you get to ask questions and actually find answers. If you have ever wondered what the best strategies are when being interviewed for a job, research will tell you. If you've ever wondered what it takes to be a NASCAR driver, an astronaut, a marine biologist, or a university professor, once again, research is one of the easiest ways to find answers to questions you're interested in knowing.

Research can also open a world you never knew existed. We often find ideas we had never considered and learn facts we never knew when we go through the research process. Maybe you want to learn how to compose music, draw, learn a foreign language, or write a screenplay; research is always the best step toward learning anything.

As public speakers, research will increase your confidence and competence. The more you know, the more you know. The more you research, the more precise your argument, and the clearer the depth of the information becomes.

Where to Start

With basic information in mind, ask: "what question am I answering? What should I be looking *for*? What do I need?"

Your specific purpose statement or a working thesis are good places to start. Take this example of a specific purpose: "to persuade my audience to support campus solutions to rising textbook costs." Research can help zero in on a working thesis by a) finding support for our perspective and b) identifying any specific campus solution that we could advocate for.

When we begin researching, we have three initial questions that arise from our specific purpose: has the cost of college textbooks

increased over time? What are the causes? And what are the opportunities to address rising textbook costs in a way that can improve access relatively quickly at your institution?

These are just our *starting* questions. It's likely that we'll revise and research for information as we learn more. As Howard and Taggart point out in their book *Research Matters*, research is not just a one-and-done task[3]. As you develop your speech, you may realize that you want to address a question or issue that didn't occur to you during your first round of research, or that you're missing a key piece of information to support one of your points.

Use these questions, prior experience, and insight from exploratory brainstorming to determine what to search and where to start. If you still feel overwhelmed, that's OK. Start somewhere (or ask a librarian for help) and use the insights below about information types as a guide.

Locating Effective Research

Once you have a general idea about the basic needs you have for your research, it's time to start tracking information down. Thankfully, we live in a world that is swimming with information.

As you search, you will naturally be drawn to tools and information types that are already familiar to you. Like most people, you will likely use Google as your first search strategy. As you know, Google isn't a source, per se: it's a search engine. It's the vehicle that, through search terms and savvy wording, will direct you to sources related to those terms.

What information types would you expect to see in your Google search results? We are guessing your list would include: news, blogs, Wikipedia, dictionaries, and social media.

While Google is a great tool, all informational roads don't lead to Google. Learning about different information types and different ways to access information can expand your search portfolio.

Information Types

As you begin looking for research, an array of information types will be at your disposal.

When you access a piece of information, you should determine what you are looking at. Is it a blog? an online academic journal? an online newspaper? a website for an organization? Will these information types be useful in answering the questions that you've identified?

Common helpful information types include websites, scholarly articles, books, and government reports, to name a few. To determine the usefulness of an information type, you should familiarize yourself with what those sources are and their goals.

Information types are often categorized as either academic or nonacademic.

Nonacademic information sources are sometimes also called popular press information sources; their primary purpose is to be read by the general public. Most nonacademic information sources are written at a sixth to eighth-grade reading level, so they are very accessible. Although the information often contained in these sources can be limited, the advantage of using nonacademic sources is that they appeal to a broad, general audience.

Alternatively, **academic sources** are often (not always) peer-reviewed by like-minded scholars in the field. Academic publications can take longer to publish because academics have established a series of checklists that are required to determine the credibility of the information. Because of this process, it takes a while! That delay can result in nonacademic sources providing information before scholarly academics have tested or studied the phenomena.

Books

The first source we have for finding secondary information is books. Now, the authors of your text are admitted bibliophiles—we love books. Fiction, nonfiction, it doesn't really matter, we just love books. And, thankfully, we live in a world where books abound and reading has never been easier. Unless your topic is very cutting-edge, chances are someone has written a book about your topic at some point in history.

Historically, the original purpose of libraries was to house manuscripts that were copied by hand and stored in library collections. After Gutenberg created the printing press, we had the ability to mass produce writing, and the handwritten manuscript gave way to the printed manuscript. In today's modern era, we are seeing another change where printed manuscript is now giving way, to some extent, to the electronic manuscript. Amazon's Kindle, Barnes & Noble's Nook, Apple's iPad, and Sony's e-Ink-based readers are examples of the new hardware enabling people to take entire libraries of information with them wherever they go. We now can carry the amount of information that used to be housed in the greatest historic libraries in the palms of our hands. When you sit back and really think about it, that's pretty darn cool!

In today's world, there are three basic types of libraries you should be aware of: physical library, physical/electronic library, and e-online library. The physical library is a library that exists only in the physical world. Many small community or county library collections are available only if you physically go into the library and check out a book. We highly recommend doing this at some point. Libraries today generally model the US Library of Congress's card catalog system. As such, most library layouts are similar. This familiar layout makes it much easier to find information if you are using multiple libraries. Furthermore, because the Library of Congress catalogs information by type, if you find one book that

is useful for you, it's very likely that surrounding books on the same shelf will also be useful. When people don't take the time to physically browse in a library, they often miss out on some great information.

The second type of library is the library that has both physical and electronic components. Most college and university libraries have both the physical stacks (where the books are located) and electronic databases containing e-books. The two largest e-book databases are ebrary and netlibrary. Although these library collections are generally cost-prohibitive for an individual, more and more academic institutions are subscribing to them. Some libraries are also making portions of their collections available online for free: Harvard University's Digital Collections, the e-book collection at the New York Public Library, the British Library Online Gallery, and the US Library of Congress.

One of the greatest advantages to using libraries for finding books is that you can search not only their books, but often a wide network of other academic institutions' books as well. Furthermore, in today's world, we have one of the greatest online card catalogs ever created—and it wasn't created for libraries at all! Retail bookseller sites like Amazon.com can be a great source for finding books that may be applicable to your topic, and the best part is, you don't actually need to purchase the book if you use your library, because your library may actually own a copy of a book you find on a bookseller site. You can pick a topic and then search for that topic on a bookseller site. If you find a book that you think may be appropriate, plug that book's title into your school's electronic library catalog. If your library owns the book, you can go to the library and pick it up today.

If your library doesn't own it, do you still have an option other than buying the book? Yes: interlibrary loans. An **interlibrary loan** is a process where librarians are able to search other libraries to locate the book a researcher is trying to find. If another library has that book, then the library asks to borrow it for a short period of time. Depending on how easy a book is to find, your library could

receive it in a couple of days or a couple of weeks. Keep in mind that interlibrary loans take time, so do not expect to get a book at the last minute. The more lead time you provide a librarian to find a book you are looking for, the greater the likelihood that the book will be sent through the mail to your library on time.

The final type of library is a relatively new one, the library that exists only online. With the influx of computer technology, we have started to create vast stores of digitized content from around the world. These online libraries contain full-text documents free of charge to everyone. Some online libraries we recommend are Project Gutenberg, Google Books, Read Print, Open Library, and Get Free E-Books. This is a short list of just a handful of the libraries that are now offering free e-content.

General-Interest Periodicals

The second category of information you may seek out includes general-interest periodicals. These are magazines and newsletters published on a fairly systematic basis. Some popular magazines in this category include *The New Yorker*, *People*, *Reader's Digest*, *Parade*, *Smithsonian*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*. These magazines are considered "general interest" because most people in the United States could pick up a copy of these magazines and find them interesting and topical.

Special-Interest Periodicals

Special-interest periodicals are magazines and newsletters that are published for a narrower audience. In a 2005 article, *Business Wire* noted that in the United States there are over ten thousand different magazines published annually, but only two thousand of those magazines have significant circulation.[1] Some more widely known special-interest periodicals are *Sports Illustrated*, *Bloomberg's Business Week*, *Gentleman's Quarterly*, *Vogue*, *Popular Science*, and *House and Garden*. But for every major magazine, there are a great many other lesser-known magazines like *American Coin Op Magazine*, *Varmint Hunter*, *Shark Diver Magazine*, *Pet Product News International*, *Water Garden News*, to name just a few.

Newspapers and Blogs

Another major source of nonacademic information is newspapers and blogs. Thankfully, we live in a society that has a free press. We've opted to include both newspapers and blogs in this category. A few blogs (e.g., *The Huffington Post*, *Talkingpoints Memo*, *News Max*, *The Daily Beast*, *Salon*) function similarly to traditional newspapers. Furthermore, in the past few years we've lost many traditional

newspapers around the United States; cities that used to have four or five daily papers may now only have one or two.

According to newspapers.com, the top ten newspapers in the United States are *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Daily News*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Post*, *Long Island Newsday*, and the *Houston Chronicle*. Most colleges and universities subscribe to a number of these newspapers in paper form or have access to them electronically. Furthermore, LexisNexis, a database many colleges and universities subscribe to, has access to full text newspaper articles from these newspapers and many more around the world.

In addition to traditional newspapers, blogs are becoming a mainstay of information in today's society. In fact, since the dawn of the twenty-first century many major news stories have been broken by professional bloggers rather than traditional newspaper reporters[4]. Although anyone can create a blog, there are many reputable blog sites that are run by professional journalists. As such, blogs can be a great source of information. However, as with all information on the Internet, you often have to wade through a lot of junk to find useful, accurate information.

We do not personally endorse any blogs, but according to Technorati.com, the top eight most commonly read blogs in the world (in 2011) are as follows:

1. *The Huffington Post* (http://www.huffingtonpost.com)
2. *Gizmodo* (http://www.gizmodo.com)
3. *TechCrunch* (http://www.techcrunch.com)
4. *Mashable!* (http://mashable.com)
5. *Engadget* (http://www.engadget.com)
6. *Boing Boing* (http://www.boingboing.net)
7. *The Daily Beast* (http://www.thedailybeast.com)
8. *TMZ* (http://www.tmz.com)

Encyclopedias

Another type of source that you may encounter is the encyclopedia. **Encyclopedias** are information sources that provide short, very general information about a topic. Encyclopedias are available in both print and electronic formats, and their content can range from eclectic and general (e.g., *Encyclopædia Britannica*) to the very specific (e.g., *Encyclopedia of 20th Century Architecture*, or *Encyclopedia of Afterlife Beliefs and Phenomena*). It is important to keep in mind that encyclopedias are designed to give only brief, fairly superficial summaries of a topic area. Thus, they may be useful for finding out what something is if it is referenced in another source, but they are generally not a useful source for your actual speech. In fact, many instructors do not allow students to use encyclopedias as sources for their speeches for this very reason.

One of the most popular online encyclopedic sources is Wikipedia. Like other encyclopedias, it can be useful for finding out basic information (e.g., what baseball teams did Catfish Hunter play for?) but will not give you the depth of information you need for a speech. Also keep in mind that Wikipedia, unlike the general and specialized encyclopedias available through your library, can be edited by anyone and therefore often contains content errors and biased information. If you are a fan of *The Colbert Report*, you probably know that host Stephen Colbert has, on several occasions, asked viewers to change Wikipedia content to reflect his views of the world. This is just one example of why one should always be careful of information on the web, but this advice is even more important when considering group-edited sites such as Wikipedia.

Websites

Websites are the last major source of nonacademic information. In the twenty-first century we live in a world where there is a considerable amount of information readily available at our fingertips. Unfortunately, you can spend hours and hours searching for information and never quite find what you're looking for if you don't devise an Internet search strategy. First, you need to select a good search engine to help you find appropriate information. Table 7.1 "Search Engines" (below) contains a list of common search engines and the types of information they are useful for finding.

Table 7.1

http://www.google.com	
http://www.yahoo.com	
http://www.bing.com	General search engines
http://www.ask.com	
http://www.about.com	
http://www.usa.gov	Searches US government websites
http://www.hon.ch/MedHunt	Searches only trustworthy medical websites
http://medlineplus.gov	Largest search engine for medical related research
http://www.bizrate.com	Comparison shopping search engine
http://prb.org	Provides statistics about the US population
http://artcyclopedia.com	Searches for art-related information
http://www.monster.com	Searches for job postings across job search websites

In addition, be cognizant of *who* produces information and who that

information is produced for. Table 7.2 simplistically illustrates the producer and audience of our short list of information types.

Table 7.2

Information Type	**What does it do?**	**Who is it produced by?**	**Who is it produced for?**
News Report	Inform readers about what's happening in the world.	General Public / Journalist	General Public
Social Media	Connects individuals, groups, and consumers	General Public	General Public
Peer Reviewed Scholarly Journal Article	Provides insight into an academic discipline	Academic Researchers/ Scholars	Academic Researchers/ Scholar/ Students
Academic Books	Provides insight into an academic discipline	Academic researchers/ Scholars	Academic Researchers/ Scholars /Students
Government reports	Shares information on behalf of a government agency	Government Agencies	Policy/ Decision Makers
Data and Statistics	Reports statistical findings	Government Agencies	Policy/ Decision Makers Academic Researcher
E-books	Inform, persuade, or entertain readers about a topic through a digital medium	Can be Self-Published or Published through a Scholar / Agency	General Public

This is not an exhaustive list of information types. Others include: encyclopedias, periodicals or blogs. For more insight on information types, check here.

With any information type, the dichotomy of producer/audience helps us with evaluating the information. As you've learned from our discussion of public speaking, the audience informs the message. If you have a clearer idea of who the content is written for, you can determine if that source is best for your research needs.

Having a better understanding of information types is important, but open and closed information systems dictate which source material we have access to.

Librarians are Resources: Remember that librarians are research experts and can help you to find information, refine an argument, locate search terms, cite your sources, and much more!

Open/Closed Information Systems

An **open system** describes information that is publicly available and accessible. A **closed system** means information is behind a paywall or requires a subscription.

Let's consider databases as an example. It's likely that you've searched your library's database. Databases provide full text periodicals and works that are regularly published. This is a great tool because it can provide you links to scholarly articles, news reports, e-books, and more.

"Does that make databases an open system?" you may be asking. Access to databases is purchased by libraries. The articles and books contained in databases are licensed by publishers to companies, who sell access to this content, which is not freely available

elsewhere. So, databases are part of a closed system. The university provides you access, but non-university folks would reach a paywall.

Table 7.3 illustrates whether different information types are like to be openly available or behind a paywall in a closed system. Knowing if an information is type is open or closed might influence your tools and search strategies used to discover and access the information.

Table 7.3

Information Type	Open Access	Closed Access
News Report	Some content exposed to internet search engines and open	Licensed content available with subscription or single access payment
Social Media	General public and open	Privacy settings may limit some access
Peer Reviewed Scholarly Journal Article	Scholarship labeled as "Open access" are free of charge	Licensed content available with subscription or single access payment
Academic Books	"Open access" books are free of charge	Many books require payment and purchase
Government Reports	Government information in the public domain is open	Classified government information – restricted access
Government Data/Statistics	Open government data	Classified government information – restricted access

Information isn't always free. If you are confronted with a closed system, you will have to determine if that information is crucial or if you can access similar information through an openly accessible system.

Having a better understanding of information types and access will assist you in locating research for your argument. We continue our discussion below by diving into best practices for locating and evaluating research.

Academic Information Sources

After nonacademic sources, the second major source for finding information comes from academics. The main difference between academic or scholarly information and the information you get from the popular press is *oversight*. In the nonacademic world, the primary gatekeeper of information is the editor, who may or may not be a content expert. In academia, we have established a way to perform a series of checks to ensure that the information is accurate and follows agreed-upon academic standards. For example, this book, or portions of this book, were read by dozens of academics who provided feedback. Having this extra step in the writing process is time consuming, but it provides an extra level of confidence in the relevance and accuracy of the information. In this section, we will discuss scholarly books and articles, computerized databases, and finding scholarly information on the web.

Scholarly Books

College and university libraries are filled with books written by academics. According to the Text and Academic Authors Association (http://www.taaonline.net), there are two types of scholarly books: textbooks and academic books. **Textbooks** are books that are written about a segment of content within a field of academic study and are written for undergraduate or graduate student audiences. These books tend to be very specifically focused. Take this book, for instance. We are not trying to introduce you to the entire world of human communication, just one small aspect of it: public speaking. Textbooks tend to be written at a fairly easy reading level and are designed to transfer information in a manner that mirrors classroom teaching to some extent. Also, textbooks are secondary sources of information. They are designed to survey the research available in a particular field rather than to present new research.

Academic books are books that are primarily written for other academics for informational and research purposes. Generally speaking, when instructors ask for you to find scholarly books, they are referring to academic books. Thankfully, there are hundreds of thousands of academic books published on almost every topic you can imagine. In the field of communication, there are a handful of major publishers who publish academic books: SAGE (http://www.sagepub.com), Routledge (http://www.routledge.com), Jossey-Bass (http://www.josseybass.com), Pfeiffer (http://www.pfeiffer.com), the American Psychological Association (http://www.apa.org/pubs/books), and the National Communication Association (http://www.ncastore.com), among others.

In addition to the major publishers who publish academic books, there are also many university presses who publish academic books: SUNY Press (http://www.sunypress.edu), Oxford University Press (http://www.oup.com/us), University of South Carolina Press

(http://www.sc.edu/uscpress), Baylor University Press (http://www.baylorpress.com), University of Illinois Press (http://www.press.uillinois.edu), the University of Alabama Press (http://www.uapress.ua.edu), the University of Minnesota Libraries (https://publishing.lib.umn.edu/#Textbooks), and OpenStax (https://openstax.org/) are just a few of them.

Scholarly Articles

Because most academic writing comes in the form of scholarly articles or journal articles, that is the best place for finding academic research on a given topic. Every academic subfield has its own journals, so you should never have a problem finding the best and most recent research on a topic. However, scholarly articles are written for a scholarly audience, so reading scholarly articles takes more time than if you were to read a magazine article in the popular press. It's also helpful to realize that there may be parts of the article you simply do not have the background knowledge to understand, and there is nothing wrong with that. Many research studies are conducted by quantitative researchers who rely on statistics to examine phenomena. Unless you have training in understanding the statistics, it is difficult to interpret the statistical information that appears in these articles. Instead, focus on the beginning part of the article where the author(s) will discuss previous research (secondary research), and then focus on the end of the article, where the author(s) explain what was found in their research (primary research).

Computerized Databases

Finding academic research is easier today than it ever has been in the past because of large computer databases containing research. Here's how these databases work: a database company signs contracts with publishers to gain the right to store the publishers' content electronically. The database companies then create thematic databases containing publications related to general areas of knowledge (business, communication, psychology, medicine, etc.). The database companies then sell subscriptions to these databases to libraries. Your tuition dollars help to pay these subscription fees, so you're essentially doing *yourself* a disservice NOT to use them!

The largest of these database companies is a group called EBSCO Publishing, which runs both EBSCO Host (an e-journal provider) and NetLibrary (a large e-book library) (http://www.ebscohost.com). Some of the more popular databases that EBSCO provides to colleges and universities are: Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Communication and Mass Media Complete, Education Research Complete, Humanities International Complete, Philosopher's Index, Political Science Complete, PsycArticles, and Vocational and Career Collection. Academic Search Complete is the broadest of all the databases and casts a fairly wide net across numerous fields. Information that you find using databases can contain both nonacademic and academic information, so EBSCO

Host has built in a number of filtering options to help you limit the types of information available.

We strongly recommend checking out your library's website to see what databases they have available and if they have any online tutorials for finding sources using the databases to which your library subscribes.

Photo by Christina Morillo.[6]

Scholarly Information on the Web

In addition to the subscription databases that exist on the web, there are also a number of great sources for scholarly information on the web. As mentioned earlier, however, finding scholarly information on the web poses a problem because anyone can post information on the web. Fortunately, there are a number of great websites that attempt to help filter this information for us.

Website	Type of Information
http://www.doaj.org	The Directory of Open Access Journals is an online database of all freely available academic journals online.
http://scholar.google.com	Google Scholar attempts to filter out nonacademic information. Unfortunately, it tends to return a large number of for-pay site results.
http://www.cios.org	Communication Institute for Online Scholarship is a clearinghouse for online communication scholarship. This site contains full-text journals and books.
http://xxx.lanl.gov	This is an open access site devoted to making physical science research accessible.
http://www.biomedcentral.com	BioMed Central provides open-access medical research.
http://www.osti.gov/eprints	The E-print Network provides access to a range of scholarly research that interests people working for the Department of Energy.
http://www.freemedicaljournals.com	This site provides the public with free access to medical journals.
http://highwire.stanford.edu	This is the link to Stanford University's free, full-text science archives.
http://www.plosbiology.org	This is the Public Library of Science's journal for biology.
https://dp.la/	The Digital Public Library of America brings together the riches of America's libraries, archives, and museums, and makes them freely available to the world
http://vlib.org	The WWW Virtual Library provides annotated lists of websites compiled by scholars in specific areas.

Evaluating Research

Going Deeper through Lateral Reading

Imagine that you're online shopping. You have a pretty clear idea of what you need to buy, and you've located the product on a common site. In a perfect world, you could trust the product producer, the site, and the product itself and, without any research, simply click and buy. If you're like us, however, being a knowledgeable consumer means checking product reviews, looking for similar products, and reading comments about the company. Once we have a deeper understanding of the product and process, then we buy!

Argument research is similar. Feeling literate about the information types described above is key, but inaccurate or untrustworthy content still emerges.

In response, we recommend **lateral reading** – fact-checking source claims by reading other sites and resources.

Lateral reading emerged after a group of Stanford researchers pitted undergraduates, professors with their Ph.D.s in history, and journalists against each other in a contest to see who could tell if information was fake or real. The results? Journalists identified fake information every time, but the Ph.D.s and undergraduates struggled to sniff out the truth.

Why is this?

Well, journalists rarely read much of the article or website they were evaluating before they dove into researching it. They would read the title and open a new tab to check out if anyone else had published something on the same topic. Reading what other people had written gave the journalists some context or background knowledge on the topic, better positioning them to judge the argument and evidence made. They would circle back to the original article, identify the author, and open more tabs to verify the identity of the author and their credentials to write the piece. Once the

journalists were satisfied with this, they had enough background information to start judging the argument of the original piece. Essentially, journalists would read the introduction and pick out big ideas or the argument, people, specific facts, and the evidence referenced in the first paragraph.

Mike Caulfield (2017), a professor who specializes in media literacy, read the Stanford study and identified steps to evaluate sources. One of those steps is to read laterally, and three additional steps include:

- **Check for previous work**: Look around to see if someone else has already fact-checked the claim or provided a synthesis of research.
- **Go upstream to the source:** Go "upstream" to the source of the claim. Most web content is not original. Get to the original source to understand the trustworthiness of the information.
- **Circle back:** If you get lost, hit dead ends, or find yourself going down an increasingly confusing rabbit hole, back up and start over, knowing what you know now. You're likely to take a more informed path with different search terms and better decisions.

Let's apply lateral reading to the college textbook affordability topic with the specific purpose to "to persuade my audience to support campus solutions to rising textbook costs."

You decide to search "textbook affordability" into Google. Google identifies approximately 1 million sources – whoa. Where do you start? Click on one those stories, "Triaging Textbook Costs" – a 2015 publication from Inside Higher Ed. From it, you learn about research on the rising costs of textbooks over time, how some students navigate those costs, and something called "open educational resources" (OER) as a strategy for reducing costs. You'll use lateral reading to follow up on some of the sources linked in the story and do a little more research to fact check this single source. By searching "OER," you can verify that yes, many universities are

turning to open educational resources to combat textbook affordability. Now, you can dive deeper into OERs as a potential solution to the problem.

Photo by Cottonbro Studio.[7]

Questioning Selected Source Information

Practicing lateral reading will provide you better insight on what diverse sources say about your argument. Through that process, you'll likely find multiple relevant sources, but is that source best for your argument? Perhaps, but ask yourself the following questions before integrating others' ideas or research into your argument:

- **What's the date?** Remember that timeliness plays a key role in establishing the relevance of your argument to your audience. Although a less timely source may be beneficial, more recent sources are often viewed more credibly and may provide updated information.

- **Who is the author / who are the authors?** Identify the author(s) and determine their credentials. We also recommend "Googling" an author and checking if there are any red flags that may hint at their bias or lack of credibility.
- **Who is the publisher?** Find out about the publisher. There are great, credible publishers (like the Cato Institute), but fringe or for-profit publishers may be providing information that overtly supports a political cause.
- **Do they cite others' work?** Check out the end of the document for a reference page. If you're using a source with no references, it's not automatically "bad," but a reputable reference page means that the author has evidence to support their insights. It helps establish if *that* author has done their research, too.
- **Do others cite the work?** Use the lateral reading technique from above to see if other people have cited this work, too. Alternatively, if, as you research, you see the same piece of work over and over, it's likely seen as a reputable source within that field. So check it out!

It can feel great to find a key piece of information that supports your argument. But a good idea is more than well-written content. To determine if that source is credible, use the questions above to guarantee that you're selecting the best research for your idea.

Developing a Research Strategy

Think of a research strategy as your personal map. The end destination is the actual speech, and along the way, there are various steps you need to complete to reach your destination: the speech. From the day you receive your speech assignment, the more clearly you map out the steps you need to take leading up to the date when you will give the speech, the easier your speech development process will be. In the rest of this section, we are going to discuss taking notes, time management, determining your research needs, finding your sources, and evaluating your sources.

Take Notes & Keep a Log of Research

Remember: this is a lot of stuff to keep track of. We suggest jotting down notes as you go to keep everything straight. According to a very useful book called *The Elements of Library Research* by M. W. George, a **research log** is a "step-by-step account of the process of identifying, obtaining, and evaluating sources for a specific project, similar to a lab note-book in an experimental setting"[2]. In essence, George believes that keeping a log of what you've done is very helpful because it can help you keep track of what you've read thus far. You can use a good old-fashioned notebook, or if you carry around your laptop or netbook with you, you can always keep it digitally – whatever works best for you.

This may seem obvious, but it is often overlooked. Poor note taking or inaccurate notes can be devastating in the long-term. If you forget to write down all the source information, backtracking and trying to re-search to locate citation information is tedious,

time-consuming, and inefficient. Without proper citations, your credibility will diminish. Keeping information without correct citations can have disastrous consequences – as discussed in the chapter on Ethical Implications.

Photo by Pixabay. [8]

Allotting Time

First and foremost, when starting a new project, no matter how big or small, it is important to seriously consider how much time that project is going to take. To help us discuss the issue of time with regard to preparing your speech, we're going to examine what the Project Management Institute refers to as the **project life cycle** or

"the phases that connect the beginning of a project to its end"[5]. Often in a public speaking class, the time you have is fairly concrete. You may have two or three weeks between speeches in a semester course or one to two weeks in a quarter course. In either case, from the moment your instructor gives you the assigned speech, the proverbial clock is ticking. With each passing day, you are losing precious time in your speech preparation process. Now, we realize that as a college student you probably have many things vying for your time in life: school, family, jobs, friends, or dating partners. For this reason, you need to really think through how much time it's going to take you to complete your preparation in terms of both research and speech preparation.

Research Time

The first step that takes a good chunk of your time is researching your speech. Whether you are conducting primary research or relying on secondary research sources, you're going to be spending a significant amount of time researching.

A good strategy is to devote no more than one-third of your speech preparation time to research (e.g., if you have three weeks before your speech date, your research should be done by the end of the first week). If you are not careful, you could easily end up spending all your time on research and waiting until the last minute to actually prepare your speech, which is highly inadvisable.

Speech Preparation Time

The second task in speech preparation is to sit down and actually develop your speech. During this time period, you will use the information you collected during your research to fully flesh out your ideas into a complete speech. You may be making arguments using the research or creating visual aids. Whatever you need to complete during this time period, you need to give yourself ample time to actually prepare your speech. One common guideline is one to two hours of speech preparation per one minute of actual speaking time.

By allowing yourself enough time to prepare your speech, you're also buffering yourself against a variety of things that can go wrong both in life and with your speech. Let's face it, life happens. Often events completely outside our control happen, and these events could negatively impact our ability to prepare a good speech. When you give yourself a little time buffer, you're already insulated from the possible negative effects on your speech if something goes wrong.

The last part of speech preparation is practice. Although some try to say that practice makes perfect, we realize that perfection is never realistic because no one is perfect. We prefer this mantra: "Practice makes permanent."

And by "practice," we mean actual rehearsals in which you deliver your speech out loud. Speakers who only script out their speeches or only think through them often forget their thoughts when they stand in front of an audience. Research has shown that when individuals practice, their speech performance in front of an audience is more closely aligned with their practice than people who just think about their speeches. In essence, you need to allow yourself to become comfortable not only with the text of the speech but also with the nonverbal delivery of the speech, so giving yourself plenty of speech preparation time also gives you more practice time.

We will discuss speech development and practice further in other chapters.

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- Sections of this chapter were taken from *Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers* by Mike Caulfield.
- Sections of this chapter were adapted from *Stand up, Speak Out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking*. ISBN: 13:

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A Note about Research

KATIE GRUBER

Conducting & Evaluating your Research

In the previous chapter, the importance of lateral reading was highlighted.

Lateral reading is an effective way to verify your sources as you research. As you begin compiling information to support your argument, verify the credibility and make sure you're taking into account potential biases. The CRAAP test is an efficient (and fun) way of evaluating resources.

Check out this CRAAP Test doc from California State University, Chico or refer to this video Evaluating Information using the CRAAP Test.

Additionally, you likely already know that most news and media outlets typically skew a certain way – left or right. Reviewing the Interactive Media Bias Chart is a great way to better understand the political leanings of various media outlets and ensure that you are not researching from only one particular angle (or political agenda). This chart is updated annually to best reflect currency.

If you are ever in doubt, ask your instructor and/or a librarian! Librarians are *wonderful* resources who are knowledgeable in all things research-related! If you can't find the answer, they are sure to know where to go.

Finally, we know the importance of researching and *orally*

citing our sources (as discussed in Chapter 3). A useful acronym may help you to remember what to include in your oral source citations: **TAD**, for Title, Author, Date. While you do not necessarily need to use this specific order each time you cite, (for example, you could use TDA, ATD, ADT, etc) this may help you keep track of the relevant information to share.

While it may feel "awkward" to orally cite sources – after all, this isn't something we do in our everyday conversations – we hope it is clear by now how important research and citing sources are to a successful speech. Even those on late-night talk shows and entertainment shows cite sources. See clips from Trevor Noah or John Oliver, or here's an example from Adam Conover's show *Adam Ruins Everything:*

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://mtsu.pressbooks.pub/principlesofpublicspeaking/?p=40#oembed-1

Citing Sources in APA Style

In writing, you should cite your sources using the style indicated by

your instructor or organization. You'll find that different disciplines have different styles. Many of you may be familiar with MLA. In this class and many of your other Communication courses, we use APA. That is because APA style prioritizes dates. Dates are helpful to us because they indicate the recency of the information and can relate to its quality.

In your written assignments, you should (1) cite your sources in-text when information comes from a source (whether summarized, paraphrased, or a direct quote) **and** (2) list your sources in a references section at the end of your paper.

Here is the basic format in APA style:

REFERENCE PAGE

Any sources referenced should be listed on their own page at the end of a paper. You should title the page "References." Your references should be then listed in alphabetical order. References should have a hanging indent of 0.5, which means that they are indented after the first line.

Below are some common reference types:

- *Peer-reviewed journal*
  - Lastname, Initials. (Year). Title of the article. *Journal Name*, *Volume*(Issue), Pages. doi or url
- *News article*
  - Lastname, Initials. (Year, Month Date). Title of the article. *Source Name*. url
- *Book*
  - Lastname, Initials. (Year). *Title*. Publisher.
- *Organization Website (With organization as author*)
  - Organization Name. (Year, Month Date). *Title of webpage*. url.

Can't find a date? Then you use n.d. in place of the date. Make sure you double check around the website or article though. Most often when students tell me there is no date, I go to the website and quickly locate it.

Another common mistake I see is related to capitalization in article titles. Only the first word and any proper nouns should be capitalized in article titles in your references. For more types of references and examples see: "Reference Examples."

Lastly, be careful of online generators for references. You can use them as a start, but you still need to generally know what to look for to correct them.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- APA Reference Examples
- Purdue OWL APA Style Guide

References

Chapter Eight – Supporting Materials

The body of your speech should help you elaborate on your main objective, by using main points, subpoints, and support for your sub points. There are three types of supporting material: statistics, examples, and testimony. These are used to support the main points and subpoints of your speech.

Credibility makes our messages believable, and a believable message is more likely to be remembered than one that is not. But gaining credibility is not so easy. As Chip and Dan Heath note in *Made to Stick: If we're trying to persuade a skeptical audience to believe a new message, the reality is that we're fighting an uphill battle against a lifetime of personal learning and social relationships.*

So how can we add credibility to our words? One way is to rely on statistics.

Using & Understanding Statistics

Statistics are a systematic collection, analysis, comparison, and interpretation of numerical data of data. As evidence, they are useful in summarizing complex information, quantifying, or making comparisons. Statistics are powerful pieces of evidence because numbers appear straightforward. Numbers provide evidence that quantifies, and statistics can be helpful to clarify a concept or highlighting the depth of a problem.

Statistics can be a powerful persuasive tool in public speaking if the speaker appropriately explains their use and significance. It provides a quantitative, objective, and persuasive platform on which to base an argument, prove a claim, or support an idea. Before a set of statistics can be used, however, it must be made understandable by people who are not familiar with statistics. The key to the persuasive use of statistics is extracting meaning and patterns from raw data in a way that is logical and demonstrable to an audience. There are many ways to interpret statistics and data sets, not all of them valid.

We often know a statistic when we find one, but it can be tricky to understand how a statistic was derived.

You may have heard the terms **mean, median,** and **mode** during math class. The **mean** is the arithmetic average for a data set, which is equal to the sum of the numerical values divided by the number of values. You can determine the mean (or average) by adding up the figures and dividing by the number of figures present. If you're giving a speech on climate change, you might note that, in 2015, the average summer temperature was 97 degrees while, in 1985, it was just 92 degrees. The **mode** is the value that appears the most often in a data set. The **median** is described as the numerical value separating the higher half of a sample, a population, or a probability

distribution, from the lower half. For example, your professors may use these values when discussing exam results with the entire class, to determine how "well" the class performed overall.Averages and percentages are two common deployments of statistical evidence.

When using statistics, comparisons can help translate the statistic for an audience. In the example above, 97 degrees may seem hot, but the audience has nothing to compare that statistic to. The 30-year comparison assists in demonstrating a change in temperature.

A **percentage** expresses a proportion of out 100. For example, you might argue that "textbook costs have risen more than 1000% since 1977" (Popken, 2015). By using a statistical percentage, 1000% sounds pretty substantial. It may be important, however, to accompany your percentage with a comparison to assist the audience in understanding that "This is 3 times higher than the normal rate of inflation" (UTA Libraries). You might also clarify that "college textbooks have risen more than any other college-related cost" (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

You are responsible for the statistical information that you deploy. It's all too common for us as information consumers to grab a quick statistic that sounds appealing, but that information may not be reliable.

Explaining statistics. Photo by Mikael Blomkvist.

Guidelines for Helping Your Audience Understand Statistics

- Use statistics as support, *not* as a main point. The audience may cringe or tune you out for saying, "Now I'd like to give you some statistics about the problem of gangs in our part of the state." That sounds as exciting as reading the telephone book! Use the statistics to support an argument.
- Do not overuse statistics. While there is no hard and fast rule on how many to use, there are other good supporting materials, and you would not want to depend on statistics alone. You want to choose the statistics and numerical data that will strengthen your argument the most and drive your point home. Statistics can have emotional power as well as probative value if used sparingly.
- Use reputable sources for the statistics you present in your speech such as government websites, academic institutions and reputable research organizations and policy/research think tanks.
- Beware of unrepresentative samples. In an unrepresentative sample, a conclusion is based on surveys of people who do not represent, or resemble, the ones to whom the conclusion is being applied.
- Use a large enough sample size in your statistics to make sure that the statistics you are using are accurate (for example, if a survey only asked four people, then it is likely not representative of the population's viewpoint).
- Use statistics that are easily understood. Many people understand what an average is but not many people will know more complex ideas such as variation and standard deviation.
- When presenting graphs, make sure that the key points are highlighted, and the graphs are not misleading as far as the values presented.
- Explain your statistics as needed, but do not make your speech

a statistics lesson. If you say, "My blog has 500 subscribers" to a group of people who know little about blogs, that might sound impressive, but is it? You can also provide a story of an individual, and then tie the individual into the statistic. After telling a story of the daily struggles of a young mother with multiple sclerosis, you could follow up with "This is just one story in the 400,000 people who suffer from MS in the United States today, according to National MS Society."

Common Misunderstandings of Statistics

A common misunderstanding when using statistics is "correlation does not mean causation." This means that just because two variables are related, they do not necessarily mean that one variable causes the other variable to occur. For example, consider a data set that indicates that there is a relationship between ice cream purchases over seasons versus drowning deaths over seasons. The incorrect conclusion would be to say that the increase in ice cream consumption leads to more drowning deaths, or vice versa. Therefore, when using statistics in public speaking, a speaker should always be sure that they are presenting accurate information when discussing two variables that may be related. Statistics can be used persuasively in all manners of arguments and public speaking scenarios—the key is understanding and interpreting the given data and molding that interpretation towards a convincing statement.

Putting Statistics into Context for Our Audiences

Graphs, tables, and maps can be used to communicate the numbers,

but then the numbers need to be put into context to make the message stick. As the Heaths state:

Statistics are rarely meaningful in and of themselves. Statistics will, and should, almost always be used to illustrate a relationship. It's more important for people to remember the relationship than the number.

In their book, the Heaths give several good examples of others who have done this. For example, they introduce us to Geoff Ainscow, one of the leaders of the Beyond War movement in the 1980s.

Ainscow gave talks trying to raise awareness of the dangers of nuclear weapons. He wanted to show that the US and the USSR possessed weapons capable of destroying the earth several times over. But simply quoting figures of nuclear weapons stockpiles was not a way to make the message stick. So, after setting the scene, Ainscow would take a BB pellet and drop it into a steel bucket where it would make a loud noise. The pellet represented the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. Ainscow would then describe the devastation at Hiroshima. Next, he would take 10 pellets and drop them in the bucket where they made 10 times as much noise. They represented the nuclear firepower on a single nuclear submarine. Finally, he poured 5,000 pellets into the bucket, one for each nuclear warhead in the world. When the noise finally subsided, his audience sat in dead silence.

That is how you put statistics into context.

Using Tables, Graphs and Maps to Communicate Statistical Findings

The story of communicating your statistics does not end with putting them into context. Actually, it would be better to say that it does not begin with putting the numbers into context. In reality, the story you are telling through your evidence will probably start with the display of a table, graph, or map.

A simple table, graph, or map can explain a great deal, and so this type of direct evidence should be used where appropriate. However, if a particular part of your analysis represented by a table, graph, or map does not add to or support your argument, it should be left out.

While representing statistical information in tables, graphs, or maps can be highly effective, it is important to ensure that the information is not presented in a manner that can mislead the listener. The key to presenting effective tables, graphs, or maps is to ensure they are easy to understand and clearly linked to the message. Ensure that you provide all the necessary information required to understand what the data is showing. The table, graph, or map should be able to stand alone.

Tables, graphs, and maps should:

- relate directly to the argument;
- support statements made in the text;
- summarize relevant sections of the data analysis; and
- be clearly labelled.

Table Checklist

- Use a descriptive title for each table.
- Label every column.
- Provide a source if appropriate.
- Minimize memory load by removing unnecessary data and minimizing decimal places.
- Use clustering and patterns to highlight important relationships.
- Use white space to effect.
- Order data meaningfully (e.g., rank highest to lowest).
- Use a consistent format for each table.

Also, do not present too much data in tables. Large expanses of

figures can be daunting for an audience, and can obscure your message.

Graph Checklist

- **Title**: Use a clear, descriptive title.
- **Type of graph**: Choose the appropriate graph for your message, avoid using 3D graphs as they can obscure information.
- **Axes**: Decide which variable goes on which axis, and what scale is most appropriate.
- **Legend**: If there is more than one data series displayed, always include a legend, preferably within the area of the graph.
- **Labels**: All relevant labels should be included.
- **Color/shading**: Colors can help differentiate; however, know what is appropriate for the medium you're using.
- **Data source**: Provide the source of data you've used for the graph.
- **Three-Quarters Rules**: For readability, it's considered best practice to make the y-axis three-quarters the size of the x-axis

Examples

Examples help the audience understand the key points; they should be to the point and complement the topic. Examples are essential to a presentation that is backed up with evidence, and it helps the audience effectively understand the message being presented. An **example** is a specific situation, problem, or story designed to help illustrate a principle, method or phenomenon. Examples are useful because they can help make an abstract idea more concrete for an audience by providing a specific case. Examples are most effective when they are used as a complement to a key point in the presentation and focus on the important topics of the presentation. An example must be quickly understandable—something the audience can pull out of their memory or experience quickly. There are three main types of examples: brief, extended, and hypothetical.

Brief Examples

Brief examples are used to further illustrate a point that may not be immediately obvious to all audience members but is not so complex that is requires a lengthier example. Brief examples can be used by the presenter as an aside or on its own. A presenter may use a brief example in a presentation on politics in explaining the Electoral College. Since many people are familiar with how the Electoral College works, the presenter may just mention that the Electoral College is based on population and a brief example of how it is used to determine an election. In this situation it would not be necessary for a presented to go into a lengthy explanation of the process of the Electoral College since many people are familiar with the process.

Extended Examples

Extended examples are used when a presenter is discussing a more complicated topic that they think their audience may be unfamiliar with. In an extended example a speaker may want to use a chart, graph, or other visual aid to help the audience understand the example. An instance in which an extended example could be used includes a presentation in which a speaker is explaining how the "time value of money" principle works in finance. Since this is a concept that people unfamiliar with finance may not immediately understand, a speaker will want to use an equation and other visual aids to further help the audience understand this principle. An extended example will likely take more time to explain than a brief example and will be about a more complex topic.

Hypothetical Examples

A hypothetical example is a fictional example that can be used when a speaker is explaining a complicated topic that makes the most sense when it is put into more realistic or relatable terms. For instance, if a presenter is discussing statistical probability, instead of explaining probability in terms of equations, it may make more sense for the presenter to make up a hypothetical example. This could be a story about a girl, Annie, picking 10 pieces of candy from a bag of 50 pieces of candy in which half are blue and half are red and then determining Annie's probability of pulling out 10 total pieces of red candy. A hypothetical example helps the audience to better visualize a topic and relate to the point of the presentation more effectively.

Podcasting. Photo by George Milton.

Using Examples to Complement Key Points

One method of effectively communicating examples is by using an example to clarify and complement a main point of a presentation. If an orator is holding a seminar about how to encourage productivity in the workplace, an example may be used that focuses on how an employee received an incentive to work harder, such as a bonus, and this improved the employee's productivity. An example like this would act as a complement and help the audience better understand how to use incentives to improve performance in the workplace.

Using Examples that are Concise and to the Point

Examples are essential to help an audience better understand a topic. However, a speaker should be careful to not overuse examples as too many examples may confuse the audience and distract them from focusing on the key points that the speaker is making.

Examples should also be concise and not drawn out, so the speaker does not lose the audience's attention. Concise examples should have a big impact on audience engagement and understanding in a small amount of time.

Narratives

Narratives are stories that clarify, dramatize, and emphasize ideas. They have, if done well, strong emotional power (or pathos). While there is no universal type of narrative, a good story often draws the audience in by identifying characters and resolving a plot issue. Narratives can be personal or historical.

Person narratives are powerful tools to relate to your audience

and embed a story about your experience with the topic. As evidence, they allow you to say, "I experienced or saw this thing firsthand." As the speaker, using your own experience as evidence can draw the audience in and help them understand why you're invested in the topic. Of course, personal narratives must be true. Telling an untrue personal narrative may negatively influence your ethos for an audience.

Historical narratives (sometimes called documented narratives) are stories about a past person, place, or thing. They have power because they can prove and clarify an idea by using a common form— the story. By "historical" we do not mean that the story refers to something that happened many years ago, only that it has happened in the past and there were witnesses to validate the happening. Historical narratives are common in informative speeches.

Using Testimony

A **testimony** is a statement or endorsement given by someone who has a logical connection to the topic and who is a credible source.

Testimony can be used to either clarify or prove a point and is often used by referring to the research of experts. For example, you could quote a study conducted by an independent auditing organization that endorses your organization's ability to financially support current workforce levels.

There are three types of testimonials that fall into the range of testimony; knowing your audience leads to the best choice.

- Expert authorities
- Celebrities and other inspirational figures
- Peer

Expert Authorities

First, we can cite expert authorities. According to Chip and Dan Heath in their book *Made to Stick*, an expert is "the kind of person whose wall is covered with framed credentials: Oliver Sacks for neuroscience, Alan Greenspan for economics [well, maybe not such a great example any longer], or Stephen Hawking for physics."

If an expert supports our position, it usually adds credibility. If we are giving a presentation on a medical issue and can find support for our position in prestigious medical reviews such as *The New England Journal of Medicine* or *The Lancet*, it would probably be a good idea to cite those authorities.

How to Incorporate Expert Testimony

When a claim or point is made during a speech, the audience initially may be reluctant to concede or agree to the validity of the point. Often this is because the audience does not initially accept the speaker as a trustworthy authority. By incorporating expert testimony, the speaker is able to bolster their own authority to speak on the topic.

Therefore, expert testimony is commonly introduced after a claim is made. For example, if a speech makes the claim, "Manufacturing jobs have been in decline since the 1970s," it should be followed up with expert testimony to support that claim. This testimony could take a variety of forms, such as government employment statistics or a historian who has written on a particular sector of the manufacturing industry. No matter the particular form of expert testimony, it is incorporated following a claim to defend and support that claim, thus bolstering the authority of the speaker.

In using expert testimony, you should follow these guidelines:

- Use the expert's testimony in their relevant field. A person may have a Nobel Prize in economics, but that does not make them an expert in biology.
- Provide at least some of the expert's relevant credentials.
- If you interviewed the expert yourself, make that clear in the speech also. "When I spoke with Dr. Mary Thompson, principal of Park Lake High School, on October 12, she informed me that . . ."

Celebrities and Other Inspirational Figures

We may also refer to the testimony of celebrities and other inspirational figures. Take the example of Oprah Winfrey recommending a book. Her recommendations influence the book-

buying habits of thousands of people. Why? Because "if Oprah likes a book, it makes us more interested in that book. We trust the recommendations of people whom we want to be like," note the Heaths.

But what if there are no "experts" or "celebrities" to be found? Well, hold on a minute. They might be closer than you think. Do you have positive feedback from satisfied customers? Is there someone on your team (including you) with certain educational background or work experience that is relevant? If so, they (or you) might be able to provide the expertise that you seek, even if they are not widely known.

Peer

Lastly, peer testimony comes from a source that is neither expert nor celebrity, but similar status to the audience.

One example is Pam Laffin, a mother of two who died at the age of 31 from emphysema-related lung failure caused by years of smoking. She appeared in several anti-tobacco commercials sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The commercials were difficult to watch but highly effective; Pam Laffin told a compelling story in a way that more famous people could not.

Peer Testimony. Photo by ISCA.

What to Consider Before Using Testimony

Before using testimony, ask:

- Is the material quoted accurately?
- Is the source biased, or perceived as biased?
- Is the source competent in the field being consulted?
- Is the information current?

In the end, your choice as to which type of testimony you use will depend on your audience.

Smokers, for example, know all of the hazards of smoking and still continue to smoke. Give them a presentation on the dangers of smoking using expert testimony and you'll probably be met with a response like, "Yeah, but it won't happen to me." Use a peer like Pam Laffin, however, and the response will be totally different.

Here is a young woman who probably also thought that it wouldn't happen to her, speaking "from her grave." Smokers can relate to her. She isn't just a numerical figure. This type of testimony is quite effective when you're trying to tell people the dangers of doing something.

So, get to know your audience, put yourself in their place, and choose the type or combination of evidence that will make your message stick.

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Chapter Nine – Organizing the Body of your Speech

Creating the Body of a Speech

In a series of important and ground-breaking studies conducted during the 1950s and 1960s, researchers started investigating how a speech's organization was related to audience perceptions of those speeches. The first study, conducted by Raymond Smith in 1951, randomly organized the parts of a speech to see how audiences would react. Not surprisingly, when speeches were randomly organized, the audience perceived the speech more negatively than when audiences were presented with a speech with clear, intentional organization. Smith also found that audiences who listened to unorganized speeches were less interested in those speeches than audiences who listened to organized speeches (Smith, 1951). Thompson furthered this investigation and found that unorganized speeches were also harder for audiences to recall after the speech. Basically, people remember information from speeches that are clearly organized—and forget information from speeches that are poorly organized (Thompson, 1960). A third study by Baker found that when audiences were presented with a disorganized speaker, they were less likely to be persuaded, and saw the disorganized speaker as lacking credibility (Baker, 1965).

These three very important studies make the importance of organization very clear. When speakers are not organized they are not perceived as credible and their audiences view the speeches negatively, are less likely to be persuaded, and don't remember specific information from the speeches after the fact.

We start this chapter discussing these studies because we want you to understand the importance of speech organization on real

audiences. If you are not organized, your speech will never have its intended effect. In this chapter, we are going to discuss the basics of organizing the body of your speech.

Determining Your Main Ideas

Matt Wynn – Lightbulb! – CC BY 2.0.

When creating a speech, it's important to remember that speeches have three clear parts: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The introduction establishes the topic and whets your audience's appetite, and the conclusion wraps everything up at the end of your

speech. The real "meat" of your speech happens in the body. In this section, we're going to discuss how to think strategically about the body of your speech.

We like the word *strategic* because it refers to determining what is important or essential to the overall plan or purpose of your speech. Too often, new speakers just throw information together and stand up and start speaking. When that happens, audience members are left confused and the reason for the speech may get lost. To avoid being seen as disorganized, we want you to start thinking critically about the organization of your speech. In this section, we will discuss how to take your speech from a specific purpose to creating the main points of your speech.

What Is Your Specific Purpose?

Before we discuss how to determine the main points of your speech, we want to revisit your speech's specific purpose. Recall that a speech can have one of three general purposes: to inform, to persuade, or to entertain. The general purpose refers to the broad goal for creating and delivering the speech. The specific purpose, on the other hand, starts with one of those broad goals (inform, persuade, or entertain) and then further informs the listener about the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* of the speech.

The specific purpose is stated as a sentence incorporating the general purpose, the specific audience for the speech, and a

prepositional phrase that summarizes the topic. Suppose you are going to give a speech about using open-source software. Here are three examples (each with a different general purpose and a different audience):

General Purpose	To inform
Specific Purpose	To inform a group of school administrators about the various open-source software packages that could be utilized in their school districts
General Purpose	To persuade
Specific Purpose	To persuade a group of college students to make the switch from Microsoft Office to the open-source office suite OpenOffice
General Purpose	To entertain
Specific Purpose	To entertain members of a business organization with a mock eulogy of for-pay software giants as a result of the proliferation of open-source alternatives

In each of these three examples, you'll notice that the general topic is the same—open-source software—but the specific purpose is different because the speech has a different general purpose and a different audience. Before you can think strategically about organizing the body of your speech, you need to know what your specific purpose is. If you have not yet written a specific purpose for your current speech, please go ahead and write one now.

From Specific Purpose to

Main Points

Once you've written down your specific purpose, you can now start thinking about the best way to turn that specific purpose into a series of main points. **Main points** are the key ideas you present to enable your speech to accomplish its specific purpose. In this section, we're going to discuss how to determine your main points and how to organize those main points into a coherent, strategic speech.

Narrowing Down Your Main Points

When you write your specific purpose and review the research you have done on your topic, you will probably find yourself thinking of quite a few points that you'd like to make in your speech. Whether that's the case or not, we recommend taking a few minutes to brainstorm and develop a list of points. What information does your audience need to know to understand your topic? What information does your speech need to convey to accomplish its specific purpose? Consider the following example:

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of school administrators about the various open-source software packages that could be utilized in their school districts
Brainstorming List of Points	Define open-source software.
	Define educational software.
	List and describe the software commonly used by school districts.
	Explain the advantages of using open-source software.
	Explain the disadvantages of using open-source software.
	Review the history of open-source software.
	Describe the value of open-source software.
	Describe some educational open-source software packages.
	Review the software needs of my specific audience.
	Describe some problems that have occurred with open-source software.

Now that you have brainstormed and developed a list of possible points, how do you go about narrowing them down to just two or three main ones? Remember, your main points are the key ideas that help build your speech. When you look over the preceding list, you can then start to see that many of the points are related to one another. Your goal in narrowing down your main points is to identify which individual, potentially minor points can be combined to make main points. This process is called **chunking** because it involves taking smaller chunks of information and putting them together with like chunks to create more fully developed chunks of information. Before reading our chunking of the preceding list, see if you can determine three large chunks out of the list (note that not all chunks are equal).

While there is no magic number for how many main points a speech should have, speech experts generally agree that the fewer the number of main points the better. First and foremost, experts on the subject of memory have consistently shown that people don't tend to remember very much after they listen to a message

or leave a conversation (Bostrom & Waldhart, 1988). While many different factors can affect a listener's ability to retain information after a speech, how the speech is organized is an important part of that process (Dunham, 1964; Smith, 1951; Thompson, 1960). For the speeches you will be delivering in a typical public speaking class, you will usually have just two or three main points. If your speech is less than three minutes long, then two main points will probably work best. If your speech is between three and ten minutes in length, then it makes more sense to use three main points.

You may be wondering why we are recommending only two or three main points. The reason comes straight out of the research on listening. According to LeFrancois, people are more likely to remember information that is meaningful, useful, and of interest to them; different or unique; organized; visual; and simple (LeFrancois, 1999). Two or three main points are much easier for listeners to remember than ten or even five. In addition, if you have two or three main points, you'll be able to develop each one with examples, statistics, or other forms of support. Including support for each point will make your speech more interesting and more memorable for your audience.

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of school administrators about the various open-source software packages that could be utilized in their school districts
	School districts use software in their operations.
Main Point 1	Define educational software.
	List and describe the software commonly used by school districts.
	What is open-source software?
	Define open-source software.
	Review the history of open-source software.
Main Point 2	Explain the advantages of using open-source software.
	Describe the value of open-source software.
	Explain the disadvantages of using open-source software.
	Describe some problems that have occurred with open-source software.
	Name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider.
Main Point 3	Review the software needs of my specific audience.
	Describe some educational open-source software packages.

You may notice that in the preceding list, the number of subpoints under each of the three main points is a little disjointed or the topics don't go together clearly. That's all right. Remember that these are just general ideas at this point. It's also important to remember that there is often more than one way to organize a speech. Some of these points could be left out and others developed more fully, depending on the purpose and audience. We'll develop the preceding main points more fully in a moment.

Thinking. Photo by Elijah O'Connell.

Helpful Hints for Preparing Your Main Points

Now that we've discussed how to take a specific purpose and turn it into a series of main points, here are some helpful hints for creating your main points.

Uniting Your Main Points

Once you've generated a possible list of main points, you want to ask yourself this question: "When you look at your main points, do they fit together?" For example, if you look at the three preceding main points (school districts use software in their operations; what is open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider), ask yourself, "Do these main points help my audience understand my specific purpose?"

Suppose you added a fourth main point about open-source software for musicians—would this fourth main point go with the other three? Probably not. While you may have a strong passion for open-source music software, that main point is extraneous

information for the speech you are giving. It does not help accomplish your specific purpose, so you'd need to toss it out.

Keeping Your Main Points Separate

The next question to ask yourself about your main points is whether they overlap too much. While some overlap may happen naturally because of the singular nature of a specific topic, the information covered within each main point should be clearly distinct from the other main points. Imagine you're giving a speech with the specific purpose "to inform my audience about the health reasons for eating apples and oranges." You could then have three main points: that eating fruits is healthy, that eating apples is healthy, and that eating oranges is healthy. While the two points related to apples and oranges are clearly distinct, both of those main points would probably overlap too much with the first point "that eating fruits is healthy," so you would probably decide to eliminate the first point and focus on the second and third. On the other hand, you could keep the first point and then develop two new points giving additional support to why people should eat fruit.

Balancing Main Points

One of the biggest mistakes some speakers make is to spend most of their time talking about one of their main points, completely neglecting their other main points. To avoid this mistake, organize your speech so as to spend roughly the same amount of time on each main point. If you find that one of your main points is simply too large, you may need to divide that main point into two main points and consolidate your other main points into a single main point.

Let's see if our preceding example is balanced (school districts use software in their operations; what is open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider). What do you think? Obviously, the answer depends on how much time a speaker will have to talk about each of these main points. If you have an hour to talk, then you may find that these three main points are balanced. However, you may also find them wildly unbalanced if you only have five minutes to speak because five minutes is not enough time to even explain what open-source software is. If that's the case, then you probably need to rethink your specific purpose to ensure that you can cover the material in the allotted time.

Separate containers. Photo by Pavel Danilyuk.

Creating Parallel Structure for Main Points

Another major question to ask yourself about your main points is whether or not they have a parallel structure. By parallel structure, we mean that you should structure your main points so that they all sound similar. When all your main points sound similar, it's simply easier for your audiences to remember your main points and retain them for later. Let's look at our sample (school districts use software in their operations; what is open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider). Notice that the first and third main points are statements, but the second one is a question. Basically, we have an example here of main points that are not parallel in structure. You could fix this in one of two ways. You

could make them all questions: what are some common school district software programs; what is open-source software; and what are some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider. Or you could turn them all into statements: school districts use software in their operations; define and describe open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider. Either of these changes will make the grammatical structure of the main points parallel.

Maintaining Logical Flow of Main Points

The last question you want to ask yourself about your main points is whether the main points make sense in the order you've placed them. The next section goes into more detail of common organizational patterns for speeches, but for now we want you to just think logically about the flow of your main points. When you look at your main points, can you see them as progressive, or does it make sense to talk about one first, another one second, and the final one last? If you look at your order, and it doesn't make sense to you, you probably need to think about the flow of your main points. Often, this process is an art and not a science. But let's look at a couple of examples.

School Dress Codes Example	
Main Point 1	History of school dress codes
Main Point 2	Problems with school dress codes
Main Point 3	Eliminating school dress codes

Rider Law Legislation	
Main Point 1	Why should states have rider laws?
Main Point 2	What are the effects of a lack of rider laws?
Main Point 3	What is rider law legislation?

When you look at these two examples, what are your immediate impressions of the two examples? In the first example, does it make sense to talk about history, and then the problems, and finally how to eliminate school dress codes? Would it make sense to put history as your last main point? Probably not. In this case, the main points are in a logical sequential order. What about the second example? Does it make sense to talk about your solution, then your problem, and then define the solution? Not really! What order do you think these main points should be placed in for a logical flow? Maybe you should explain the problem (lack of rider laws), then define your solution (what is rider law legislation), and then argue for your solution (why states should have rider laws). Notice that in this example you don't even need to know what "rider laws" are to see that the flow didn't make sense.

Using Common Organizing Patterns

Twentyfour Students – Organization makes you flow – CC BY-SA 2.0.

Previously in this chapter we discussed how to make your main points flow logically. This section is going to provide you with a number of organizational patterns to help you create a logically organized speech. The first organizational pattern we'll discuss is topical.

Topical

By far the most common pattern for organizing a speech is by categories or *topics*. The **topical** organizational pattern is a way to help the speaker arrange the message in a consistent fashion. The goal of a topical organization is to create categories (or chunks) of information that go together to help support your original specific purpose. Let's look at an example.

Specific Purpose	To persuade a group of high school juniors to apply to attend Generic University
Main Points	I. Life in the dorms II. Life in the classroom III. Life on campus

In this case, we have a speaker trying to persuade a group of high school juniors to apply to attend Generic University. To persuade this group, the speaker has divided the information into three basic categories: what it's like to live in the dorms, what classes are like, and what life is like on campus. Almost anyone could take this basic speech and specifically tailor the speech to fit their university or college. The main points in this example could be rearranged and the organizational pattern would still be effective because there is no inherent logic to the sequence of points. Let's look at a second example.

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of college students about the uses and misuses of Internet dating
Main Points	I. Define and describe Internet dating. II. Explain some strategies to enhance your Internet dating experience. III. List some warning signs to look for in potential online dates.

In this speech, the speaker is talking about how to find others online and date them. Specifically, the speaker starts by explaining what Internet dating is; then the speaker talks about how to make Internet dating better for audience members; and finally, the speaker ends by discussing some negative aspects of Internet dating. Again, notice that the information is chunked into three topics and that the second and third could be reversed and still provide a logical structure for your speech

Comparison/Contrast

Another method for organizing main points is the **comparison/contrast** pattern. While this pattern clearly lends itself easily to two main points, you can also create a third point by giving basic information about what is being compared and what is being contrasted. Let's look at two examples; the first one will be a two-point example and the second a three-point example.

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of physicians about Drug X, a newer drug with similar applications to Drug Y
Main Points	I. Show how Drug X and Drug Y are similar. II. Show how Drug X and Drug Y differ.
Specific Purpose	To inform a group of physicians about Drug X, a newer drug with similar applications to Drug Y
Main Points	I. Explain the basic purpose and use of both Drug X and Drug Y. II. Show how Drug X and Drug Y are similar. III. Show how Drug X and Drug Y differ.

If you were using the comparison/contrast pattern for persuasive purposes, in the preceding examples, you'd want to make sure that when you show how Drug X and Drug Y differ, you clearly state why Drug X is clearly the better choice for physicians to adopt. In essence, you'd want to make sure that when you compare the two drugs, you show that Drug X has all the benefits of Drug Y, but when you contrast the two drugs, you show how Drug X is superior to Drug Y in some way.

Spatial

The **spatial** organizational pattern arranges information according to how things fit together in physical space. This pattern is best used when your main points are oriented to different locations that can exist independently. The basic reason to choose this format is to show that the main points have clear locations. We'll look at two

examples here, one involving physical geography and one involving a different spatial order.

Specific Purpose	To inform a group of history students about the states that seceded from the United States during the Civil War
Main Points	I. Locate and describe the Confederate states just below the Mason-Dixon Line (Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee).
	II. Locate and describe the Confederate states in the deep South (South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida).
	III. Locate and describe the western Confederate states (Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas).

If you look at a basic map of the United States, you'll notice that these groupings of states were created because of their geographic location to one another. In essence, the states create three spatial territories to explain.

Now let's look at a spatial speech unrelated to geography.

Specific Purpose	To explain to a group of college biology students how the urinary system works
Main Points	I. Locate and describe the kidneys and ureters.
	II. Locate and describe the bladder.
	III. Locate and describe the sphincter and urethra.

In this example, we still have three basic spatial areas. If you look at a model of the urinary system, the first step is the kidney, which then takes waste through the ureters to the bladder, which then relies on the sphincter muscle to excrete waste through the urethra. All we've done in this example is create a spatial speech order for discussing how waste is removed from the human body through the urinary system. It is spatial because the organization pattern is determined by the physical location of each body part in relation to the others discussed.

Chronological

The **chronological** pattern places the main idea in the time order in which items appear—whether backward or forward. Here's a simple example.

Specific Purpose	To inform my audience about the books written by Winston Churchill
Main Points	I. Examine the style and content of Winston Churchill's writings prior to World War II.
	II. Examine the style and content of Winston Churchill's writings during World War II.
	III. Examine the style and content of Winston Churchill's writings after World War II.

In this example, we're looking at the writings of Winston Churchill in relation to World War II (before, during, and after). By placing his writings into these three categories, we develop a system for understanding this material based on Churchill's own life. Note that you could also use reverse chronological order and start with Churchill's writings after World War II, progressing backward to his earliest writings.

Biographical

As you might guess, the **biographical** organizational pattern is generally used when a speaker wants to describe a person's life—either a speaker's own life, the life of someone they know personally, or the life of a famous person. By the nature of this speech organizational pattern, these speeches tend to be informative or entertaining; they are usually not persuasive. Let's look at an example.

Specific Purpose	To inform my audience about the early life of Marilyn Manson
Main Points	I. Describe Brian Hugh Warner's early life and the beginning of his feud with Christianity.
	II. Describe Warner's stint as a music journalist in Florida.
	III. Describe Warner's decision to create Marilyn Manson and the Spooky Kids.

In this example, we see how Brian Warner, through three major periods of his life, ultimately became the musician known as Marilyn Manson.

In this example, these three stages are presented in chronological order, but the biographical pattern does not have to be chronological. For example, it could compare and contrast different periods of the subject's life, or it could focus topically on the subject's different accomplishments.

Causal

The **causal** pattern is used to explain cause-and-effect relationships. When you use a causal speech pattern, your speech will have two basic main points: cause and effect. In the first main point, typically you will talk about the causes of a phenomenon, and in the second main point you will then show how the causes lead to either a specific effect or a small set of effects. Let's look at an example.

Specific Purpose	To inform my audience about the problems associated with drinking among members of Native American tribal groups
Main Points	I. Explain the history and prevalence of drinking alcohol among Native Americans. II. Explain the effects that abuse of alcohol has on Native Americans and how this differs from the experience of other populations.

In this case, the first main point is about the history and prevalence of drinking alcohol among Native Americans (the cause). The second point then examines the effects of Native American alcohol consumption and how it differs from other population groups.

However, a causal organizational pattern can also begin with an effect and then explore one or more causes. In the following example, the effect is the number of arrests for domestic violence.

Specific Purpose	To inform local voters about the problem of domestic violence in our city
Main Points	I. Explain that there are significantly more arrests for domestic violence in our city than in cities of comparable size in our state. II. List possible causes for the difference, which may be unrelated to the actual amount of domestic violence.

In this example, the possible causes for the difference might include

stricter law enforcement, greater likelihood of neighbors reporting an incident, and police training that emphasizes arrests as opposed to other outcomes. Examining these possible causes may suggest that despite the arrest statistic, the actual number of domestic violence incidents in your city may not be greater than in other cities of similar size.

Problem-Cause-Solution

Another format for organizing distinct main points in a clear manner is the **problem-cause-solution** pattern. In this format you describe a problem, identify what you believe is causing the problem, and then recommend a solution to correct the problem.

Specific Purpose	To persuade a civic group to support a citywide curfew for individuals under the age of eighteen
Main Points	I. Demonstrate that vandalism and violence among youth is having a negative effect on our community.
	II. Show how vandalism and violence among youth go up after 10:00 p.m. in our community.
	III. Explain how instituting a mandatory curfew at 10:00 p.m. would reduce vandalism and violence within our community.

In this speech, the speaker wants to persuade people to pass a new curfew for people under eighteen. To help persuade the civic group members, the speaker first shows that vandalism and violence are problems in the community. Once the speaker has shown the problem, the speaker then explains to the audience that the cause

of this problem is youth outside after 10:00 p.m. Lastly, the speaker provides the mandatory 10:00 p.m. curfew as a solution to the vandalism and violence problem within the community. The problem-cause-solution format for speeches generally lends itself to persuasive topics because the speaker is asking an audience to believe in and adopt a specific solution.

Selecting an Organizational Pattern

Each of the preceding organizational patterns is potentially useful for organizing the main points of your speech. However, not all organizational patterns work for all speeches. For example, as we mentioned earlier, the biographical pattern is useful when you are telling the story of someone's life. Some other patterns, particularly comparison/contrast and problem-cause-solution, are well suited for persuasive speaking. Your challenge is to choose the best pattern for the particular speech you are giving.

You should be aware that it is also possible to combine two or more organizational patterns to meet the goals of a specific speech. For example, you might wish to discuss a problem and then compare/contrast several different possible solutions for the audience. Such a speech would thus be combining elements of the comparison/contrast and problem-cause-solution patterns. When considering which organizational pattern to use, you need to keep

in mind your specific purpose as well as your audience and the actual speech material itself to decide which pattern you think will work best.

Keeping Your Speech Moving

Chris Marquardt – REWIND – CC BY-SA 2.0.

Have you ever been listening to a speech or a lecture and found yourself thinking, "I am so lost!" or "Where the heck is this speaker going?" Chances are one of the reasons you weren't sure what the speaker was talking about was that the speaker didn't effectively keep the speech moving. When we are reading and encounter something we don't understand, we have the ability to reread the paragraph and try to make sense of what we're trying to read.

Unfortunately, we are not that lucky when it comes to listening to a speaker. We cannot pick up our universal remote and rewind the person. For this reason, speakers need to really think about how they keep a speech moving so that audience members are easily able to keep up with the speech. In this section, we're going to look at four specific techniques speakers can use that make following a speech much easier for an audience: transitions, internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.

Transitions between Main Points

A **transition** is a phrase or sentence that indicates that a speaker is moving from one main point to another main point in a speech. Basically, a transition is a sentence where the speaker summarizes what was said in one point and previews what is going to be discussed in the next point. Let's look at some examples:

- Now that we've seen the problems caused by lack of adolescent curfew laws, let's examine how curfew laws could benefit our community.
- Thus far we've examined the history and prevalence of alcohol abuse among Native Americans, but it is the impact that this abuse has on the health of Native Americans that is of the greatest concern.
- Now that we've thoroughly examined how these two medications are similar to one another, we can consider the

many clear differences between the two medications.
- Although he was one of the most prolific writers in Great Britain prior to World War II, Winston Churchill continued to publish during the war years as well.

You'll notice that in each of these transition examples, the beginning phrase of the sentence indicates the conclusion of a period of time (now that, thus far). The table below contains a variety of transition words that will be useful when keeping your speech moving.

Table 9.1 Transition Words

Addition	also, again, as well as, besides, coupled with, following this, further, furthermore, in addition, in the same way, additionally, likewise, moreover, similarly
Consequence	accordingly, as a result, consequently, for this reason, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, so then, subsequently, therefore, thus, thereupon, wherefore
Generalizing	as a rule, as usual, for the most part, generally, generally speaking, ordinarily, usually
Exemplifying	chiefly, especially, for instance, in particular, markedly, namely, particularly, including, specifically, such as
Illustration	for example, for instance, for one thing, as an illustration, illustrated with, as an example, in this case
Emphasis	above all, chiefly, with attention to, especially, particularly, singularly
Similarity	comparatively, coupled with, correspondingly, identically, likewise, similar, moreover, together with
Exception	aside from, barring, besides, except, excepting, excluding, exclusive of, other than, outside of, save
Restatement	in essence, in other words, namely, that is, that is to say, in short, in brief, to put it differently
Contrast and Comparison	contrast, by the same token, conversely, instead, likewise, on one hand, on the other hand, on the contrary, nevertheless, rather, similarly, yet, but, however, still, nevertheless, in contrast
Sequence	at first, first of all, to begin with, in the first place, at the same time, for now, for the time being, the next step, in time, in turn, later on, meanwhile, next, then, soon, the meantime, later, while, earlier, simultaneously, afterward, in conclusion, with this in mind
Common Sequence Patterns	first, second, third…
	generally, furthermore, finally
	in the first place, also, lastly
	in the first place, pursuing this further, finally
	to be sure, additionally, lastly
	in the first place, just in the same way, finally
	basically, similarly, as well
Summarizing	after all, all in all, all things considered, briefly, by and large, in any case, in any event, in brief, in conclusion, on the whole, in short, in summary, in the final analysis, in the long run, on balance, to sum up, to summarize, finally

Diversion	by the way, incidentally
Direction	here, there, over there, beyond, nearly, opposite, under, above, to the left, to the right, in the distance
Location	above, behind, by, near, throughout, across, below, down, off, to the right, against, beneath, in back of, onto, under, along, beside, in front of, on top of, among, between, inside, outside, around, beyond, into, over

Beyond transitions, there are several other techniques that you can use to clarify your speech organization for your audience. The next sections address several of these techniques, including internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.

Internal Previews

An **internal preview** is a phrase or sentence that gives an audience an idea of what is to come within a section of a speech. An internal preview works similarly to the preview that a speaker gives at the end of a speech introduction, quickly outlining what they will talk about (i.e., the speech's three main body points). In an internal preview, speakers highlight what they are going to discuss within a specific main point during a speech.

Ausubel was the first person to examine the effect that internal previews had on retention of oral information (Ausubel, 1968). Essentially, when speakers clearly inform an audience what they will talk about in a clear and organized manner, the audience listens for those main points, which leads to higher retention of the speaker's message. Let's look at a sample internal preview:

> *To help us further understand why recycling is important, we will first explain the positive benefits of recycling and then explore how recycling can help our community.*

When an audience hears that you will be exploring two different ideas within this main point, they are ready to listen for those main points as you talk about them. In essence, you're helping your audience keep up with your speech.

Rather than being given alone, internal previews often come after a speaker has transitioned to that main topic area. Using the previous internal preview, let's see it along with the transition to that main point.

> Now that we've explored the effect that a lack of consistent recycling has on our community, let's explore the importance of recycling for our community (*transition*). To help us further understand why recycling is important, we will first explain the positive benefits of recycling and then explore how recycling can help our community (*internal preview*).

While internal previews are definitely helpful, you do not need to include one for every main point of your speech. In fact, we recommend that you use internal previews sparingly to highlight only main points containing relatively complex information.

Internal Summaries

Whereas an internal preview helps an audience know what you are going to talk about within a main point at the beginning, an **internal summary** is delivered to remind an audience of what they just heard within the speech. In general, internal summaries are best used when the information within a specific main point of a speech was complicated. To write your own internal summaries, look at the summarizing transition words in Table 9.1. Let's look at an example.

> *To sum up, school bullying is a definite problem. Bullying in schools has been shown to be detrimental to the victim's grades, the victim's scores on standardized tests, and the victim's future educational outlook.*

In this example, the speaker was probably talking about the impact that bullying has on an individual victim educationally. Of course, an internal summary can also be a great way to lead into a transition to the next point of a speech.

> In this section, we have explored how bullying in schools has been shown to be detrimental to the victim's grades, the victim's scores on standardized tests, and the victim's future educational outlook (*internal summary*). Therefore, schools need to implement campus-wide, comprehensive antibullying programs (*transition*).

While not sounding like the more traditional transition, this internal summary helps readers summarize the content of that main point. The sentence that follows then leads to the next major part of the speech, which is going to discuss the importance of antibullying programs.

Neon sign. Photo by Tim Mossholder.

Signposts

Have you ever been on a road trip and watched the green rectangular mile signs pass you by? Fifty miles to go. Twenty-five miles to go. One mile to go. Signposts within a speech function the same way. Speakers use **signposts** to guide their audience through the content of a speech. If you look at Table 9.1 and look at the "common sequence patterns," you'll see a series of possible signpost options. In essence, we use these short phrases at the beginning of a piece of information to help our audience members keep up with what we're discussing. For example, if you were giving a speech whose main point was about the three functions of credibility, you could use internal signposts like this:

- The first function of credibility is competence.
- The second function of credibility is trustworthiness.
- The final function of credibility is caring/goodwill.

Signposts are simply meant to help your audience keep up with your speech, so the more simplistic your signposts are, the easier it is for your audience to follow.

In addition to helping audience members keep up with a speech, signposts can also be used to highlight specific information the speaker thinks is important. Where the other signposts were designed to show the way (like highway markers), signposts that call attention to specific pieces of information are more like billboards. Words and phrases that are useful for highlighting information can be found in Table 9.1 under the category "emphasis." All these words

are designed to help you call attention to what you are saying so that the audience will also recognize the importance of the information.

Note from the author, *Gruber*: As we have previously stated, organization is integral to your audience understanding your message, and thus, being influenced by it. A clear organizational pattern with connectives, such as transitions and summaries, creates a clear and memorable message.

Finally, we sometimes get funny looks when we suggest you write the body of your speech *before* your Introduction & Conclusion. The natural thought may be "The introduction *comes* first, so I should *write* it first." However, consider the objectives of the Introduction, as described in the next chapter, and you'll understand why you should always write the body first and *then* the introduction and conclusion.

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Chapter Ten – Introductions and Conclusions

The Importance of an Introduction

While not a hard science, it's generally recognized that the introduction for a speech should only encompass about 10 to 20 percent of the entire time the speaker will spend speaking. This means that if your speech is meant to be five minutes long, your introduction should be no more than about forty-five seconds. If your speech is to be ten minutes long, then your introduction should be no more than about a minute and a half. Keep in mind, that 10 to 20 percent of your speech can either make your audience interested in what you have to say or cause them to tune out before you've really gotten started. Overall, a good introduction should serve five functions. Let's examine each of these.

Gain Audience Attention and Interest

The first major purpose of an introduction is to gain your audience's attention and make them interested in what you have to say. This is

oftentimes called the *hook*. One of the biggest mistakes that novice speakers make is to assume that people will naturally listen because the speaker is speaking. While many audiences may be polite and not talk while you're speaking, actually getting them to listen to what you are saying is a completely different challenge. Let's face it—we've all tuned someone out at some point because we weren't interested in what they had to say. If you do not get the audience's attention at the outset, it will only become more difficult to do so as you continue speaking. We'll talk about some strategies for grabbing an audience's attention later on in this chapter.

State the Purpose of Your Speech

The second major function of an introduction is to reveal the purpose of your speech to your audience. Have you ever sat through a speech wondering what the basic point was? Have you ever come away after a speech and had no idea what the speaker was talking about? An introduction is important because it forces the speaker to be mindfully aware of explaining the topic of the speech to the audience. If the speaker doesn't know their topic and cannot convey that topic to the audience, then we've got really big problems! Robert Cavett, the founder of the National Speaker's Association, used the analogy of a preacher giving a sermon when he noted, "*When it's foggy in the pulpit, it's cloudy in the pews*."

As you previously learned, the specific purpose is the one idea you want your audience to remember when you are finished with your speech. Your specific purpose is the rudder that guides your research, organization, and development of main points. The more clearly focused your purpose is, the easier your task will be in developing your speech. In addition, a clear purpose provides the audience with a single, simple idea to remember even if they daydream during the body of your speech. To develop a specific purpose, you should complete the following sentence: "I want my audience to understand that…" Notice that your specific speech purpose is phrased in terms of expected audience responses, not in terms of your own perspective.

Establish Credibility

One of the most researched areas within the field of communication has been Aristotle's concept of *ethos* or credibility. First, and foremost, the concept of credibility must be understood as the perception of your listeners. You may be the most competent, caring, and trustworthy speaker in the world on a given topic, but if your audience does not *perceive* you as credible, then your expertise and passion will not matter. As public speakers, we need to make sure that we explain to our audiences why we are credible speakers on a given topic.

James C. McCroskey and Jason J. Teven have conducted extensive research on credibility and have determined that an individual's credibility is composed of three factors: competence,

trustworthiness, and goodwill[1]. **Competence** is the degree to which a speaker is perceived to be knowledgeable or expert in a given subject by an audience member. Some individuals are given expert status because of positions they hold in society. For example, Dr. Regina Benjamin, the US Surgeon General, is expected to be competent in matters related to health and wellness as a result of being the United States' top physician.

Regina Benjamin. Photo by Lawrence Jackson.

But what if you do not possess a fancy title that lends itself to established competence? You need to explain to the audience why you are competent to speak on your topic. Keep in mind that even well-known speakers are not perceived as universally credible. US Surgeon General Regina Benjamin may be seen as competent on health and wellness issues but may not be seen as a competent speaker on trends in Latin American music or different ways to cook summer squash. Like well-known speakers, you will need to establish your credibility on *each* topic you address. For example, if you are an undergraduate student and are delivering a speech about the importance of string theory in physics, unless you are a prodigy of some kind, you are probably not a recognized expert on the subject. Conversely, if your number one hobby in life is collecting memorabilia about the Three Stooges, then you may be an expert about the Three Stooges. However, you would need to explain to your audience your passion for collecting Three Stooges memorabilia and how this has made you an expert on the topic.

If, on the other hand, you are not actually a recognized expert on a topic, you need to demonstrate that you have done your homework to become more knowledgeable than your audience about your topic. The easiest way to demonstrate your competence is through the use of appropriate references from leading thinkers and researchers on your topic. When you demonstrate to your audience that you have done your homework, they are more likely to view you as competent.

The second characteristic of credibility, **trustworthiness**, is a little more complicated than competence, for it ultimately relies on audience perceptions. This factor of credibility noted by McCroskey and Teven, is the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as honest. One way to increase the likelihood that a speaker will be perceived as trustworthy is to use reputable sources. If you're quoting Dr. John Smith, you need to explain who Dr. John Smith is so your audience will see the quotation as being more

trustworthy. As speakers we can easily manipulate our sources into appearing more credible than they actually are, which would be unethical. When you are honest about your sources with your audience, they will trust you and your information more so than when you are ambiguous. Many speakers have attempted to lie to an audience because it will serve their own purposes or even because they believe their message is in their audience's best interest, but lying is one of the fastest ways to turn off an audience and get them to distrust both the speaker and the message. Not only is lying highly unethical, but if you are caught lying, your audience will deem you untrustworthy and perceive everything you are saying as untrustworthy. For example, in the summer of 2009, many Democratic members of Congress attempted to hold public town-hall meetings about health care. For a range of reasons, many of the people who attended these town-hall meetings refused to let their elected officials actually speak because the audiences were convinced that the Congressmen and Congresswomen were lying.

In these situations, where a speaker is in front of a very hostile audience, there is little a speaker can do to reestablish that sense of trustworthiness. These public town-hall meetings became screaming matches between the riled-up audiences and the congressional representatives. Some police departments actually ended up having to escort the representatives from the buildings because they feared for their safety. Check out this video from CNN.com to see what some of these events actually looked like: Hostile Town Hall Meeting. We hope that you will not be in physical danger when you speak to your classmates or in other settings, but these incidents serve to underscore how important speaker trustworthiness is across speaking contexts.

Goodwill is the final factor of credibility noted by McCroskey and Teven. **Goodwill** refers to the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as caring about the audience member. As noted by Wrench, McCroskey, and Richmond, "If a receiver does not believe that a source has the best intentions in mind for the receiver, the receiver will not see the source as credible. Simply

put, we are going to listen to people who we think truly care for us and are looking out for our welfare"[3]. As a speaker, then, you need to establish that your information is being presented because you care about your audience and are not just trying to manipulate them. We should note that research has indicated that goodwill is the most important factor of credibility. This means that if an audience believes that a speaker truly cares about the audience's best interests, the audience may overlook some competence and trust issues. One way to show that you have your audience's best interests in mind is to acknowledge disagreement from the start:

> *Today I'm going to talk about why I believe we should enforce stricter immigration laws in the United States. I realize that many of you will disagree with me on this topic. I used to believe that open immigration was necessary for the United States to survive and thrive, but after researching this topic, I've changed my mind. While I may not change all of your minds today, I do ask that you listen with an open mind, set your personal feelings on this topic aside, and judge my arguments on their merits.*

While clearly not all audience members will be open or receptive to opening their minds and listening to your arguments, by establishing that there is known disagreement, you are telling the audience that you understand their possible views and are not trying to attack their intellect or their opinions.

Provide Reasons to Listen

The fourth major function of an introduction is to establish a connection between the speaker and the audience, often described as relating to your audience. We call this the "why should I care?" part of your speech because it tells your audience why the topic is directly important to them. One of the most effective means of establishing a connection with your audience is to provide them with reasons why they should listen to your speech. The idea of establishing a connection is an extension of the notion of caring/goodwill. In the chapter on Speech Delivery, we'll spend a lot more time talking about how you can establish a good relationship with your audience. However, this relationship starts the moment you step to the front of the room to start speaking.

People in today's world are very busy, and they do not like their time wasted. Nothing is worse than having to sit through a speech that has nothing to do with you. Imagine sitting through a speech about a new software package you don't own and you will never hear of again. How would you react to the speaker? Most of us would be pretty annoyed at having had our time wasted in this way. Obviously, this particular speaker didn't do a great job of analyzing her or his audience if the audience isn't going to use the software package—but even when speaking on a topic that is highly relevant to the audience, speakers often totally forget to explain how and why it is important.

Instead of assuming the audience will make their own connections to your material, you should explicitly state how your information might be useful to your audience. Tell them directly how they might use your information themselves. It is not enough for you alone to be interested in your topic! You need to build a bridge to the audience by explicitly connecting your topic to their possible needs.

Stack of books. Photo by Min An.

Preview Main Ideas

The last major function of an introduction is to preview the main ideas that your speech will discuss. A preview establishes the direction your speech will take. In the most basic speech format, speakers generally have three to five major points they plan on making. During the preview, a speaker outlines what these points will be, which demonstrates to the audience that the speaker is organized.

Having a solid preview of the information contained within one's speech and then following that preview will definitely help a

speaker's credibility. It also helps your audience keep track of where you are if they momentarily daydream or get distracted.

The preview may also be called your *thesis statement*, that is, a summary of your main points. The preview or thesis statement explicitly states and summarizes your main points, to ensure your audience knows what to expect. A strong, clear thesis statement is valuable within an introduction because it lays out the basic goal of the entire speech. We strongly believe that it is worthwhile to invest some time in framing and writing a good thesis statement because it helps your audience by letting them know "in a nutshell" what you are going to talk about.

Attention-Getting Strategies

Now that we have discussed the five basic functions of the introduction, let's discuss potential attention-getting strategies. This is not an exhaustive list, and many of these attention getters can be combined or adapted to fit the needs of the speaker, the occasion and the audience. Regardless of the specific strategy used for the introduction, all introductions still need to meet the basic functions of an introduction.

> *You will get good attention and people will be more inclined to listen to you if you can make a statement whereby their response is…* "No *kidding!*" – Gael Boardman

Tell a Story

Humans love stories. In all cultures, stories are used to communicate and share values, traditions and knowledge. Rhetorician Walter Fisher[1] argues that human beings are best understood as *homo narrans*, as people who tell stories. As an introductory device, stories (and anecdotes and illustrations) are very effective attention getters.

First, stories have a built-in structure that everyone recognizes and expects. Stories have a beginning, middle and end, and this built-in structure allows the audience and the speaker to immediately share this experience.

Secondly, because this built-in structure, stories as attention getters lend themselves readily to a well- structured speech. You as speaker can start the story, get right to the climax, and then stop. You have the attention of the audience; you have shared

1. [2]
2. [4]

experiences with them; and now you also have the conclusion of the speech all set to go—the end of the story.

> *Speakers who talk about what life has taught them never fail to keep the attention of their listeners.* – Dale Carnegie

Refer to the Occasion

You are presenting this speech for a reason. The audience is present at this speech for a reason. These reasons can provide you with an effective attention getter. Referring to the occasion is often used as an introduction to tribute speeches, toasts, dedication ceremonies and historical events. Speech scholar Lloyd Bitzer[3] argues that all speeches are made at least in part in response to specific occasions, so referring to the occasion seems a good idea.

Bono, lead singer of the rock group U2 and an activist for a number of humanitarian issues, addressed the 54th annual National Prayer Breakfast, and started his speech with these words:

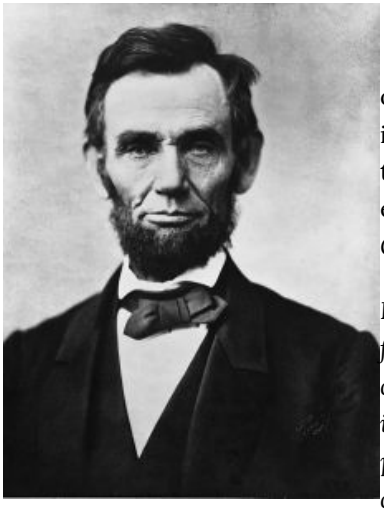
Well, thank you. Thank you, Mr. President, First Lady, King Abdullah of Jordan, Norm [Coleman], distinguished guests. Please join me in praying that I don't say something we'll all regret.[5]

3. [4]
4. [5]
5. [6]
6. [6]

"National Prayer Breakfast" by Paul Morse. Public domain.

Refer to Recent or Historical Events

In addition to referring to the occasion, another effective attention-getting device is to refer to current events or to historical events. This style of reference again helps to create a shared experience for the speaker and the audience, as the speaker reminds all present that they have these events in common. Additionally, referring to current or historical events can also help establish goodwill and personal credibility by demonstrating that the speaker is aware of the relationship between this particular speech and what is going on in the world at that time, or what has occurred in the past.



Abraham Lincoln (1863), in one of the most well-known speeches in American history, refers both to historical events and current events in the beginning of the *Gettysburg Address*:

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.

"Abraham Lincoln" by Alexander Gardner. Public domain.

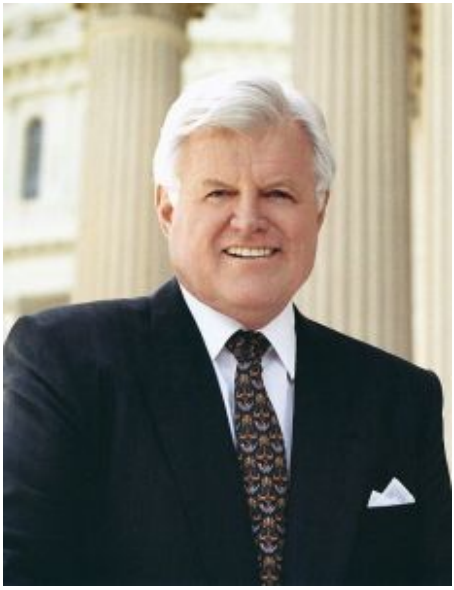
Refer to Previous Speeches

Most of you reading this material are doing so because you are in a public speaking or introductory communication class of some kind. And that means that most of you will be presenting your speeches right after someone else has presented. Even if you are not in a classroom situation, many other speaking situations (such as presenting at a city council or other government meeting or taking part in a forum or lecture series) result in speakers presenting right after another person has spoken.

In these situations, speakers before you may have already addressed some of the information you were planning to discuss, or perhaps have given a speech on the same topic you are now planning to address. By referring to the previous speeches, you enhance your credibility by showing your knowledge of the previous speech, and you have the opportunity to either compare or contrast your speech to the previous speeches (you could also demonstrate your listening skills).

Edward (Ted) Kennedy, at the 1980 Democratic National Convention, began his speech with a short tribute and acknowledgement to the previous speaker, member of Congress Barbara Mikulski:

Thanks very much, Barbara Mikulski, for your very eloquent, your eloquent introduction. Distinguished legislator, great spokeswoman for economic democracy and social justice in this country, I thank you for your eloquent introduction.



"Ted Kennedy, Senator from Massachusetts" by United States Senate. Public domain.

Refer to Personal Interest

One of the key considerations in choosing an appropriate topic for your speech is that you have a personal interest in that topic. An effective attention getter then, can be your description of that personal interest. By noting your personal interest, you will

demonstrate your credibility by showing your knowledge and experience with this topic, and because you have a personal interest, you are more likely to present this information in a lively and clear manner—again, enhancing your credibility. Referring to your personal interest in this topic in the introduction also helps you set the stage for additional anecdotes or examples from your personal experience later in the speech.

In speaking at the 1992 Democratic National Convention, Elizabeth Glaser began her speech by acknowledging her very personal interest in the topic:

I'm Elizabeth Glaser. 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.[1]

Use Startling Statistics

Startling statistics startle an audience and catch its attention and encourage that audience to listen further as you present the context of the surprising statistic. Long-time radio announcer Paul Harvey is well known for the catch phrase "And now, the rest of the story." The same function should be at work here. When you startle the audience, you set them up to want to hear the "rest of the story."

Be careful, though. Use of startling statistics requires that you do a number of things. First, make sure the statistic is accurate. Second, make sure the statistic is relevant to the topic of the speech.

1. [2]
2. [7]

Startling an audience with an irrelevant statistic diminishes the speech and decreases your credibility. Third, make sure you then present "the rest of the story." You need to place this startling statistic in the context of your speech so that everything fits together.

One speaker used an effective startling statistic to help introduce a speech on the dangers of heart disease:

According to the Center for Disease Control, in the United States 26.6 million adults have heart disease. This would be about 12% of adults, or three people in this room.

Use an Analogy

Analogies compare something that your audience knows and understands with something new and different. For your speech, then, you can use an **analogy** to show a connection between your speech topic (something new and different for the audience) and something that is known by your audience.

"Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes" by National Photo Company. Public domain.

One very common (and often misquoted) analogy comes from the 1919 Supreme Court case of *Schenck v United States*. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes used this analogy to support his reasoning that some forms of expression can be suppressed because they present a "clear and present danger." Holmes noted that "[t]he most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic."[3]

3. [4]
4. [8]

Use a Quotation

Using a quotation from a well-known figure or using a quotation from a lesser-known figure if the quotation is particularly suitable for your speech topic, is a common attention-getting technique. When you quote that well-known figure, you are in a sense, borrowing some of that person's credibility for your speech, enhancing your credibility with the audience. Even when you use a less than well-known figure, the quotation can be effective if it nicely sets up
your speech topic and is something to which your audience can relate.

Be careful with quotations, however. First, just using the quotation is not sufficient. You need to place the quotation in the context of your speech (as well as meet the other required functions of an introduction, of course). Second, it is easy to fall into a bad (and somewhat lazy) habit of simply finding a quotation and using it to start every speech. Third, simply using a quotation is no guarantee that your audience will find that quotation interesting or apt for the speech and may also find the author of the quotation to be lacking in credibility—or your audience may simply not like the author of the quotation. Finally, beware of overly- long quotations (three or more sentences): Remember, this is just part of the introduction, not a main point of the speech.

"Reagan farewell salute" by White House Photographic Office. Public domain.

In his farewell address, former President Ronald Reagan (1989) utilized a very short quotation to emphasize his feelings upon leaving office.

People ask how I feel about leaving. And the fact is, "parting is such sweet sorrow." The sweet part is California and the ranch and freedom. The sorrow — the goodbyes, of course, and leaving this beautiful place.

Ask a Question

Using rhetorical questions in speeches is a great way to keep the audience involved. Don't you think those kinds of questions would keep your attention? – Bo Bennett

The use of questions can be a very effective way to get attention, whether those questions are rhetorical in nature, and are only meant to be considered and pondered by the audience or are meant

to be answered by the audience (generally a good technique to get audience involvement and interest).

Rhetorical questions are designed to allow you as speaker to get the audience to think about your topic without actually speaking the answer to the question. Rhetorical questions allow you as speaker to maintain the most control over a speech situation and allow you to guard against an inappropriate or even offensive response.

Using questions that ask for real responses, however, has additional benefits, if a speaker feels comfortable with the audience, and is able to handle some impromptu situations. Getting the audience to physically and verbally involve themselves in your topic guarantees that they're paying attention. Using questions that lead to positive answers can also enhance your connection to and credibility with the audience.

Starting a speech with a question whether rhetorical or actual does require thought and practice on your part. You need to carefully consider the question and possible answers. Remember—even if you think the question is rhetorical, your audience may not know this and may answer the question. You also need to carefully deliver the question. Too often, speakers will use a question as an introduction—but then give the audience no time to either think about the answer or answer the question. You need to use timing and pause when starting with a question. You also need to be careful to use eye contact in asking questions, since you are above all asking for audience involvement, and your eye contact requests that involvement.

> *It is not enough for me to ask questions; I want to know how to answer the one question that seems to encompass everything I face: What am I here for?* – Abraham Joshua Heschel

In 1992, Ross Perot selected a little-known retired military figure, Admiral James Stockdale, as his Vice-Presidential running mate. In the fall debates, Stockdale began his opening statement with two questions: "Who am I? Why am I here?" (Stockdale, 1992). The questions received applause and also laughter, though the later

reaction to these questions was mixed at best. Some saw this as confusion on the part of Stockdale.[5] Stockdale considered these two questions to illustrate his difference from the other two "mainstream" candidates, Al Gore and then Vice President Dan Quayle. Traditional politicians, Gore and Quayle were readily recognized as compared to Stockdale.

"Audience enjoy Stallman's jokes" by Wikimania2009 and Damiu00e1n Buonamico. CC-BY.

5. [6]
6. [9]

Use Humor

The use of humor in an introduction can be one of the most effective types of introductions—if done well. Humor can create a connection between the speaker and audience, can get an audience relaxed and in a receptive frame of mind, and can allow an audience to perceive the speaker (and the topic) in a positive light.

Humor done badly can destroy the speech and ruin a speaker's credibility.

So first, a word of warning: None of us (those reading this, those teaching this class, and those writing this) are as funny as we think we are. If we were that funny, we would be making our living that way. Humor is hard. Humor can backfire. Humor is to a large extent situation bound. Most likely, there will be a number of members of your audience who do not use English as a first language (there are plenty of people reading this who are English as a Second Language learners). Much humor requires a native understanding of English. Most likely, there will be a number of people in your audience who do not share your cultural upbringing—and humor is often culture-bound. Be careful with humor.

In general, there is basically only one safe and suitable style of humor: light and subtle self-deprecation. In other words, you as speaker are the only really safe subject for humor.

Using humor to tell stories about other people, other groups, and even other situations, may work—but it is just as likely to offend those people, members of those groups, and people in that situation. Using self-deprecating humor will not offend others, but unless you can do this with a light and subtle touch, you may be harming your credibility rather than creating a connection between yourself and the audience.

"Ann Richards" by Kenneth C. Zirkel. CC-BY-SA.

Now, with all these warnings, you may want to stay far away from humor as an introduction. Humor can work, however.

Ann Richards, at the 1988 Democratic National Convention, used humor in the introduction to her Keynote Address. Knowing the audience, Richards was able to use partisan humor to establish a connection to the audience and score points against the political opposition.

I'm delighted to be here with you this evening, because after listening to George Bush all these years, I figured you needed to know what a real Texas accent sounds like.

Steps of a Conclusion

Matthew Culnane – Steps – CC BY-SA 2.0.

Signal the Ending

Letting your audience know that the conclusion is coming is the first step in a powerful conclusion. When we show the audience we have come to the end, we ensure that our speech end is intentional, and not abrupt. Suppose your purpose was, "I will analyze Barack Obama's use of lyricism in his July 2008 speech, 'A World That Stands as One.'" You could start your conclusion with "In the past few minutes, I have analyzed Barack Obama's use of lyricism in his July 2008 speech, 'A World That Stands as One.'" Notice the shift in tense: the statement has gone from the future tense (this is what I will speak about) to the past tense (this is what I have spoken about). Not only does this remind them of the major purpose or goal of your speech, but it ushers in a memorable conclusion.

You may have used the line "In Conclusion" as a signal when writing an essay for your English class. While certainly a signal, this is a cliché phrase that you may want to avoid, using more creative means to signal the end.

Review of Main Points

Once you have stated the main idea of your speech, the second step in a powerful conclusion is to review the main points from your speech. One of the biggest differences between written and oral communication is the necessity of repetition in oral

communication. When we preview our main points in the introduction, effectively discuss and make transitions to our main points during the body of the speech, and finally, review the main points in the conclusion, we increase the likelihood that the audience will retain our main points after the speech is over.

In the introduction of a speech, we deliver a *preview* of our main body points, and in the conclusion, we deliver a *review*. Let's look at a sample preview:

> *In order to understand the field of gender and communication, I will first differentiate between the terms biological sex and gender. I will then explain the history of gender research in communication. Lastly, I will examine a series of important findings related to gender and communication.*

In this preview, we have three clear main points. Let's see how we can review them at the conclusion of our speech:

> *Today, we have differentiated between the terms biological sex and gender, examined the history of gender research in communication, and analyzed a series of research findings on the topic.*

> *In the past few minutes, I have explained the difference between the terms "biological sex" and "gender," discussed the rise of gender research in the field of communication, and examined a series of groundbreaking studies in the field.*

Notice that both of these conclusions review the main points originally set forth. Both variations are equally effective reviews of the main points, but you might like the linguistic turn of one over the other. Remember, while there is a lot of science to help us understand public speaking, there's also a lot of art as well, so you are always encouraged to choose the wording that you think will be most effective for your audience.

Concluding Devices

The final part of a powerful conclusion is the concluding device. A concluding device is essentially the final thought you want your audience members to have when you stop speaking. It also provides a definitive sense of closure to your speech. Imagine the summer Olympics and you're watching your favorite gymnast. You could make the analogy between a gymnast's dismount and the concluding device in a speech. Just as a gymnast dismounting the parallel bars or balance beam wants to stick the landing and avoid taking two or three steps, a speaker wants to "stick" the ending of the presentation by ending with a concluding device instead of with, "Well, umm, I guess I'm done." Miller observed that speakers tend to use one of ten concluding devices when ending a speech (Miller, 1946). The rest of this section will examine these ten concluding devices.

Conclude with a Challenge

The first way that Miller found that some speakers end their speeches is with a challenge. A challenge is a call to engage in some kind of activity that requires a contest or special effort. In a speech on the necessity of fund-raising, a speaker could conclude by challenging the audience to raise 10 percent more than their original projections. In a speech on eating more vegetables, you could challenge your audience to increase their current intake of vegetables by two portions daily. In both of these challenges, audience members are being asked to go out of their way to do something different that involves effort on their part.

Conclude with a Quotation

A second way you can conclude a speech is by reciting a quotation relevant to the speech topic. When using a quotation, you need to think about whether your goal is to end on a persuasive note or an informative note. Some quotations will have a clear call to action, while other quotations summarize or provoke thought. For example, let's say you are delivering an informative speech about dissident writers in the former Soviet Union. You could end by citing this quotation from Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "A *great writer is, so to speak, a second government in his country. And for that reason,*

no regime has ever loved great writers" (Solzhenitsyn, 1964). Notice that this quotation underscores the idea of writers as dissidents, but it doesn't ask listeners to put forth effort to engage in any specific thought process or behavior. If, on the other hand, you were delivering a persuasive speech urging your audience to participate in a very risky political demonstration, you might use this quotation from Martin Luther King Jr.: "*If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live*" (King, 1963). In this case, the quotation leaves the audience with the message that great risks are worth taking, that they make our lives worthwhile, and that the right thing to do is to go ahead and take that great risk.

Conclude with a Summary

When speakers end with a summary, they are simply elongating the review of the main points. While this may not be the most exciting concluding device, it can be useful for information that was highly technical or complex or for speeches lasting longer than thirty minutes. Typically, for short speeches (like those in your class), this summary device should be avoided.

Conclude by Visualizing the Future

The purpose of a conclusion that refers to the future is to help your audience imagine the future you believe can occur. If you are giving a speech on the development of video games for learning, you could conclude by depicting the classroom of the future where video games are perceived as true learning tools and how those tools could be utilized. More often, speakers use visualization of the future to depict how society would be, or how individual listeners' lives would be different, if the speaker's persuasive attempt worked. For example, if a speaker proposes that a solution to illiteracy is hiring more reading specialists in public schools, the speaker could ask the audience to imagine a world without illiteracy. In this use of visualization, the goal is to persuade people to adopt the speaker's point of view. By showing that the speaker's vision of the future is a positive one, the conclusion should help to persuade the audience to help create this future.

Man in the mirror. Photo by Photo by Ketut Subiyanto.

Conclude with an Appeal for Action

Probably the most common persuasive concluding device is the appeal for action or the call to action. In essence, the appeal for action occurs when a speaker asks the audience to engage in a specific behavior or change in thinking. When a speaker concludes by asking the audience "to do" or "to think" in a specific manner, the speaker wants to see an actual change. Whether the speaker appeals for people to eat more fruit, buy a car, vote for a candidate, oppose the death penalty, or sing more in the shower, the speaker is asking the audience to engage in action.

One specific type of appeal for action is the immediate call to action. Whereas some appeals ask for people to engage in behavior in the future, the immediate call to action asks people to engage in behavior right now. If a speaker wants to see a new traffic light placed at a dangerous intersection, they may conclude by asking all the audience members to sign a digital petition right then and there, using a computer the speaker has made available (http://www.petitiononline.com). Here are some more examples of immediate calls to action:

- In a speech on eating more vegetables, pass out raw veggies and dip at the conclusion of the speech.
- In a speech on petitioning a lawmaker for a new law, provide audience members with a prewritten e-mail they can send to the lawmaker.
- In a speech on the importance of using hand sanitizer, hand out little bottles of hand sanitizer and show audience members how to correctly apply the sanitizer.
- In a speech asking for donations for a charity, send a box around the room asking for donations.

These are just a handful of different examples we've actually seen students use in our classrooms to elicit an immediate change in behavior. These immediate calls to action may not lead to long-term change, but they can be very effective at increasing the likelihood that an audience will change behavior in the short term.

Advocate. Photo by Lara Jameson.

Conclude by Inspiration

By definition, the word inspire means to affect or arouse someone. Both affect and arouse have strong emotional connotations. The ultimate goal of an inspiration concluding device is similar to an "appeal for action" but the ultimate goal is more lofty or ambiguous; the goal is to stir someone's emotions in a specific manner. Maybe a speaker is giving an informative speech on the prevalence of domestic violence in our society today. That speaker could end the speech by reading Paulette Kelly's powerful poem "I Got Flowers Today." "I Got Flowers Today" is a poem that evokes strong emotions because it's about an abuse victim who received flowers from her abuser every time she was victimized. The poem ends by saying, "I got flowers today… / Today was a special day—it was the day of my funeral / Last night he killed me" (Kelly, 1994).

Conclude with Advice

The next concluding device is one that should be used primarily by speakers who are recognized as expert authorities on a given subject. Advice is essentially a speaker's opinion about what should or should not be done. The problem with opinions is that everyone has one-, and one-person's opinion is not necessarily any more correct than another's. There needs to be a really good reason

your opinion—and therefore your advice—should matter to your audience. If, for example, you are an expert in nuclear physics, you might conclude a speech on energy by giving advice about the benefits of nuclear energy.

Conclude by Proposing a Solution

Another way a speaker can conclude a speech powerfully is to offer a solution to the problem discussed within a speech. For example, perhaps a speaker has been discussing the problems associated with the disappearance of art education in the United States. The speaker could then propose a solution of creating more community-based art experiences for school children as a way to fill this gap. Although this can be an effective conclusion, a speaker must reflect upon whether the solution should be discussed in more depth as a stand-alone main point within the body of the speech, so that audience concerns about the proposed solution may be addressed.

Conclude with a Question

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

Conclude with a Reference to Audience

The last concluding device discussed by Miller (1946) was a reference to one's audience. This concluding device is when a speaker attempts to answer the basic audience question, "What's in it for me?" The goal of this concluding device is to spell out the direct benefits a behavior or thought change has for audience members. For example, a speaker talking about stress reduction techniques could conclude by clearly listing all the physical health

benefits stress reduction offers (e.g., improved reflexes, improved immune system, improved hearing, reduction in blood pressure). In this case, the speaker is clearly spelling out why audience members should care—what's in it for them!

Informative versus Persuasive Conclusions

As you read through the possible ways to conclude a speech, hopefully you noticed that some of the methods are more appropriate for persuasive speeches and others are more appropriate for informative speeches. To help you choose appropriate conclusions for informative, persuasive, or entertaining speeches, we've created a table — Table 11.1 — to help you quickly identify appropriate concluding devices. Additionally, you may have noticed the concluding devices were similar to the introductory devices. This is not a mistake! Ending your speech in the same way you began can bring uniformity to your speech, making it feel "full circle."

Table 10.1 Your Speech Purpose and Concluding Devices

Types of Concluding Devices	**General Purposes of Speeches**	
	Informative	*Persuasive*
Challenge		x
Quotation	x	x
Summary	x	x
Visualizing the Future	x	x
Appeal		x
Inspirational	x	x
Advice		x
Proposal of Solution		x
Question	x	x
Reference to Audience		x

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A Note about Outlining Your Speech

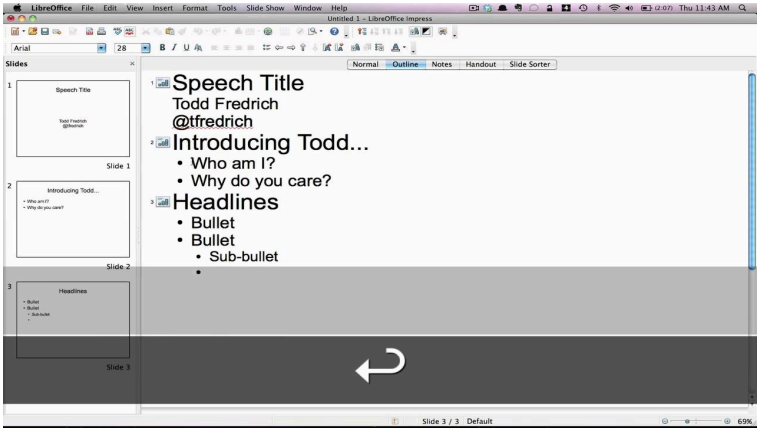
KATIE GRUBER

Have you ever made a grocery list before visiting the grocery store? Have you ever been to the grocery store without one? Lists can be helpful in a successful grocery visit, ensuring you pick up all your necessities. Let's say you need milk, eggs, bread, pasta, toothpaste, green beans, yogurt, chicken, cheese, bananas, carrots, shampoo, avocadoes, Pop-tarts, cereal, coffee, and soda. If you organized your list by department – Produce, Meats, Dairy, Pre-packaged foods, and Toiletries – and then listed your items according to their department, you would be one organized shopper!

Believe it or not, a speech outline is like a grocery list. To ensure effective speech delivery, we must organize our thoughts and research. The following chapter will discuss how to organize your thoughts into a coherent speech outline.

Chapter Eleven – Outlining the Speech

Why Outline?



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Most speakers and audience members would agree that an organized speech is both easier to present as well as more effective. Public speaking teachers especially believe in the power of organizing your speech, which is why they encourage (and often require) that you create an outline for your speech. **Outlines**, or textual arrangements of all the various elements of a speech, are a very common way of organizing a speech before it is delivered. Most extemporaneous speakers keep a brief outline with them during the speech as a way to ensure that they do not leave out any important elements and to keep them on track. Writing an outline is also important to the speechwriting process since doing so forces speakers to think about the main points and sub-points, the examples they wish to include, and the ways in which these elements correspond to one another. In short, the outline functions both as an organization tool and as a reference for delivering a speech.

A full-sentence outline lays a strong foundation for your message.

It will call on you to have one clear and specific purpose for your message. As we have seen in other chapters of this book, writing your specific purpose in clear language serves you well:

It helps you frame a clear, concrete thesis statement.

It helps you exclude irrelevant information.

It helps you focus only on information that directly bears on your thesis.

It reduces the amount of research you must do.

It helps both you and your audience remember the central message of your speech.

It suggests what kind of supporting evidence is needed, so less effort is expended in trying to figure out what to do next.

Finally, a solid full-sentence outline helps your audience understand your message because they will be able to follow your reasoning. Remember that live audiences for oral communications lack the ability to "rewind" your message to figure out what you said, so it is critically important to help the audience follow your reasoning as it reaches their ears.

Your authors have noted among their past and present students a reluctance to write full-sentence outlines. It's a task too often perceived as busywork, unnecessary, time consuming, and restricted. On one hand, we understand that reluctance. But on the other hand, we find that students who carefully write a full-sentence outline show a stronger tendency to give powerful presentations of excellent messages.

Outlines Test the Scope of Content

When you begin with a clear, concrete thesis statement, it acts as kind of compass for your outline. Each of the main points should directly explicate. The test of the scope will be a comparison of each main point to the thesis statement. If you find a poor match, you will know you've wandered outside the scope of the thesis.

Let's say the general purpose of your speech is to inform, and your broad topic area is wind-generated energy. Now you must narrow this to a specific purpose. You have many choices, but let's say your specific purpose is to inform a group of property owners about the economics of wind farms where electrical energy is generated.

Your first main point could be that modern windmills require a very small land base, making the cost of real estate low. This is directly related to economics. All you need is information to support your claim that only a small land base is needed.

In 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 thesis. You must resist the temptation to add it. Perhaps in another speech, your thesis will address environmental impact, but in this speech, you must stay within the economic scope. Perhaps you will say that once windmills are in place, they require virtually no maintenance. This claim is related to the thesis. Now all you need is supporting information to support this second claim.

Your third point, the point some audience members will want to hear, is the cost for generating electrical energy with windmills compared with other sources. This is clearly within the scope of energy economics. You should have no difficulty finding authoritative sources of information to support that claim.

When you write in outline form, it is much easier to test the scope

of your content because you can visually locate specific information very easily and then check it against your thesis statement.

Outlines Test the Logical Relation of Parts

You have many choices for your topic, and therefore, there are many ways your content can be logically organized. In the example above, we simply listed three main points that were important economic considerations about wind farms. Often the main points of a speech can be arranged into a logical pattern; let's review some of these patterns:

A **chronological** pattern arranges main ideas in the order events occur. In some instances, reverse order might make sense. For instance, if your topic is archaeology, you might use the reverse order, describing the newest artifacts first.

A **cause-and-effect** pattern calls on you to describe a specific situation and explain what the effect is. However, most effects have more than one cause. Even dental cavities have multiple causes: genetics, poor nutrition, teeth too tightly spaced, sugar, ineffective brushing, and so on. If you choose a cause-and-effect pattern, make sure you have enough reliable support to do the topic justice.

A **biographical** pattern is usually chronological. In describing the events of an individual's life, you will want to choose the three most significant events. Otherwise, the speech will end up as a very

lengthy and often pointless timeline or bullet point list. For example, Mark Twain had several clear phases in his life. They include his life as a Mississippi riverboat captain, his success as a world-renowned writer and speaker, and his family life. A simple timeline would present great difficulty in highlighting the relationships between important events. An outline, however, would help you emphasize the key events that contributed to Mark Twain's extraordinary life.

Although a **comparison-contrast** pattern appears to dictate just two main points, McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond explain how a comparison-and-contrast can be structured as a speech with three main points. They say that "you can easily create a third point by giving basic information about what is being compared and what is being contrasted. For example, if you are giving a speech about two different medications, you could start by discussing what the medications' basic purposes are. Then you could talk about the similarities, and then the differences, between the two medications"[1].

Whatever logical pattern you use, if you examine your thesis statement and then look at the three main points in your outline, you should easily be able to see the logical way in which they relate.

Outlines Test the Relevance of Supporting Ideas

When you create an outline, you can clearly see that you need

supporting evidence for each of your main points. For instance, using the example above, your first main point claims that less land is needed for windmills than for other utilities. Your supporting evidence should be about the amount of acreage required for a windmill and the amount of acreage required for other energy generation sites, such as nuclear power plants or hydroelectric generators. Your sources should come from experts in economics, economic development, or engineering. The evidence might even be expert opinion but not the opinions of ordinary people. The expert opinion will provide stronger support for your point.

Similarly, your second point claims that once a wind turbine is in place, there is virtually no maintenance cost. Your supporting evidence should show how much annual maintenance for a windmill costs, and what the costs are for other energy plants. If you used a comparison with nuclear plants to support your first main point, you should do so again for the sake of consistency. It becomes very clear, then, that the third main point about the amount of electricity and its profitability needs authoritative references to compare it to the profit from energy generated at a nuclear power plant. In this third main point, you should make use of just a few well-selected statistics from authoritative sources to show the effectiveness of wind farms compared to the other energy sources you've cited.

Where do you find the kind of information you would need to support these main points? A reference librarian can quickly guide you to authoritative statistics and help you make use of them.

An important step you will notice is that the full-sentence outline includes its authoritative sources within the text. This is a major departure from the way you've learned to write a research paper. In a research paper, you can add that information to the end of a sentence, leaving the reader to turn to the last page for a fuller citation. In a speech, however, your listeners can't do that. From the beginning of the supporting point, you need to fully cite your source so your audience can assess its importance.

Because this is such a profound change from the academic habits that you're probably used to, you will have to make a concerted

effort to overcome the habits of the past and provide the information your listeners need when they need it.

Outlines Test the Balance and Proportion of the Speech

Part of the value of writing a full-sentence outline is the visual space you use for each of your main points. Is each main point of approximately the same importance? Does each main point have the same number of supporting points? If you find that one of your main points 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 that you should use the best supporting evidence you can find even if it means investing more time in your search for knowledge.

As you write the preparation outline, you may find it necessary to rearrange your points or to add or subtract supporting material. You may also realize that some of your main points are sufficiently supported while others are lacking. The final draft of your preparation outline should include full sentences, making up a complete script of your entire speech. In most cases, however, the preparation outline is reserved for planning purposes only and is translated into a speaking outline before you deliver the speech.

Outlines Serve as Notes during the Speech

Although we recommend writing a full-sentence outline during the speech *preparation* phase, you should also create a shortened outline that you can use as notes, a *speaking outline*, which allows for strong delivery. If you were to use the full-sentence outline when delivering your speech, you would do a great deal of reading, which would limit your ability to give eye contact and use gestures, hurting your connection with your audience.

Although some cases call for reading a speech verbatim from the full-sentence outline (manuscript delivery), in most cases speakers will simply refer to their speaking outline for quick reminders and to ensure that they do not omit any important information. For this reason, we recommend writing a short phrase speaking outline on 5×7 notecards to use when you deliver your speech.

In the next section, we will explore more fully how to create preparation and speaking outlines.

Outline Structure

Because an outline is used to arrange all of the elements of your speech, it makes sense that the outline itself has an organizational hierarchy and a common format. Although there are a variety of outline styles, generally they follow the same pattern. Main ideas are preceded by Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.). Sub-points are preceded by capital letters (A, B, C, etc.), then Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.), and finally lowercase letters (a, b, c, etc.). Each level of subordination is also differentiated from its predecessor by indenting a few spaces. Indenting makes it easy to find your main points, sub-points, and the supporting points and examples below them. Since there are three sections to your speech— introduction, body, and conclusion— your outline needs to include all of them. Each of these sections is titled and the main points start with Roman numeral I.

OUTLINE FORMATTING GUIDE

Title: Organizing Your Public Speech

Topic: Organizing public speeches

Specific Purpose Statement: To inform my audience about the various ways in which they can organize their public speeches.

Thesis Statement: A variety of organizational styles can used to organize public speeches.

Introduction

Paragraph that gets the attention of the audience, establishes goodwill with the audience, states the purpose of the speech, and previews the speech and its structure.

(Transition)

Body

I. Main point

A. Sub-point
B. Sub-point
C. Sub-point

1. Supporting point
2. Supporting point

(Transition)

Conclusion
Paragraph that prepares the audience for the end of the speech, presents any final appeals, and summarizes and wraps up the speech.

Bibliography

In addition to these formatting suggestions, there are some additional elements that should be included at the beginning of your outline: the title, topic, specific purpose statement, and thesis statement. These elements are helpful to you, the speechwriter, since they remind you what, specifically, you are trying to accomplish in your speech. They are also helpful to anyone reading and assessing your outline since knowing what you want to accomplish will determine how they perceive the elements included in your outline. Additionally, you should write out the transitional

statements that you will use to alert audiences that you are moving from one point to another. These are included in parentheses between main points. At the end of the outlines, you should include bibliographic information for any outside resources you mention during the speech. These should be cited using whatever citations style your professor requires. The textbox entitled "Outline Formatting Guide" above provides an example of the appropriate outline format.

Preparation Outline Examples

This book contains the preparation outline for an informative speech the author gave about making guacamole (see third section). In this example, the title, specific purpose, and thesis precedes the speech. Depending on your instructor's requirements, you may need to include these details plus additional information (like visual aids). It is also a good idea to keep these details at the top of your document as you write the speech since they will help keep you on track to developing an organized speech that is in line with your specific purpose and helps prove your thesis. At the end of this text, in Part 3, you will find full-length examples of Preparation (Full Sentence) Outlines, written by students just like you!

Using the Speaking Outline

A **speaking outline** is the outline you will prepare for use when delivering the speech. The speaking outline is much more succinct than the preparation outline and includes brief phrases or words that remind the speakers of the points they need to make, plus supporting material and signposts.[1] The words or phrases used on the speaking outline should briefly encapsulate all of the information needed to prompt the speaker to accurately deliver the speech. Although some cases call for reading a speech verbatim from the full-sentence outline, in most cases speakers will simply refer to their speaking outline for quick reminders and to ensure that they do not omit any important information. Because it uses just words or short phrases, and not full sentences, the speaking outline can easily be transferred to index cards that can be referenced during a speech.

"TAG speaks of others first" by Texas Military Forces. CC-BY-ND.

Speaking instructors often have requirements for how you should format the speaking outline. When formatting your speaking outline, here are a few tips:

First, write large enough so that you do not have to bring the

1. [2]
2. [2]

cards close to your eyes to read them. Second, make sure you have the cards in the correct order and bound together in some way so that they do not get out of order. Third, just in case your cards do get out of order (this happens too often!), be sure that you number each in the top right corner so you can quickly and easily get things organized. Fourth, try not to fiddle with the cards when you are speaking. It is best to lay them down if you have a podium or table in front of you. If not, practice reading from them in front of a mirror. You should be able to look down quickly, read the text, and then return to your gaze to the audience.

> *Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex... It takes a touch of genius – and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction.* – Albert Einstein

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PART II
SPEECH DELIVERY

To this point, much of the content of this text has focused on speech *preparation.* All of these "behind the scenes" steps are critical to your success as a speaker. However, preparation is only a part of the speech process. At some point you must deliver the speech! As we discuss in the following chapters, speech delivery is a skill and, much like any skill, can be learned and improved with time and practice.

Once you have prepared, it's time to deliver your speech and finally, reflect on your performance. Only with reflection of our practice and performance do we improve.

Chapter Twelve – Language Use

Oral versus Written Language

Clemsonunivlibrary – group meeting – CC BY-NC 2.0.

When we use the word "language," we are referring to the words you choose to use in your speech—so by definition, our focus is on spoken language. Spoken language has always existed prior to written language. Wrench, McCroskey, and Richmond suggested that if you think about the human history of language as a twelve-inch ruler, written language or recorded language has only existed for the "last quarter of an inch"[1]. Furthermore, of the more than six thousand languages that are spoken around the world today, only a minority of them actually use a written alphabet[2]. To help us understand the importance of language, we will first look at the basic functions of language and then delve into the differences between oral and written language.

Basic Functions of Language

Language is any formal system of gestures, signs, sounds, and symbols used or conceived as a means of communicating thought. As mentioned above, there are over six thousand language schemes currently in use around the world. The language spoken by the greatest number of people on the planet is Mandarin; other widely spoken languages are English, Spanish, and Arabic[3]. Language is ultimately important because it is the primary means through which humans have the ability to communicate and interact with one another. Some linguists go so far as to suggest that the acquisition of language skills is the primary advancement that enabled our prehistoric ancestors to flourish and succeed over other hominid species[4].

In today's world, effective use of language helps us in our interpersonal relationships at home and at work. Using language effectively also will improve your ability to be an effective public speaker. Because language is an important aspect of public speaking that many students don't spend enough time developing, we encourage you to take advantage of this chapter.

One of the first components necessary for understanding language is to understand how we assign meaning to words. Words consist of sounds (oral) and shapes (written) that have agreed-upon meanings based in concepts, ideas, and memories. When we write the word "blue," we may be referring to a portion of the visual spectrum dominated by energy with a wavelength of roughly 440–490 nanometers. You could also say that the color in question is an equal mixture of both red and green light. While both of these are technically correct ways to interpret the word "blue," we're pretty sure that neither of these definitions is how you thought about the word. When hearing the word "blue," you may have thought of your favorite color, the color of the sky on a spring day, or the color of a really ugly car you saw in the parking lot.

When people think about language, there are two different types of meanings that people must be aware of: denotative and connotative.

Denotative Meaning

The **denotative** meaning is the specific meaning associated with a word. We sometimes refer to denotative meanings as dictionary definitions. The definitions provided above for the word "blue" are examples of definitions that might be found in a dictionary. The first dictionary was written by Robert Cawdry in 1604 and was called *Table Alphabeticall*. This dictionary of the English language consisted of three thousand commonly spoken English words. Today, the *Oxford English Dictionary* contains more than 200,000 words[6].

Connotative Meaning

The **connotative** meaning is the idea suggested by or associated

with a word. In addition to the examples above, the word "blue" can evoke many other ideas:

- State of depression (feeling blue)
- Indication of winning (a blue ribbon)
- Side during the Civil War (blues vs. grays)
- Sudden event (out of the blue)

We also associate the color blue with the sky and the ocean. Maybe your school's colors or those of your archrival include blue. There are also various forms of blue: aquamarine, baby blue, navy blue, royal blue, and so on.

Some miscommunication can occur over denotative meanings of words. For example, a flyer for a tennis center open house expressed the goal of introducing children to the game of tennis. At the bottom of the flyer, people were encouraged to bring their own racquets if they had them but that "a limited number of racquets will be available." It turned out that the denotative meaning of the final phrase was interpreted in multiple ways: some parents attending the event perceived it to mean that loaner racquets would be available for use during the open house event, but the people running the open house intended it to mean that parents could purchase racquets onsite. The confusion over denotative meaning probably hurt the tennis center, as some parents left the event feeling they had been misled by the flyer.

Although denotatively based misunderstanding such as this one do happen, the majority of communication problems involving language occur because of differing connotative meanings. You may be trying to persuade your audience to support public funding for a new professional football stadium in your city, but if mentioning the team's or owner's name creates negative connotations in the minds of audience members, you will not be very persuasive. The potential for misunderstanding based in connotative meaning is an additional reason why audience analysis, discussed earlier in this book, is critically important. By conducting effective audience

analysis, you can know in advance how your audience might respond to the connotations of the words and ideas you present. Connotative meanings can not only differ between individuals interacting at the same time but also differ greatly across time periods and cultures. Ultimately, speakers should attempt to have a working knowledge of how their audiences could potentially interpret words and ideas to minimize the chance of miscommunication.

Twelve Ways Oral and Written Language Differ

A second important aspect to understand about language is that oral language (used in public speaking) and written language (used for texts) does not function the same way. Try a brief experiment. Take a textbook, maybe even this one, and read it out loud. When the text is read aloud, does it sound conversational? Probably not. Public speaking, on the other hand, should sound like a conversation. McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond highlighted the following twelve differences that exist between oral and written language:

1. Oral language has a smaller variety of words.
2. Oral language has words with fewer syllables.
3. Oral language has shorter sentences.

4. Oral language has more self-reference words (*I*, *me*, *mine*).
5. Oral language has fewer quantifying terms or precise numerical words.
6. Oral language has more pseudo-quantifying terms (*many*, *few*, *some*).
7. Oral language has more extreme and superlative words (*none*, *all*, *every*, *always*, *never*).
8. Oral language has more qualifying statements (clauses beginning with *unless* and *except*).
9. Oral language has more repetition of words and syllables.
10. Oral language uses more contractions.
11. Oral language has more interjections ("Wow!," "Really?," "No!," "You're kidding!").
12. Oral language has more colloquial and nonstandard words (McCroskey, et al., 2003).

These differences exist primarily because people listen to and read information differently. First, when you read information, if you don't grasp content the first time, you have the ability to reread a section. When we are listening to information, we do not have the ability to "rewind" life and relisten to the information. Second, when you read information, if you do not understand a concept, you can look up the concept in a dictionary or online and gain the knowledge easily. However, we do not always have the ability to walk around with the Internet and look up concepts we don't understand. Therefore, oral communication should be simple enough to be easily understood in the moment by a specific audience, without additional study or information.

Using Language Effectively

Kimba Howard – megaphone – CC BY 2.0.

When considering how to use language effectively in your speech, consider the degree to which the language is appropriate, vivid, inclusive, and familiar. The next sections define each of these aspects of language and discuss why each is important in public speaking.

Use Appropriate Language

As with anything in life, there are positive and negative ways of using language. One of the first concepts a speaker needs to think about when looking at language use is appropriateness. By appropriate, we mean whether the language is suitable or fitting for ourselves, as the speaker; our audience; the speaking context; and the speech itself.

Appropriate for the Speaker

One of the first questions to ask yourself is whether the language you plan on using in a speech fits with your own speaking pattern. Not all language choices are appropriate for all speakers. The language you select should be suitable for you, not someone else. If you're a first-year college student, there's no need to force yourself to sound like an astrophysicist even if you are giving a speech on new planets. One of the biggest mistakes novice speakers make is thinking that they have to use million-dollar words because it makes them sound smarter. Actually, million-dollar words don't tend to function well in oral communication to begin with, so using them will probably make you uncomfortable as a speaker. Also, it may be difficult for you or the audience to understand the nuances of meaning when you use such words, so using them can increase the risk of denotative or connotative misunderstandings.

Appropriate for the Audience

The second aspect of appropriateness asks whether the language you are choosing is appropriate for your specific audience. Let's say that you're an engineering student. If you're giving a presentation in an engineering class, you can use language that other engineering students will know. On the other hand, if you use that engineering vocabulary in a public speaking class, many audience members will not understand you. As another example, if you are speaking about the Great Depression to an audience of young adults, you can't assume they will know the meaning of terms like "New Deal" and "WPA," which would be familiar to an audience of senior citizens. In other chapters of this book, we have explained the importance of audience analysis; once again, audience analysis is a key factor in choosing the language to use in a speech.

Appropriate for the Context

The next question about appropriateness is whether the language you will use is suitable or fitting for the context itself. The language you may employ if you're addressing a student assembly in a high school auditorium will differ from the language you would use at a business meeting in a hotel ballroom. If you're giving a speech at an outdoor rally, you cannot use the same language you would use in a classroom. Recall that the speaking context includes the occasion, the time of day, the mood of the audience, and other factors in addition to the physical location. Take the entire speaking context into consideration when you make the language choices for your speech.

Appropriate for the Topic

The fourth and final question about the appropriateness of language involves whether the language is appropriate for your specific topic. If you are speaking about the early years of The Walt Disney Company, would you want to refer to Walt Disney as a "thaumaturgic" individual (i.e., one who works wonders or miracles)? While the word "thaumaturgic" may be accurate, is it the most appropriate for the topic at hand? As another example, if your speech topic is the dual residence model of string theory, it makes

sense to expect that you will use more sophisticated language than if your topic was a basic introduction to the physics of, say, sound or light waves.

Use Vivid Language

After appropriateness, the second main guideline for using language is to use **vivid language**. Vivid language helps your listeners create strong, distinct, clear, and memorable mental images. Good vivid language usage helps an audience member truly understand and imagine what a speaker is saying. Two common ways to make your speaking more vivid are through the use of imagery and rhythm.

Imagery

Imagery is the use of language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. The goal of imagery is to help an audience member create

a mental picture of what a speaker is saying. A speaker who uses imagery successfully will tap into one or more of the audience's five basic senses (hearing, taste, touch, smell, and sight). Three common tools of imagery are concreteness, simile, and metaphor.

Concreteness

We have previously discussed the importance of concrete language. When we use language that is concrete, we attempt to help our audiences see specific realities or actual instances instead of abstract theories and ideas. The goal of concreteness is to help you, as a speaker, show your audience something instead of just telling them. Imagine you've decided to give a speech on the importance of freedom. You could easily stand up and talk about the philosophical work of Rudolf Steiner, who divided the ideas of freedom into freedom of thought and freedom of action. If you're like us, even reading that sentence can make you want to go to sleep. Instead of defining what those terms mean and discussing the philosophical merits of Steiner, you could use real examples where people's freedom to think or freedom to behave has been stifled. For example, you could talk about how Afghani women under Taliban rule have been denied access to education, and how those seeking education have risked public flogging and even execution[7]. You could further illustrate how Afghani women under the Taliban are forced to adhere to rigid interpretations of Islamic law that functionally limit their behavior. As illustrations of the two freedoms discussed by Steiner, these examples make things more concrete for audience members and thus easier to remember. Ultimately, the

goal of concreteness is to show an audience something instead of talking about it abstractly.

Simile

Another form of imagery is **simile**. As you likely learned in English courses, a simile is a figure of speech in which two unlike things are explicitly compared. Both aspects being compared within a simile are able to remain separate within the comparison. The following are some examples:

- The thunderous applause was *like* a party among the gods.
- After the revelation, she was as angry *as* a raccoon caught in a cage.
- Love is *like* a battlefield.

When we look at these two examples, you'll see that two words have been italicized: "like" and "as." All similes contain either "like" or "as" within the comparison. Speakers use similes to help an audience understand a specific characteristic being described within the speech. In the first example, we are connecting the type of applause being heard to something supernatural, so we can imagine that the applause was huge and enormous. Now think how you would envision the event if the simile likened the applause to a mime convention—your mental picture changes dramatically, doesn't it?

To effectively use similes within your speech, first look for instances where you may already be finding yourself using the

words “like” or “as”—for example, “his breath smelled like a fishing boat on a hot summer day.” Second, when you find situations where you are comparing two things using “like” or “as,” examine what it is that you are actually comparing. For example, maybe you’re comparing someone’s breath to the odor of a fishing vessel. Lastly, once you see what two ideas you are comparing, check the mental picture for yourself. Are you getting the kind of mental image you desire? Is the image too strong? Is the image too weak? You can always alter the image to make it stronger or weaker depending on what your aim is.

Metaphor

The other commonly used form of imagery is the metaphor, or a figure of speech where a term or phrase is applied to something in a nonliteral way to suggest a resemblance. In the case of a metaphor, one of the comparison items is said to *be* the other (even though this is realistically not possible).

Metaphors are comparisons made by speaking of one thing in terms of another. **Similes** are similar to metaphors in how they function; however, similes make comparisons by using the word “like” or “as,” whereas metaphors do not. Let’s look at a few examples:

- Love is a *battlefield*.
- Upon hearing the charges, the accused *clammed up* and refused to speak without a lawyer.

- Every year a new *crop* of activists are *born*.

In these examples, the comparison word has been italicized. Let's think through each of these examples. In the first one, the comparison is the same as one of our simile examples except that the word "like" is omitted—instead of being *like* a battlefield, the metaphor states that love *is* a battlefield, and it is understood that the speaker does not mean the comparison literally. In the second example, the accused "clams up," which means that the accused refused to talk in the same way a clam's shell is closed. In the third example, we refer to activists as "crops" that arise anew with each growing season, and we use "born" figuratively to indicate that they come into being—even though it is understood that they are not newborn infants at the time when they become activists.

To use a metaphor effectively, first determine what you are trying to describe. For example, maybe you are talking about a college catalog that offers a wide variety of courses. Second, identify what it is that you want to say about the object you are trying to describe. Depending on whether you want your audience to think of the catalog as good or bad, you'll use different words to describe it. Lastly, identify the other object you want to compare the first one to, which should mirror the intentions in the second step. Let's look at two possible metaphors:

1. Students *groped* their way through the *maze* of courses in the catalog.
2. Students *feasted on* the *abundance* of courses in the catalog.

While both of these examples evoke comparisons with the course catalog, the first example is clearly more negative and the second is more positive.

One mistake people often make in using metaphors is to make two incompatible comparisons in the same sentence or line of thought. Here is an example:

- "That's awfully thin gruel for the right wing to hang their hats on."[9]

This is known as a mixed metaphor, and it often has an incongruous or even hilarious effect. Unless you are aiming to entertain your audience with fractured use of language, be careful to avoid mixed metaphors.

The power of a metaphor is in its ability to create an image that is linked to emotion in the mind of the audience.

For example, it is one thing to talk about racial injustice, it is quite another for the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to note that people have been "...battered by storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality." Throughout his "*I Have a Dream*" speech, the Reverend Dr. King uses the metaphor of the checking account to make his point.

He notes that the crowd has come to the March on Washington to "cash a check" and claims that America has "defaulted on this promissory note" by giving "the Negro people a bad check, a check that has come back "insufficient funds." By using checking and bank account terms that most people are familiar with, the Reverend Dr. King is able to more clearly communicate what he believes has occurred. In addition, the use of this metaphor acts as a sort of "shortcut." He gets his point across very quickly by comparing the problems of civil rights to the problems of a checking account.

In the same speech the Reverend Dr. King also makes use of similes, which also compare two things but do so using "like" or "as." In discussing his goals for the Civil Rights movement in his "I Have a Dream" speech, the Reverend Dr. exclaims: "No, no we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Similes also help make your message clearer by using ideas that are more concrete for your audience. For example, to give the audience an idea of what a winter day looked like you could note that the "snow looked as solid as pearls." To communicate sweltering heat, you could say that

"the tar on the road looked like satin." A simile most of us are familiar with is the notion of the United States being "like a melting pot" with regard to its diversity. We also often note that a friend or colleague that stays out of conflicts between friends is "like Switzerland." In each of these instances, similes have been used to more clearly and vividly communicate a message.

Rhythm

Our second guideline for effective language in a speech is to use rhythm. When most people think of rhythm, they immediately think about music. What they may not realize is that language is inherently musical; at least it can be. **Rhythm** refers to the patterned, recurring variance of elements of sound or speech. Whether someone is striking a drum with a stick or standing in front of a group speaking, rhythm is an important aspect of human communication. Think about your favorite public speaker. If you analyze their speaking pattern, you'll notice that there is a certain cadence to the speech. While much of this cadence is a result of the nonverbal components of speaking, some of the cadence comes from the language that is chosen as well. Let's examine types of rhythmic language: parallelism, antithesis, repetition, alliteration, and assonance.

Parallelism

When listing items in a sequence, audiences will respond more strongly when those ideas are presented in a grammatically parallel fashion, which is referred to as parallelism. For example, look at the following two examples and determine which one sounds better to you:

1. "Give me liberty or I'd rather die."
2. "Give me liberty or give me death."

Technically, you're saying the same thing in both, but the second one has better rhythm, and this rhythm comes from the parallel construction of "give me." The lack of parallelism in the first example makes the sentence sound disjointed and ineffective.

Antithesis

Antithesis allows you to use contrasting statements in order to make a rhetorical point. Perhaps the most famous example of antithesis comes from the Inaugural Address of President John F. Kennedy when he stated, "And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." In Reverend Jackson's "*Rainbow Coalition*" speech he notes, "I challenge them to put hope in their brains and not dope in their veins." In each of these cases, the speakers have juxtaposed two competing ideas in one statement to make an argument in order to draw the listener's attention.

You're easy on the eyes — hard on the heart. – Terri Clark

Parallel Structure and Language

Antithesis is often worded using parallel structure or language. Parallel structure is the balance of two or more similar phrases or clauses, and parallel wording is the balance of two or more similar words. The Reverend Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech exemplifies both strategies in action. Indeed, the section where he repeats "I Have a Dream" over and over again is an example of the use of both parallel structure and language. The use of parallel structure and language helps your audience remember without beating them over the head with repetition. If worded and delivered carefully, you can communicate a main point over and over again, as did the Reverend Dr. King, and it doesn't seem as though you are simply repeating the same phrase over and over. You are often doing just that, of course, but because you are careful with your wording (it should be powerful and creative, not pedantic) and your delivery (the correct use of pause, volumes, and other elements of delivery), the audience often perceives the repetition as dramatic and memorable. The use of parallel language and structure can also help you when you are speaking persuasively. Through the use of these strategies, you can create a speech that takes your audience through a series of ideas or arguments that seem to "naturally" build to your conclusion.

Repetition

As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, one of the major differences between oral and written language is the use of repetition. Because

speeches are communicated orally, audience members need to hear the core of the message repeated consistently. Repetition as a linguistic device is designed to help audiences become familiar with a short piece of the speech as they hear it over and over again. By repeating a phrase during a speech, you create a specific rhythm. Probably the most famous and memorable use of repetition within a speech is Martin Luther King Jr.'s use of "I have a dream" in his speech at the Lincoln Memorial on August 1963 during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. In that speech, Martin Luther King Jr. repeated the phrase "I have a dream" eight times to great effect. If worded and delivered carefully, you can communicate a main point over and over again, as did the Reverend Dr. King, and it doesn't seem as though you are simply repeating the same phrase over and over. Because you are careful with your wording (it should be powerful and creative, not pedantic) and your delivery (the correct use of pause, volumes, and other elements of delivery), the audience often perceives the repetition as dramatic and memorable.

Alliteration

Another type of rhythmic language is alliteration or repeating two or more words in a series that begin with the same consonant. In the *Harry Potter* novel series, the author uses alliteration to name the four wizards who founded Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry: Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, and Salazar Slytherin. There are two basic types of alliteration: immediate juxtaposition and nonimmediate

juxtaposition. *Immediate juxtaposition* occurs when the consonants clearly follow one after the other—as we see in the *Harry Potter* example. *Nonimmediate juxtaposition* occurs when the consonants are repeated in nonadjacent words (e.g., "It is the **p**oison that we must **p**urge from our **p**olitics, the wall that we must tear down before the hour grows too late")[11]. Sometimes you can actually use examples of both immediate and nonimmediate juxtaposition within a single speech. The following example is from Bill Clinton's acceptance speech at the 1992 Democratic National Convention: "Somewhere at this very moment, a child is **b**eing **b**orn in America. Let it be our cause to give that child a **h**appy **h**ome, a **h**ealthy family, and a **h**opeful future"[7].

Assonance

Assonance is similar to alliteration, but instead of relying on consonants, assonance gets its rhythm from repeating the same vowel sounds with different consonants in the stressed syllables. The phrase "how now brown cow," which elocution students traditionally used to learn to pronounce rounded vowel sounds, is an example of assonance. While rhymes like "free as a breeze," "mad as a hatter," and "no pain, no gain" are examples of assonance, speakers should be wary of relying on assonance because when it is overused it can quickly turn into bad poetry.

Personalized Language

We're all very busy people. Perhaps you've got work, studying, classes, a job, and extracurricular activities to juggle. Because we are all so busy, one problem that speakers often face is trying to get their audience interested in their topic or motivated to care about their argument. A way to help solve this problem is through the use of language that personalizes your topic. Rather than saying, "One might argue" say "You might argue." Rather than saying "This could impact the country in ways we have not yet imagined," say "This could impact your life in ways that you have not imagined." By using language that directly connects your topic or argument to the audience you better your chances of getting your audience to listen and to be persuaded that your subject matter is serious and important to them. Using words like "us," "you," and "we" can be a subtle means of getting your audience to pay attention to your speech. Most people are most interested in things that they believe impact their lives directly—make those connections clear for your audience by using personal language.

Use Inclusive Language

Language can either inspire your listeners or turn them off very quickly. One of the fastest ways to alienate an audience is through the use of non-inclusive language. Inclusive language that avoids placing any one group of people above or below other groups while speaking. Let's look at some common problem areas related to

language about gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disabilities.

Gender-Specific Language

The first common form of non-inclusive language is language that privileges one of the sexes over the other. There are three common problem areas that speakers run into while speaking: using "he" as generic, using "man" to mean all humans, and gender typing jobs.

Generic "He"

The generic "he" happens when a speaker labels all people within a group as "he" when in reality there is a mixed sex group involved. Consider the statement, "Every morning when an officer of the law puts on his badge, he risks his life to serve and protect his fellow citizens." In this case, we have a police officer that is labeled as male four different times in one sentence. Obviously, all police officers

risk their lives when they put on their badges. A better way to word the sentence would be, "Every morning when officers of the law put on their badges, they risk their lives to serve and protect their fellow citizens." Notice that in the better sentence, we made the subject plural ("officers") and used neutral pronouns ("they" and "their") to avoid the generic "he."

Use of "Man"

Traditionally, speakers of English have used terms like "man," "mankind," and (in casual contexts) "guys" when referring to all genders. In the second half of the twentieth century, as society became more aware of gender bias in language, organizations like the National Council of Teachers of English developed guidelines for nonsexist language (National Council of Teachers of English, 2002). For example, instead of using the word "man," you could refer to the "human race." Instead of saying, "hey, guys," you could say, "OK, everyone." By using gender-fair language you will be able to convey your meaning just as well, and you won't risk alienating a portion of your audience.

Gender-Typed Jobs

The last common area where speakers get into trouble with gender and language has to do with job titles. It is not unusual for people to assume, for example, that doctors are male and nurses are female. As a result, they may say "she is a woman doctor" or "he is a male nurse" when mentioning someone's occupation, perhaps not realizing that the statements "she is a doctor" and "he is a nurse" already inform the listener as to the sex of the person holding that job. Speakers sometimes also use a gender-specific pronoun to refer to an occupation that has both males and females. Table 12.1 *Gender Type Jobs* lists some common gender-specific jobs titles along with more inclusive versions of those job titles.

Table 12.1 Gender Type Jobs

Exclusive Language	**Inclusive Language**
Policeman	Police officer
Businessman	Businessperson
Fireman	Firefighter
Stewardess	Flight attendant
Waiters	Wait staff / servers
Mailman	Letter carrier / postal worker
Barmaid	Bartender

Ethnic Identity

Another type of inclusive language relates to the categories used to highlight an individual's ethnic identity. Ethnic identity refers to a group an individual identifies with based on a common culture. For example, within the United States we have numerous ethnic groups, including Italian Americans, Irish Americans, Japanese Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Cuban Americans, and Mexican Americans. As with the earlier example of "male nurse," avoid statements such as "The committee is made up of four women and a Vietnamese man." Instead, say, "The committee is made up of four women and a man" or, if race and ethnicity are central to the discussion, "The committee is made up of three European American women, an Israeli American woman, a Brazilian American woman, and a Vietnamese American man." In recent years, there has been a trend toward steering inclusive language away from broad terms like "Asians" and "Hispanics" because these terms are not considered precise labels for the groups they actually represent. If you want to be safe, the best thing you can do is ask a couple of people who belong to an ethnic group how they prefer to label themselves.

Sexual Orientation

Another area that can cause some problems is referred to as heterosexism. Heterosexism occurs when a speaker presumes that everyone in an audience is heterosexual or that cross-sex relationships are the only norm. For example, a speaker might begin a speech by saying, "I am going to talk about the legal obligations you will have with your future husband or wife." While this speech starts with the notion that everyone plans on getting married, which isn't the case, it also assumes that everyone will label their significant others as either "husbands" or "wives." Although some members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and gender non-conforming communities will use these terms, others prefer for more gender-neutral terms like "spouse" and "partner." Notice also that we are not using terms such as 'homosexual' to refer to multiple distinct sexual orientations, and we are not using outdated terms, such as 'transexual,' which are generally no longer accepted terms for gender non-conforming individuals."

Disability

The last category of exclusive versus inclusive language that causes problems for some speakers relates to individuals with physical or mental disabilities. While not always possible in advance of an

unknown audience, it's best to *ask* a person what terms work for them, based on their lived experiences and identity (Ladau, 2021). Additionally, you may have been taught not to use the word "disabled" and taught to use "person-first" language, in which you identify the person before their disability (i.e., person with autism, person with cerebral palsy). Historically, some disabled individuals and disability service providers pushed person-first language so that others would not solely focus on the disability itself. That is not necessarily wrong, but language evolves over time and the disabled community has started a shift towards "identify-first" language (i.e., disabled, deaf, autistic). This identify-first language places prominence on the disability and is a point of pride (Forber-Pratt, 2019).

Table 12.2 *Inclusive Language for Disabilities*, provides some other examples of exclusive versus inclusive language.

Table 12.2 Inclusive Language for Disabilities

Exclusive Language	Inclusive Language Person-First Language / Identity-First Language
Handicapped People	People with disabilities / Disabled people
Insane Person	Person with a psychiatric disability (or label the psychiatric diagnosis, e.g., “person with schizophrenia”)
Person in a wheelchair	Person who uses a wheelchair / Wheelchair user
Crippled	Person with a physical disability / Disabled person
Special needs program	Accessible program
Mentally retarded	Person with an intellectual disability / Intellectually disabled person

Use Familiar Language

The last category related to using language appropriately simply asks you to use language that is familiar both to yourself and to your audience. If you are not comfortable with the language you are using, then you are going to be more nervous speaking, which will definitely have an impact on how your audience receives your speech. You may have a hard time speaking genuinely and sincerely if you use unfamiliar language, and this can impair your credibility.

Furthermore, you want to make sure that the language you are using is familiar to your audience. If your audience cannot understand what you are saying, you will not have an effective speech.

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A Note about Language

KATIE GRUBER

As Gudykunst & Kim (2003) said, "*We communicate the way we do because we are raised in a particular culture and learn its language, rules, and norms*" (p. 430). The English language, like any language, can be ambiguous without context.

We have all agreed that "toast" for example, means bread that has been put into a toaster oven and baked for additional time, making it crunchy and oh-so-perfect for some smooth peanut butter! We have also established that "brunch" is a combination of "breakfast" and "lunch". Some newer words have been created recently, such as "glamping" or "frenemy." But consider the word "bootylicious" from the hit song of the same name:

I don't think you're ready for this jelly
I don't think you're ready for this
'Cause my body too bootylicious for ya, babe
(Fusari, Knowles, Moore, & Nicks, 2001)

Do you remember that song? While Destiny's Child's *Bootylicious* skyrocketed up the Billboard charts in 2001, the term "bootylicious" was actually first used by Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg, rapped on "F–k Wit Dre Day," the second single from Dr. Dre's debut solo 1993 album, *The Chronic*.

Your bark was loud, but your bite wasn't vicious
And them rhymes you were kickin' were quite bootylicious
(Young, 1993)

While Dr. Dre's version of *bootylicious* refers to "bad" or "weak" rap lyrics, *bootylicious* can also mean "sexually attractive, sexy, shapely," especially in reference to a woman, oftentimes referring to the buttocks. *Bootylicious* was added to the Oxford English

Dictionary in 2004 and demonstrates the ever-changing landscape of language!

In fact, a family in Boston is trying to honor their dad by getting the word "orbisculate" added to the dictionary. Their dad made up this word for a class at Cornell – when a "citrus fruit squirts in your eye." He used the word so frequently while his kids were growing up that they thought it was a "real word" and also used it. They were shocked to find out that it wasn't in the dictionary! Their family thinks that since *bootylicious* is in the dictionary, *orbisculate* should be, too. You can even visit their website www.orbisculate.com to petition to have the word added to the dictionary!

Think about the slang you use with your friends. *Bet. No cap. Outta pocket. 'fit. Thirsty. Drip. Cringe.* In the words of Justin Bieber [and others], *On God!* Man, that song *slaps*! What about the words of previous generations? *Bodacious*, *rad*, *crunk*, *junk in the trunk*, *tubular*, *shawty*. How have these terms evolved and/or become obsolete over the years? How will the language you use now change in 10 or 20 years?

It's important to consider the language you use and avoid slang and/or jargon that will create a disconnect between you and your audience. As should be obvious by now, the audience is the most important consideration you make as you research and write your speech. If you use language they don't understand, how can you relate to them?

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Chapter Thirteen – Speech Delivery

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The easiest approach to speech delivery is not always the best. Substantial work goes into the careful preparation of an interesting and ethical message, so it is understandable that students may have the impulse to avoid "messing it up" by simply reading it word for word. But students who do this miss out on one of the major reasons for studying public speaking: to learn ways to "connect" with one's audience and to increase one's confidence in doing so. You already know how to read, and you already know how to talk. But public speaking is neither reading nor talking.

Speaking in public has more formality than talking. During a

speech, you should present yourself professionally. This doesn't mean you must wear a suit or "dress up" (unless your instructor asks you to), but it does mean making yourself presentable by being well groomed and wearing clean, appropriate clothes. It also means being prepared to use language correctly and appropriately for the audience and the topic, to make eye contact with your audience, and to look like you know your topic very well.

While speaking has more formality than talking, it has less formality than reading. Speaking allows for meaningful pauses, eye contact, small changes in word order, and vocal emphasis. Reading is a more or less exact replication of words on paper without the use of any nonverbal interpretation. Speaking, as you will realize if you think about excellent speakers you have seen and heard, provides a more animated message.

The next sections introduce four methods of delivery that can help you balance between too much and too little formality when giving a public speech.

Types of Delivery

Impromptu Speaking

Impromptu speaking is the presentation of a short message without advance preparation. You have probably done impromptu speaking many times in informal, conversational settings. Self-introductions in group settings are examples of impromptu speaking: "Hi, my name is Steve, and I'm a volunteer with the Homes for the Brave program." Another example of impromptu speaking occurs when you answer a question such as, "What did you think of the movie?" Your response has not been preplanned, and you are constructing your arguments and points as you speak. Even worse, you might find yourself going into a meeting and your boss says, "I want you to talk about the last stage of the project. . ." and you have no warning.

The advantage of this kind of speaking is that it's spontaneous and responsive in an animated group context. The disadvantage is that the speaker is given little or no time to contemplate the central theme of their message. As a result, the message may be disorganized and difficult for listeners to follow.

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

- Take a moment to collect your thoughts and plan the main point that you want to make (like a mini thesis statement).
- Thank the person for inviting you to speak. Do not make comments about being unprepared, called upon at the last moment, on the spot, or uneasy. In other words, try to avoid being self-deprecating!
- Deliver your message, making your main point as briefly as you can while still covering it adequately and at a pace your listeners can follow.
- If you can use a structure, use numbers if possible: "Two main reasons. . ." or "Three parts of our plan. . ." or "Two side effects of this drug. . ." Past, present, and future or East Coast,

Midwest, and West Coast are prefab structures.
- Thank the person again for the opportunity to speak.
- Stop talking (it is easy to "ramble on" when you don't have something prepared). If in front of an audience, don't keep talking as you move back to your seat.

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

We recommend practicing your impromptu speaking regularly and every day. Do you want to work on reducing your vocalized pauses in a formal setting? Cool! You can begin that process by being conscious of your vocalized fillers during informal conversations and settings.

If you want to see examples of impromptu speaking, watch any awards show, when actors deliver acceptance speeches. Since they do not know beforehand that they will win, their comments are usually off-the-cuff. Since they are also practiced speakers, they generally sound good! Here is such an example, from the 2002 Academy Awards: Denzel Washington Wins Best Actor at 74th Oscars.

Extemporaneous

Extemporaneous speaking is the presentation of a carefully planned and rehearsed speech, spoken in a conversational manner using brief notes.

Speaking extemporaneously has some advantages. It promotes the likelihood that you, the speaker, will be perceived as knowledgeable and credible since you know the speech well enough that you don't need to read it. In addition, your audience is likely to pay better attention to the message because it is engaging both verbally and nonverbally. By using notes rather than a full manuscript (or everything that you're going to say), the

extemporaneous speaker can establish and maintain eye contact with the audience and assess how well they are understanding the speech as it progresses. It also allows flexibility; you are working from the strong foundation of an outline, but if you need to delete, add, or rephrase something at the last minute or to adapt to your audience, you can do so. The outline also helps you be aware of main ideas vs. subordinate ones.

Because extemporaneous speaking is the style used in the great majority of public speaking situations, most of the information in the subsequent sections of this chapter is targeted toward this kind of speaking.

To see an example of extemporaneous speaking, check out the viewer's choice winner from MTSU's Department of Communication Studies 8th annual Speech Contest: Why Video Games are Good for You.

Manuscript

Manuscript speaking is the word-for-word iteration of a written message. In a manuscript speech, the speaker maintains their attention on the printed page except when using presentation aids.

The advantage to reading from a manuscript is the exact repetition of original words. This can be extremely important in some circumstances. For example, reading a statement about your organization's legal responsibilities to customers may require that the original words be exact. In reading one word at a time, in order, the only errors would typically be mispronunciation of a word or stumbling over complex sentence structure. A manuscript speech may also be appropriate at a more formal affair (like a funeral), when your speech must be said exactly as written in order to convey the proper emotion or decorum the situation deserves.

However, there are costs involved in manuscript speaking. First, it's typically an uninteresting way to present. Unless the speaker has

rehearsed the reading as a complete performance animated with vocal expression and gestures (well-known authors often do this for book readings), the presentation tends to be dull. Keeping one's eyes glued to the script prevents eye contact with the audience. For this kind of "straight" manuscript speech to hold audience attention, the audience must be already interested in the message and speaker before the delivery begins. Finally, because the full notes are required, speakers often require a lectern to place their notes, restricting movement and the ability to engage with the audience. Without something to place the notes on, speakers have to manage full-page speaking notes, and that can be distracting.

It is worth noting that professional speakers, actors, news reporters, and politicians often read from an autocue device, such as a teleprompter, especially when appearing on television, where eye contact with the camera is crucial. With practice, a speaker can achieve a conversational tone and give the impression of speaking extemporaneously and maintaining eye contact while using an autocue device. However, success in this medium depends on two factors: (1) the speaker is already an accomplished public speaker who has learned to use a conversational tone while delivering a prepared script, and (2) the speech is written in a style that sounds conversational. You can find many examples of presidents through the years using manuscript style when delivering the *State of the Union* address.

Memorized

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

The advantage to memorization is that it enables the speaker to maintain eye contact with the audience throughout the speech. Being free of notes means that you can move freely around the stage and use your hands to make gestures. If your speech uses presentation aids, this freedom is even more of an advantage.

Memorization, however, can be tricky. First, if you lose your place and start trying to ad lib, the contrast in your style of delivery will alert your audience that something is wrong. If you go completely blank during the presentation, it will be extremely difficult to find your place and keep going. Obviously, memorizing a typical seven-minute classroom speech takes a great deal of time and effort, and if you aren't used to memorizing, it is very difficult to pull off.

We recommend playing with all 4 types of delivery (though extemporaneous is most common in public speaking). Once you identify what type of delivery style you'll use in a speech, it's time to rehearse.

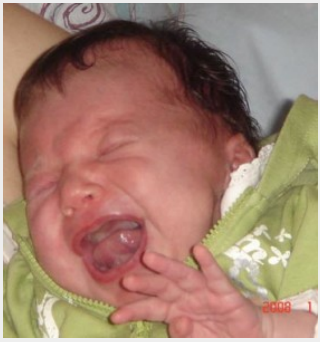
We will discuss best practices for rehearsing in Chapter 20. Let us focus now on elements of effective speech delivery.

Vocal Aspects of Delivery

Though we speak frequently during the course of a day, a formal speech requires extra attention to detail in preparation of a more formal speech presentation. What can one do in advance to prepare for a speech? The challenge is partly determined by the speaker's experience, background and sometimes cultural influence and existing habits of speaking. Articulation, Pronunciation, Dialect, Tone, Pitch, and Projection each depends on long-term practice for success. These aspects are like signatures and should be developed and used by each speaker according to his own persona.

Voice, or vocal sound, is made when controlled air being exhaled from the lungs, passes over the vocal cords causing a controlled vibration. The vibrating air resonates in the body, chest cavity, mouth, and nasal passages. The vibrating air causes a chain reaction with the air in the room. The room's air, set in motion by the voice, is captured by the listener's ear. The vibration of the air against the eardrum is transferred to electrical impulses that are interpreted by the listener's brain. Thus, the sounds we can make are predicated on the breaths that we take.

TRY



"Crying baby" by Brazzouk. CC-BY-SA.

THIS! BREATHING

Talk without breathing. It cannot be done. So, if you are screaming (like a baby), you are also breathing!

The first word of advice on speaking to an audience: BREATHE!

Articulation

We are often judged by how well we speak in general. A measure of perceived intellect or education is how well we **articulate**. That is: how well and correctly we form our vowels and consonants using our lips, jaw, tongue, and palate to form the sounds that are identified as speech. **Diction** and **enunciation** are other terms that refer to the same idea. For instance, saying "going to" instead of "gonna" or "did not" instead of "dint" are examples of good versus poor articulation. Consonant and vowels are spoken with standard accepted precision, and serious students and speakers will strive to practice the clarity of their sounds. Proper diction is as integral to the English language as proper spelling, but it takes practice.

Pronunciation

Proper **articulation** applied to a given word is that

word's **pronunciation**. The pronunciation includes how the vowels and consonants are produced as well as which syllable is emphasized. For generations, speakers depended on "markings (such as the International Phonetics Alphabet or similar Dictionary Symbols) to discover or decide how words were officially pronounced. With online dictionaries now readily available, one needs only to "look up" a word and select "play" to hear an audible recording of the official and precise way a word should be pronounced. Now there is no excuse for mispronouncing a word in a speech. A mispronounced word will obliterate a speaker's credibility, and the audience's attention will be focused on the fault rather than the message.

TRY THIS! PRONUNCIATION

1. Flip through a book, article or scholarly work until you come to a word that is unfamiliar and you can only guess its pronunciation.

2. Go to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary website and look up the word.

3. When the definition appears, click the icon of the loudspeaker. The word is audibly pronounced for you.

The online dictionary is useful in both articulation as well as pronunciation.

Accent, Dialect, and Regionalisms

"Iraqi speaker" by Office of United States Rep. Ellen Tauscher. Public domain.

Subtleties in the way we pronounce words and phrase our speech within a given language are evident in **accents**, **regionalisms**, and **dialects**. An accent refers to the degree of prominence of the way syllables are spoken in words, as when someone from Australia says "undah" whereas we say "under." A **regionalism** is a type of expression, as when someone says "The dog wants walked," instead of "the dog wants to go for a walk." Dialect is a variety of language where one is distinguished from others by grammar and vocabulary. In Pennsylvania you might hear people say that they are going to "red up the room," which means "to clean the room."

Those who depend on speaking for a career (broadcasters, politicians, and entertainers) will often strive for unaccented General or Standard English. Listen to most major network newscasters for examples of **regionalism-free** speech. A given

audience may be prejudiced towards or against a speaker with an identifiable accent or dialect. Though we would wish prejudice were not the case, the way we speak implies so much about our education, cultural background, and economic status, that prejudice is inevitable. Any speaker should be aware of how accent, **dialect**, and regionalisms can be perceived by a given audience. If you speak in a way that the audience might find difficult to understand, make an extra effort to pay attention to the accent and phrasing of your speech. Ask a sympathetic and objective listener to help you when you practice.

> *We often refuse to accept an idea merely because the tone of voice in which it has been expressed is unsympathetic to us.* – Friedrich Nietzsche

Vocal Quality

The quality of the voice, its **timbre** (distinctive sound) and texture, affects audibility and can affect the articulation. Our voices are unique to each of us. It is a result of our physical vocal instrument, including diaphragm, vocal cords, lungs and body mass. Some examples of vocal quality include warm, clear, soft, scratchy, mellow and breathy. Each speaker should practice at maximizing the vocal effect of their instrument, which can be developed with vocal exercises. There are numerous books, recordings and trainers available to develop one's vocal quality when needed. The quality of one's voice is related to its range of pitch.

TRY THIS! INFLECTION

Your voice goes UP, and then your voice goes d o w n.

Pitch and Inflection

Identical to musical parlance, the **pitch** is the "highness" or "lowness" of the voice. Each of us has a range of **tone**. Vocal sounds are actually vibrations sent out from the vocal cords resonating through chambers in the body. The vibrations can literally be measured in terms of audio frequency in the same way music is measured. When the **pitch** is altered to convey a meaning (like raising the pitch at the end of a sentence that is a question), it is the inflection. **Inflections** are variations, turns and slides in pitch to achieve the meaning.

In his writing "Poetics," Aristotle lists "Music" as an element of the Drama. Some scholars interpret that to include the musicalization of the spoken word with **dramatic inflection**. The meaning and effectiveness of a spoken line is greatly dependent on the "melody" of its inflection.

Though archaic, the study of **elocution** formalizes the conventions of inflection. In some contemporary cultures, inflection has been minimized because it sounds too "melodramatic" for the taste of the demographic group. It would be sensible to be aware of and avoid both extremes. With effective animated inflection, a speaker is more interesting, and the inflection conveys energy and "aliveness" that compels the audience to listen.

When public speaking was known as elocution, sentences were "scored" like music, and spoken using formal rules. Sentences ending as a question went UP at the end. Sentences ending in a period, ended with a base note. And everyone had fun with exclamation points!

"Ice-T" by Tino Jacobs. CC-BY.

For most of music in history, including Opera, Broadway, and early Rock and Roll, songs were written so that the melody (raising and lowering the pitch) was consistent with what would be spoken. Many of today's songs, notably Rap songs, depend solely on rhythm. There is little if any inflection (melody) to enhance a lyric's meaning. Certain languages differ in their dependence on inflection. Japanese and German seem monotonic compared to Italian and French, which offer great variety of inflection.

> *The human voice is the most beautiful instrument of all, but it is the most difficult to play.* – Richard Strauss

Even someone one who is not a singer can be expressive with inflection and pitch. Like the "Think System" of Professor Harold Hill in the musical The Music Man. If you THINK varied pitch, you can SPEAK varied pitch. Think of pitch inflections as seasoning spices that can make the speech more interesting. Sing "Happy Birthday." You do not have to concentrate or analyze how to create the melody in your voice. Your memory and instinct take over. Notice how the pitch also provides an audible version of punctuation, letting the

audience know if your sentence has ended, if it is a question, and so on. The melody lets the audience know that there is more to come (a comma) and when the phrase is ended (a period). Remember that in a speech, the audience does not have the written punctuation to follow, so you have to provide the punctuation with your inflection.

TRY THIS! VOCAL VARIATION

Find a listening partner. Using only the sounds of "la" ha," and "oh," convey the meaning of the following:

1. It's the biggest thing I've ever seen!
2. I've fallen and can't get up!
3. That soup is disgusting and spoiled.
4. I got an "A" in my Speech Final!

If you cannot relay the meaning with just sounds, try a second time (each) with gestures and facial expressions until the listener understands. Then say the lines with the expressive inflections you have developed using only the sounds.

Those who do not use inflection, or use a range of pitch, are speaking in **monotone**. And, as the word implies, it can be monotonous, boring, and dull. A balance between melodramatic and monotonous would be preferred. The inflection should have a meaningful and interesting variety. Be careful not to turn a pattern

of inflection into a repetitious sound. Think through each phrase and its musicalization separately.

Many speakers have developed the habit of ending each sentence as though it is a question. It may be becoming increasingly common. In the wake of the Valley Girl syndrome of the 1980's, a bad inflection habit has entered the speech pattern: Some speakers end a declarative sentence with the inflection of a question.

Do you know what I mean?

A word of caution: Inflection and varied pitch must be "organic," that is to say, natural for the speaker. You cannot fake it, or it sounds artificial and disingenuous. It is a skill that needs to develop over a period of time.

Rate of Speaking

Table 13.1: Finding the Right Pace for Your Speech

If you speak too quickly...	**If you speak too slowly...**
the audience might get the impression you have nothing important to say.	the audience might think you are too tired to be presenting.
the audience has a difficult time catching up and comprehending what you are saying. They need time to digest the information. So plan on periodic pauses.	the audience can forget the first part of your sentence by the time you get to the last! (It happens!) And they lose interest.
the audience might think you really do not want to be there.	the audience might think you are wasting their time by taking longer than necessary to relay your message.
As a speaker, you cannot race with the audience, nor drag their attention down. Like Goldilocks, look for the pace that is "just right."	

In order to retain clarity of the speech with articulation and inflection, the speaker must be aware that there is a range of appropriate **tempo** for speaking. If the tempo is too slow, the speech might resemble a monotonous peal. If it is too fast, the articulation could suffer if consonants or vowels are dropped or rushed to keep

up the speed. An audience could become frustrated with either extreme. The tempo needs to be appropriate to the speaker's style, but neither paced like a Gilbertian Lyric (as in "Gilbert and Sullivan") patter nor a funereal dirge. A comfortable and clear pace is the best. An ideal speaking rate will allow you to comfortably increase your pace to create a sense of excitement, or slow down to emphasize the seriousness of a topic.

> *It is simple nonsense to speak of the fixed tempo of any particular vocal phrase. Each voice has its peculiarities.* – Anton Seidl

Pauses Versus Vocalized Pauses

A text that is read has punctuation that the reader can see…miniature landmarks to define the text. When spoken, similar punctuation is needed for comprehension, and the speaker's responsibility is to offer the text with pauses. Space between phrases, properly planted, gives the audience the opportunity to understand the structure of the speaker's sentences and paragraphs. It also gives time for the audience to "digest" crucial phrases.

Generally, spoken sentences and paragraphs need to be simpler and shorter than what can be comprehended by reading. Pauses can help increase comprehension.

However, pauses that are filled with "uh's, "um's," etc., are called **vocalized pauses**, or **fillers**, and should be avoided. They can be distracting, annoying, and give the impression of a lack of preparation if used excessively. Even worse is the use of vernacular phrases like, "y'know" (a contraction of "Do You Know") which gives the impression of lack of education or lack of concern for the audience. The use of vocalized pauses may be the result of a habit

that deserves an effort to be overcome. Avoid using phrases such as "Uh," "OK?", "y'know", "like…, I mean," "right?"

Vocal Projection

The volume produced by the vocal instrument is **projection**. Supporting the voice volume with good breathing and energy can be practiced, and helping a speaker develop the correct volume is a main task of a vocal trainer, teacher or coach. Good vocal support with good posture, breathing, and energy should be practiced regularly, long before a speech is delivered. There are numerous exercises devoted to developing projection capabilities.

While there is no need to shout, a speaker should project to be easily heard from the furthest part of the audience. Even if the speech is amplified with a microphone/sound system, one must speak with projection and energy. As with your rate of speech, you should speak at a volume that comfortably allows you to increase the volume of your voice without seeming to shout or decrease the volume of your voice and still be heard by all audience members.

Do not expect to walk up to the podium and have a full voice. Actors spend about a half-hour doing vocal warm-ups, and singers warm up much more. You might not have an opportunity to warm up immediately before your speech, but when you can, warm up with humming, yawning (loudly) or singing scales: all while breathing deeply and efficiently. It will loosen your voice, prevent irritation, and fire up your vocal energy.

TRY THIS! PROJECTION

Go to the room in which you are to speak. Have a friend sit as far away from the podium is possible. Rehearse your speech, talking loudly enough so your friend can hear you comfortably. That is the projection you will need. When you mentally focus on the distant listener, you will tend to project better.

One final note: If public speaking is or will be an important part of your career, it would be sensible to have an evaluation of your voice, articulation and projection done by an objective professional so you can take any remedial action that might be recommended. There are courses of study, private lessons, and professional voice coaches to work with your voice projection, tone, and pitch.

> *Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with deeper meaning.* – Maya Angelou

While vocal aspects of delivery are certainly important, they do not paint the entire picture. Nonverbal aspects of delivery are discussed next; these include your appearance, posture, gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions.

Nonverbal Aspects of Delivery

Women in Business Leadership Conf. by UCLA Anderson. C C-BY-NC-SA.

Personal Appearance

Here is the golden rule: Dress appropriately for the situation. You don't need to sport a power tie (the predictable red tie politicians wore in the 1980s), but you should be comfortable and confident knowing that you look good.

Table 13.2: Dressing Appropriately

What to Wear:	What NOT to wear:
• A button-down shirt or blouse • Trousers (khaki or dark) or a skirt • A dress appropriate for a business setting • A nice sweater • Limited, tasteful jewelry • A suit or jacket may be appropriate • A tie or scarf (optional)	• T-shirts, sweatshirts, or sweatsuits • Sleeveless tops • Printed logos or sayings (unless appropriate to the speech) • Caps or hats • Torn jeans • Visible underwear • Noisy or dangling jewelry • Flip flops • Provocative clothing • Pockets full of keys or change

With the exception of wearing formal black-tie tuxedo to a hockey

game, it is good practice to dress a bit more formal than less. Err on the side of formal. Most class speeches would be best in business casual (which can vary from place to place and in time). The culture or standards of the audience should be considered.

There are exceptions depending on the speech. A student once arrived in pajamas to deliver his 9 a.m. speech. At first, I thought he got up too late to dress for class. However, his speech was on Sleep Deprivation, and his costume was deliberate. What he wore contributed to his speech.

If you have long hair, be sure it is out of the way so it won't cover your face. Flipping hair out of your face is very distracting, so it is wise to secure it with clips, gel, or some other method. Be sure you can be seen, especially your eyes and your mouth, even as you glance down to the podium.

Think of it as an interview…just like in an interview, you will want to make a good first impression. The corporate culture of the business will determine the dress. Always dress at the level of the person conducting the interview. For example, a construction supervisor (or project manager) will conduct an interview to hire you as a carpenter. Do not dress like a carpenter, dress like the project manager.

Actors know when they audition, the role is won by the time they step into the room. A speaker can launch success by stepping confidently to the podium.

Be tidy and clean. If you appear as though you took time to prepare because your speech is important, then your audience will recognize and respect what you have to say.

Movement and Gestures

Overall movement and specific gestures are integral to a speech. Body stance, gestures and facial expressions can be generally categorized as **body language**. Movement should be relaxed and

natural, and not excessive. How you move takes practice. Actors usually have the advantage of directors helping to make decisions about movement, but a good objective listener or a rehearsal in front of a large mirror can yield productive observations.

Moving around the performance space can be a very powerful component of a speech; however, it should be rehearsed as part of the presentation. Too much movement can be distracting. This is particularly true if the movement appears to be a result of nervousness. Avoid fidgeting, stroking your hair, and any other nervousness-related movement.

"Barack Obama at Las Vegas Presidential Forum" by Center for American Progress Action Fund. CC-BY-SA.

Among the traditional common fears of novice speakers is not knowing what to do with one's hands. Sometimes the speaker relies on clutching to the podium or keeping hands in pockets. Neither is a good pose. From my own observation, hand gestures are very common in Italy. We Italians can be seen in conversation from across the street, and an observer can often tell what is being said. There is no need to imitate an Italian in delivering a speech, but hand movement and the energy that the movement represents, can help hold
attention as well as help express the message.

An actor practices using the entire body for expression, and regularly practices physical exercises to keep the body and hands and arms relaxed and in motion. An actor's hand gestures are developed in rehearsal. A speaker's gestures should also be considered during practice.

During the period when elocution was taught, hand gestures were regimented like a sign language. This is nonsense. Like inflections,

gestures and movement should be organic and spontaneous, not contrived. If there is a hint of artificiality in your presentation, you will sacrifice your credibility.

TRY THIS! GESTURES

Using only your hands, convey the following:

1. "It's OK."
2. "I give up."
3. "I caught a fish, and it was THIS big!"
4. "We will be victorious."

Facial Expressions

Most readers are very familiar with emoticons like these:
🙂 🙁 :p 😀 😉 :/

Emoticons were not casual inventions, but graphic depictions of facial expressions that convey various meanings of emotions. They are based on a nearly universal language of expression that we begin learning soon after birth. We smile, we frown, we roll our eyes, and we wink. We open eyes wide with astonishment. We raise our eyebrows…occasionally one at a time, in suspicion; both, in

astonishment. Sometimes we pucker our lips, either to offer a kiss or express disapproval, disappointment, or grave concern.

"Castefest 2011, Gothic" by Qsimple. CC-BY-NC-SA.

Since facial expression is a valid form of communication, it is integral to delivering a speech. The face supports the text, and the speaker's commitment to the material is validated. The press scrutinizes a politician for every twitch of insincerity. Detectives have created a science of facial communication for interviewing suspects. Like inflections, gestures and movement: facial expressions should be organic and spontaneous, not contrived. If there is a hint of artificiality in your expression, you will sacrifice your credibility.

TRY THIS! FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

While looking in a mirror, try to express these thoughts without words:

1. "I am thrilled that I am getting a raise."
2. "I am worried about tomorrow."
3. "Lemons are too sour for me."
4. "I am suspicious about what he did."

After you have determined a facial expression for each, say the phrase. And see how well the verbal expression goes with the nonverbal expression.

Eye Contact

Next to clearly speaking an organized text, eye contact is another very important element of speaking. An audience must feel interested in the speaker and know the speaker cares about them. Whether addressing an audience of 1000 or speaking across a "deuce" (table for two), eye contact solidifies the relationship between the speaker and audience. Good eye contact takes practice. The best practice is to scan the audience, making contact with each member of the audience.

However, there are some eye contact failures.

Head Bobber

People who bob their head looking down on the notes and up to the audience in an almost rhythmic pattern.

Balcony Gazer

People who look over the heads of their audience to avoid looking at any individual.

The Obsessor

A person who looks at one or two audience members or who only looks in one direction.

Developing Good Eye Contact

The best way to develop good eye contact is to have an objective listener watch and comment on the eye contact.

The eyes are called the windows to the soul, and the importance of eye contact in communication cannot be overemphasized. Ideally, a speaker should include 80% to 90% of the delivery time with eye contact.

Eye contact is so important that modern teleprompters are designed to allow the speaker to look at the audience while actually reading the speech. The Presidential Teleprompter (two angled pieces of glass functioning like a periscope) is used so the politician can "connect" to the audience without missing a single syllable. Audience members will be much more attentive and responsive if they believe the speech is directed to them.

With good eye contact, the speaker can also observe and gauge the attention and response of the audience. This is actually part of the feedback process of communication. The ideal is that the audience is not overly aware of the speaker using notes.

How do you develop good eye contact? First, practice the speech with a generous amount of eye contact. Second, know the speech well enough to only periodically (and quickly) glance at your notes. Third, prepare your notes so they can be easily read and followed without hesitation.

> *There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.* – Colin Powell

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Chapter Fourteen – Presentation Aids

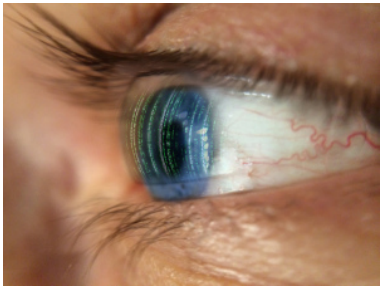
"I know you can't read this from the back there," *the presenter apologizes to a screen so full of words you would think the entire speech had been crammed into one slide. This is just the first of a seemingly endless string of slides I can't read, charts so full of numbers I can't decipher the meaning, and clip art so clichéd I can't help but roll my eyes and sigh. It is not long before I'm presented with an incredibly dense graph I can't make any sense of since he keeps interrupting my concentration with actual talking.* "When is he going to come to the point already?" *I think to myself as I start to doodle in the margins of the handout of the PowerPoint slides for the very talk I'm currently sitting through. Why did he even bother with a presentation? He could have just emailed us all of the handout and saved us from this painful, dull spectacle. As he reads from his slides and belabors his statistics, my mind drifts to grocery lists and the upcoming weekend. I can think of a hundred better uses for an hour.*

"Grifo mágico" by emijrp. CC-BY.

It seems nearly impossible to see a presentation that doesn't revolve around a lengthy PowerPoint, so much so that you might think it was a requirement for giving a speech. The phrase "death by PowerPoint" was coined in response to the ubiquitous, wordy, and intellectually deadening presentations that focus on the slides rather than the content or the presenter. With the speaker reading directly from the slides, or worse, showing slides with text so small that it can't be read, viewers are often left wondering what the need for the presentation is at all. A simple handout would convey the message and save everyone's time. PowerPoint, however, is just one of the visual aids available to you as a speaker. Your ability to

incorporate the right visual aid at the right time and in the right format can have a powerful effect on your audience. Because your message is the central focus of your speech, you only want to add visual aids that enhance your message, clarify the meaning of your words, target the emotions of your audience, and/or show what words fail to clearly describe.

> A *visual image is a simple thing, a picture that enters the eyes.*
> – Roy H. Williams



"mwdCyborgLenses" by em den. CC-BY-NC-SA.

Learning how to create effective visuals that resonate with your audience is important for a quality presentation. Understanding basic principles of how visual information is processed alone and in combination with audio information can make or break your visuals' effectiveness and impact. Incorporating visuals into your speech that complement your words rather than stand in place of them or distract from them, will set you apart from other presenters, increase your credibility, and make a bigger and more memorable impact on your audience.

Types of Visual Aids

In the past, transparencies displayed with overhead projectors, posters, and flip charts were common visual aids, but these have

mostly been replaced with computer technology. For many people, the term "visual aids" for presentations or speeches is synonymous with PowerPoint (often long, dry, painful PowerPoint at that), but this is just one type of visual aid. You should consider all the available options to determine what will be most effective and appropriate for your presentation.

> *If you wear clothes that don't suit you, you're a fashion victim. You have to wear clothes that make you look better.* – Vivienne Westwood

Personal Appearance

Some people choose to dress up as part of their presentation, and this can help set the tone of the speech or reinforce a specific point. A speaker may wear a handmade sweater in a talk about knitting in order to inspire others to begin the hobby. Another speaker may opt for a firefighter's uniform in a speech about joining the local volunteer fire department in an effort to appeal to the respect most people have for people in uniform. As mentioned in the previous chapter, if you're delivering a speech on sleep deprivation, wearing pj's *could* be appropriate!

If you wear clothes that don't suit you, you're a fashion victim. You have to wear clothes that make you look better. – Vivienne Westwood

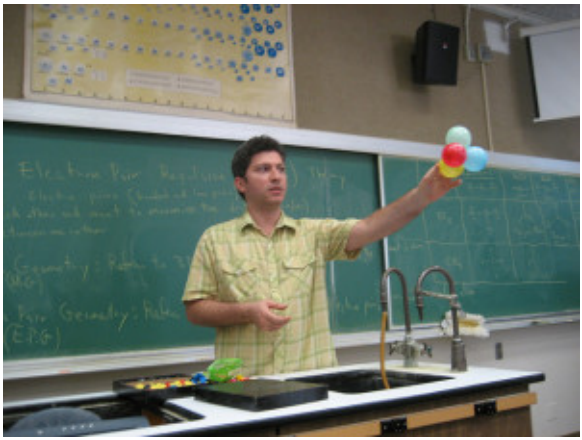
"Firefighters Onboard Royal Navy Destroyer HMS Edinburgh" by UK Ministry of Defence. CC-BY-NC.

If you aren't dressing in relation to your topic, you should dress appropriately for your audience and venue. A presentation to a professional audience or at a professional conference would lend itself to appropriate business attire. If you are giving a presentation to your local Girl Scout troop, more casual clothing may be the best choice. Any time you are doing a demonstration, make sure you are dressed appropriately to give the demonstration. It is difficult for a speaker to show how to correctly put on a rock-climbing harness if she is wearing a skirt the day of the presentation.

Beyond dressing appropriately for your audience and topic, the audience will make judgments about you even before your presentation begins. Your dress, mannerisms, the way you greet the audience when they are arriving, how you are introduced, and

the first words out of your mouth all impact your credibility and ability to connect with your audience. Make sure you are calm and welcoming to your audience when they arrive and greet them in a professional manner. Your credibility and professionalism suffer when the audience arrives and you are busy scrambling around attempting to finish your preparations.[1]

Objects and Props



"Honestly I Don't Remember Much from This Lecture" by Daniel Lu. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Objects and props, such as a bicycle helmet for a speech on bike safety or an actual sample of the product you are trying to sell, can greatly enhance your presentation. Seeing the actual item will often make it easier for your audience to understand your meaning and will help you connect with your audience on an emotional level.

1. [2]
2. [1]

Props can be used as part of demonstrations (discussed below) or as a stand-alone item that you refer to in your speech.

There are several important considerations for using props in your presentation. If you have a large audience, showing the prop at the front of the venue may mean that audience members can't see the item. The alternative to this is to pass the item around, though Young and Travis[3] advise caution in passing objects around during your speech, as most people will be seeing the object after you have moved on with your talk. Having your prop out of sync with your presentation, either as it is passed around disrupting your audience's attention or by having your prop visible when you aren't talking about it, is distracting to your audience and message. To make the most effective use of props in your presentation, carefully consider how the object will be visible to your entire audience when you are speaking about it, and make sure it is out of sight when you are not.

3. [4]
4. [2]

Demonstration

"A dad teaches his daughter the hula hoop at the 2011 Downton Cuckoo Fair"
by Anguskirk. CC-BY-NC-ND.

A demonstration can serve two different purposes in a speech. First, it can be used to "wow" the audience. Showing off the features of your new product, illustrating the catastrophic failure of a poorly tied climbing knot, or launching a cork across the room during a chemistry experiment are all ways of capturing the audience's attention. Demonstration should not be gimmicky, but should add value to your presentation. When done well, it can be the memorable moment from your speech, so make sure it reinforces the central message of your talk.

Demonstration can also be used to show how something is done. People have different learning styles, and a process demonstration can help visual learners better understand the concept being taught. Consider for a moment the difference between reading the instructions on how to perform CPR, watching someone perform CPR, and trying CPR on the training dummy. As evidenced by the huge number of online videos illustrating how to do something, there is great value in watching while you learn a new task.

If your presentation includes a process where seeing will improve understanding, consider including a demonstration.

Because you have a limited time to present, make sure your demonstrations are succinct, well-rehearsed, and visible to the entire audience. Be prepared for the demonstration to fail and have a back-up plan in place. It is better to move forward with your presentation than to fret with trying to get your demonstration perfect or fixed. However, if you are providing a demonstration of your new product, make sure it is as error free as possible. If you can't be positive the product will perform as expected, it is better to skip the demonstration.

Posters and Flip Charts

If you are presenting to a small audience, around a dozen people, you may choose to use a poster rather than PowerPoint. The focus of your poster should be to support your core message and can be left behind to remind those in attendance of your presentation after you have left. Posters should look professional (e.g., not handwritten), be visible to everyone in the room, and follow design rules covered later in this chapter. Before your presentation, you should ask whether posters must be hung or be free standing. For posters that will be hung from a wall, sturdy poster or matte boards will suffice. If your poster is going to be free standing or if you are

going to use the same poster for multiple presentations, you should consider using a tri-fold display board.

"Dad's Jr. Year Science Fair Project" by Rev. Xanatos Satanicos Bombasticos . CC-BY-NC-SA.

Other text-based visual aids include white boards and flip charts. Both can be used to write or draw on during the presentation and should be used with several caveats. Writing during your presentation actually takes away from your speaking time, so make sure to factor this into your speaking time. Speaking and writing at the same time can be tricky because the audience will have a difficult time processing what they are hearing when they are also trying to read what you write. Additionally, if you are writing, you need to be careful not to turn your back on your audience, which is makes it harder for them to hear you and for you to connect with your audience. Legible handwriting that can be seen at a distance is of prime importance, so using these kinds of visual aids should be limited to small audiences. While some speakers write and draw to highlight important points, this takes an enormous amount of skill and practice. For those with less developed skills, flip charts are

best limited to situations where audience input is necessary for the direction or continuation of the presentation.[5]

The soul never thinks without a picture. – Aristotle

Audio and Video

A large amount of digitized audio and video is now available to be included and embedded in your presentation. Select short clips; Young and Travis [7] recommend only 10–20 seconds, but this will depend in part on the length of the presentation, the purpose of the presentation, and clip content and relevance. You should not have a presentation primarily composed of audio/video clips. Select only clips that *reinforce* the message or serve as an appropriate segue into your next topic.

When including audio or video in your speech, there are several technical considerations. It is important that the clip be properly cued to start at exactly where you want it to begin playing. It distracts from both your audience's attention and your credibility when you are fumbling with technology during a speech. It is also important that your file format can be played on the computer you are using. Since not all computers will play all file formats, be sure to test playability and audio volume before your presentation. Again, going back to providing a professional appearance from your first interaction with your audience, you should iron out the technical details before they enter the room. As with a demonstration, if your clip isn't playing properly, move on rather than attempt to correct

5. [6]
6. [3]
7. [8]
8. [4]

the issue. Fumbling with technology is a waste of your audience's valuable time.

Handouts

There are many schools of thought on the use of handouts during a presentation. The most common current practice is that the presenters provide a copy of their PowerPoint slides to the participants before or after the presentation. This is so common that some academic and professional conferences require presenters to submit their slides prior to the event, so copies of the slides can be made for each attendee. Despite this prevailing trend, you should avoid using your slides as handouts because they serve different purposes. Using your presentation slides as the handout both shortchanges your slides and fails as a handout.

"Lt. Lydia Battey distributes handouts" by Kerryl Cacho. Public domain.

Handouts are best used to supplement the content of your talk. If you are providing statistical data, your slide may only show the relevant statistic focusing on the conclusion you want your audience to draw. Your handout, on the other hand, can contain the full table of data. If you need to show a complex diagram or chart, a handout will be more legible than trying to cram all that information on a slide. Since you need to simplify the data to make it understandable on a slide, the handout can contain the evidence for

your message in a way that is legible, detailed, complex, and shows respect for the audience's time and intelligence.[9]

You don't need to include everything in your talk, and you don't need to pack all your information into your slides. Write a handout document with as much detail as you want and keep the slides simple. Presenters often feel the need to display all the data and information they have so they will appear knowledgeable, informed, and thoroughly prepared. You can help ease this feeling by creating a handout with all of the detailed data you wish, which leaves your slides open to focus on your key message.[11]

There are many true statements about complex topics that are too long to fit on a PowerPoint slide. – Edward Tufte

9. [10]
10. [5]
11. [12]
12. [6]

Crafting an appropriate handout will take additional time for the presenter but doing so will result in a take-away document that will stand on its own and a slide show that focuses on effective visual content. Duarte (2008) and Tufte (2003) recommend handouts only for dense, detailed information. Reynolds[1] expands on this idea, noting that your handout needs to be complete enough to stand in your place since you won't be there to present the information or answer questions.

When to distribute handouts is also heavily debated. So common is the practice of providing handouts at the beginning of a presentation that it may seem wrong to break the convention. It is important to understand, however, that if people have paper in front of them while you are speaking, their attention will be split between the handout, your other visual aids, and your words. To counter this, you might consider distributing handouts as they are needed during the presentation and allowing time for people to review them before continuing on.[3] This may not be a viable option for shorter presentations, and the interruption in the flow of the presentation may be hard to recover from. Unless having the documents in front of your audience is absolutely critical to the success of the presentation, handouts should be distributed at the end of the presentation.

1. [2]
2. [7]
3. [4]
4. [8]

Slideware

"Steve Jobs Presentation" by Ken.gz. CC-BY.

Slideware is a generic term for the software used create and display slide shows such as *Microsoft PowerPoint*, *Apple iWorks Keynote*, *Google Drive Presentation*, *Zoho Show* and others. Composed of individual slides, collectively known as the **slide deck**, slideware is a de facto standard for presentation visual aids despite criticisms and complaints about the format. In truth, the problem is not with the software but in the *use* of the software. The focus of much of the remainder of this chapter will be suggestions and best practices for creating effective slide decks that will be high impact and avoid many of the complaints of slideware detractors. Before this discussion, there are two distinct slideware presentation styles that should be mentioned.

> *A picture is a poem without words.* – Horace

Pecha Kucha

Pecha Kucha is a method of presenting using a slide deck of 20 slides that display for 20 seconds per slide, advance automatically,

and generally contain no text.[5] This method began in 2003 as a way to contain the length of presentations of architects and continues to grow in popularity, but is still reserved mostly for people in creative industries.[7] Because of the restrictive format, Pecha Kucha-style presentations help the speaker practice editing, pacing, connecting with the audience, focusing on the message, and using images in place of words.[9]

Prezi

While not quite slideware, **Prezi** is digital presentation software that breaks away from the standard slide deck presentation. It requires users to plot out their themes before adding primarily image-focused content.[11] Instead of flipping through the slide deck, the presenter zooms in and out of the presentation to visually demonstrate connections not available in other slideware. The design of the software lends itself toward more rapidly changing visuals. This helps to keep the viewer engaged but also lends itself to over-populating the blank canvas with images.[13]

Prezi's fast-moving images and, at times, unusual movement can make users dizzy or disoriented. Careful work is needed during

5. [6]
6. [9]
7. [8]
8. [10]
9. [10]
10. [11]
11. [12]
12. [12]
13. [14]
14. [13]

planning and practice so that the point of the talk isn't the wow factor of the Prezi software, but that your visuals enhance your presentation. The best way to learn more about this emerging tool is to visit the Prezi website to view examples.

If opting to use Prezi in a corporate environment, you should strongly consider one of the paid options for the sole purpose of removing the Prezi logo from the presentation.

Now that you have a better understanding of the different types of presentation aids you could employ during your speech, let's discuss effective design principles of visual aids.

Design Principles

Slide and slide show design have a major impact on your ability to get your message across to your audience. Research shows that people have trouble grasping information when it comes at them simultaneously. "They will either listen to you or read your slides; they cannot do both."[1] This leaves you, the presenter, with a lot of power to direct or scatter your audience's attention. This section will serve as an overview of basic design considerations that even novices can use to improve their slides.

First and foremost, design with your audience in mind. Your slide show is not your outline. The show is also not your handout. As discussed earlier, you can make a significantly more meaningful, content-rich handout that complements your presentation if you do not try to save time by making a slide show that serves as both. Keep your slides short, create a separate handout if needed, and write as many notes for yourself as you need.

Figure 13.1

Figure 13.1 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

All decisions, from the images you use to their placement, should be done with a focus on your message, your medium, and your audience. Each slide should ***reinforce*** or ***enhance*** your message, so make conscious

1. [2]
2. [14]

decisions about each element and concept you include[3] and edit mercilessly. Taken a step further, graphic designer Robin Williams[5] suggests each element be placed on the slide deliberately in relation to every other element on the slide.

Providing the right amount of information, neither too much nor too little, is one of the key aspects in effective communication.[7] See Figure 13.1 as an example of slides with too little or too much information. The foundation of this idea is that if the viewers have too little information, they must struggle to put the pieces of the presentation together. Most people, however, include too much information (e.g., slides full of text, meaningless images, overly complicated charts), which taxes the audience's ability to process the message. "There is simply a limit to a person's ability to process new information efficiently and effectively."[9] As a presenter, reducing the amount of information directed at your audience (words, images, sounds, etc.) will help them to better remember your message.[11] In this case, *less* is actually more.

3. [4]
4. [15]
5. [6]
6. [16]
7. [8]
8. [17]
9. [10]
10. [18]
11. [12]
12. [19]

The first strategy to keeping your slides simple is to include only one concept or idea per slide. If you need more than one slide, use it, but don't cram more than one idea on a slide. While many have tried to prescribe the number of slides you need based on the length of your talk, there is no formula that works for every presentation. Use only the number of slides necessary to communicate your message, and make sure the number of slides corresponds to the amount of time allotted for your speech. Practice with more and fewer slides and more and less content on each slide to find the balance between too much information and too little.

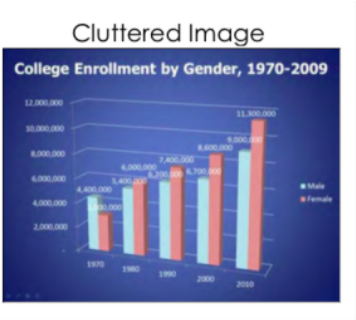


Figure 13.2 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

With simplicity in mind, the goal is to have a slide that can be understood in 3 seconds. Think of it like a billboard you are passing on the highway.[13] You can achieve this by reducing the amount of irrelevant information, also known as **noise**, in your slide as much as possible. This might include eliminating background images, using clear icons and images, or creating simplified graphs. Your approach should be to remove as much from your slide as possible until it no longer makes any sense if you remove more.[15]

13. [14]
14. [20]
15. [16]
16. [21]

Slide Layout

It is easy to simply open up your slideware and start typing in the bullet points that outline your talk. If you do this, you will likely fall into the traps for which PowerPoint is infamous. Presentation design experts Reynolds[17] and Duarte[18] both recommend starting with paper and pen. This will help you break away from the text-based, bullet-filled slide shows we all dread. Instead, consider how you can turn your words and concepts into images. Don't let the software lead you into making a mediocre slide show.

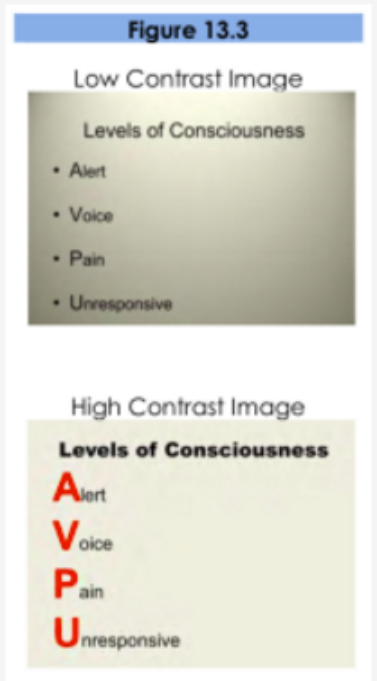


Figure 13.3 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Regarding slide design, focus on simplicity. Don't over-crowd your slide with text and images. Cluttered slides are hard to understand (see Figure 13.2). Leaving empty space, also known as **white space**, gives breathing room to your design. The white space actually draws attention to your focus point and makes your slide appear more elegant and professional. Using repetition of color, font, images, and layout

17. [19]
18. [20]
19. [22]
20. [23]

throughout your presentation will help tie all of your slides together. This is especially important if a group is putting visuals together collaboratively. If you have handouts, they should also match this formatting in order to convey a more professional look and tie all your pieces together.[21]

Another general principle is to use contrast to highlight your message. Contrast should not be subtle. Make type sizes significantly different. Make contrasting image placements, such as horizontal and vertical, glaringly obvious. A general principle to follow: if things are not the same, then make them very, very different,[23] as in Figure 13.3.

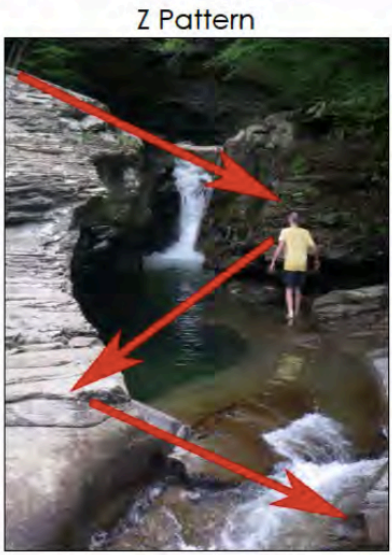
A common layout design is called the **rule of thirds**. If you divide the screen using two imaginary lines horizontally and two vertically, you end up with nine sections. The most visually interesting and pleasing portions of the screen will be at the points where the lines intersect.

21. [22]
22. [24]
23. [24]
24. [25]

Figure 13.4

Figure 13.4 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Figure 13.5



Aligning your text and images with these points is preferred to centering everything on the screen.[12] See Figure 13.4. Feel free to experiment with the right and left aligned content for contrast and interest. Sticking with a centered layout means more work trying to make the slide interesting.[5]

Understanding how people view images (and thus slides) can help you direct the viewer's attention to the main point of your slide. In countries that read text from left to right and top to bottom, like English-speaking countries, people tend to also read images and slides the same way. Starting in the upper left of the screen, they read in a **Z pattern**, exiting the page in the bottom right corner unless their vision is side-tracked by the objects they are looking at (as in Figure 13.5).

Viewers' eyes are scanning from focus point to focus point in an image, so you need to consciously create visual cues to direct them to the relevant information. Cues can be created subtly by the placement of objects in the slide, by showing movement, or more obviously by using a simple arrow.[7] Make sure all people and pets are facing into your slide and preferably at your main point, as in Figure 13.6. If your slide contains a road, path, car, plane, etc., have them also facing into your slide. When the natural motion or gaze of your images points away from your slide, your viewers look that way too. Being aware of this and addressing the natural tendencies of

1. [3]
2. [4]
3. [26]
4. [27]
5. [6]
6. [28]
7. [8]
8. [29]

people when viewing images can help you select images and design slides that keep the viewer engaged in your message.[9]

Backgrounds and Effects

PowerPoint and other slideware have a variety of templates containing backgrounds that are easy to implement for a consistent slide show. Most of them, however, contain distracting graphics that are counter to the simplicity you are aiming for in order to produce a clear message. It is best to use solid colors, if you even need a background at all. For some slide shows, you can make the slides with full-screen images, thus eliminating the need for a background color.

Graphic design is the paradise of individuality, eccentricity, heresy, abnormality, hobbies and humors. – George Santayana

9. [10]
10. [30]

Should you choose to use a background color, make sure you are consistent throughout your presentation. Different colors portray different meanings, but much of this is cultural and contextual, so there are few hard and fast rules about the meaning of colors. One universal recommendation is to avoid the color red because it has been shown to reduce your ability to think clearly. Bright colors, such as yellow, pink, and orange, should also be avoided as background colors, as they are too distracting. Black, on the other hand, is generally associated with sophistication and can be a very effective background as long as there is sufficient contrast with the other elements on your slide.[1]

When designing your presentation, it is tempting to show off your tech skills with glitzy transitions, wipes, fades, moving text, sounds, and a variety of other actions. These are distracting to your audience and should be avoided. They draw attention away from you and your message, instead focusing the audience's attention on the screen. Since people naturally look at what is moving and expect it to mean something, meaningless effects, no matter how subtle, distract your audience, and affect their ability to grasp the content. Make sure that all your changes are meaningful and reinforce your message[3].

Colors

There are complicated and fascinating biological and psychological processes associated with color and color perception that are beyond the scope of this chapter. Because color can have such a

1. [2]
2. [31]
3. [4]
4. [32]

huge impact on the ability to see and understand your visuals, this section will explore basic rules and recommendations for working with color.

Much of what we perceive in terms of a color is based on what color is next to it. Be sure to use colors that *contrast* so they can be easily distinguished from each other (think yellow and dark blue for high contrast, not dark blue and purple). High contrast improves visibility, particularly at a distance. To ensure you have sufficient contrast, you can view your presentation in greyscale either in the software if available or by printing out your slides on a black and white printer.[5]

Figure 13.7

Figure 13.7 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

> *Color does not add a pleasant quality to design—it reinforces it.* – Pierre Bonnard

As seen in Figure 13.7, warm colors (reds, oranges, yellows) appear to come to the foreground when set next to a cool color (blues, grays, purples) which recede into the background. Tints (pure color mixed with white, think pink) stand out against a darker background. Shades (pure color mixed with black, think maroon) recede into a light background.[7] If you want something to stand out, these color combination rules can act as a guide.

5. [6]
6. [33]
7. [8]
8. [34]

Avoid using red and green closely together. Red-green color blindness is the predominate form of color blindness, meaning that the person cannot distinguish between those two colors (Vorick, 2011). There are other forms of color blindness, and you can easily check to see if your visuals will be understandable to everyone using an online tool such as the Coblis Color Blindness Simulator to preview images as a color-blind person would see it. Certain red-blue pairings can be difficult to look at for the non-color blind. These colors appear to vibrate when adjacent to each other and are distracting and sometimes unpleasant to view.[9]

Figure 13.8

Figure 13.8 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

With all these rules in place, selecting a **color palette**, the group of colors to use throughout your presentation, can be daunting. Some color pairs, like *complementary colors* or *analogous colors* as in Figure 13.8, are naturally pleasing to the eye and can be easy options for the color novice. There are also online tools for selecting pleasing color palettes using standard color pairings including Kuler and Color

9. [10]
10. [35]

Scheme Designer. You can also use websites like Colorbrewer to help identify an appropriate palette of colors that are visually distinct, appropriate for the colorblind, and that will photocopy well, should you decide to also include this information in a handout.

> *I'm a visual thinker, not a language-based thinker. My brain is like Google Images.* – Temple Grandin

Fonts

There are thousands of fonts available today. One might even say there has been a renaissance in font design with the onset of the digital age. Despite many beautiful options, it is best to stick to standard fonts that are considered screen friendly. These include the *serif fonts* Times New Roman, Georgia, and Palatino, and the *sans serif* fonts Ariel, Helvetica, Tahoma, and Veranda.[11] These fonts work well with the limitations of computer screens and are legible from a distance if sized

Figure 13.9

Figure 13.9 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

11. [12]
12. [36]

appropriately. Other non-standard fonts, while attractive and eye-catching, may not display properly on all computers. If the font isn't installed on the computer you are presenting from, the default font will be used which alters the text and design of the slide.

Readability is a top concern with font use, particularly for those at the back of your audience, furthest from the screen. After you have selected a font (see previous paragraph), make sure that the font size is large enough for everyone to read clearly. If you have the opportunity to use the presentation room before the event, view your slides from the back of the room. They should be clearly visible. This is not always possible and should not be done immediately preceding your talk, as you won't have time to effectively edit your entire presentation. Presentation guru Duarte[13] describes an ingenious way to test visibility from your own computer.

Measure your monitor diagonally in inches, display your slides, then step back the same number of feet as you measured on your monitor in inches. For example, if you have a 17-inch screen, step back 17 feet to see what is legible.

Create your own visual style… let it be unique for yourself and yet identifiable for others. – Orson Welles

In addition to font style and size, there are other font "rules" to improve your slides:

- Don't use decorative, script, or visually complex fonts.
- Never use the Comic Sans font if you want to retain any credibility with your audience.
- If you must use more than one font, use one serif font and one sans serif font.
- Use the same font(s) and size(s) consistently throughout your

13. [14]
14. [37]

presentation.
- Don't use all upper case or all bold.
- Avoid small caps and all word art, shadows, outlines, stretching text, and other visual effects.
- Use italics and underlines only for their intended purposes, not for design.

While there are many rules listed here, they can be summarized as" keep it as simple as possible."[15] See *Figure 13.9* for examples of poor font choices.

Text

Nothing is more hotly debated in slide design than the amount of text that should be on a slide. Godin says "no more than six words on a slide. EVER."[17] Other common approaches include the 5×5 rule—5 lines of text, 5 words per line—and similar 6×6 and 7×7 rules.[19] Even with these recommendations, it is still painfully common to see slides with so much text on them that they can't be read by the audience. The type has to be so small to fit all the words on the slide that no one can read it. Duarte[21] keenly points out that if you have too many words, you no longer have a visual aid. You have either

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16. [38]
17. [18]
18. [39]
19. [20]
20. [40]
21. [22]
22. [41]

a paper or a teleprompter, and she recommends opting for a small number of words.

Once you understand that the words on the screen are competing for your audience's attention, it will be easier to edit your slide text down to a minimum. The next time you are watching a presentation and the slide changes, notice how you aren't really grasping what the speaker is saying, and you also aren't really understanding what you are reading. Studies have proved this split-attention affects our ability to retain information;[23] so when presenting, you need to give your audience silent reading time when you display a new slide. That is: talk, advance to your next slide, wait for them to read the slide, and resume talking. If you consider how much time your audience is reading rather than listening, hopefully you will decide to reduce the text on your slide and return the focus back to you, the speaker, and your message.

There are several ways to reduce the number of words on your page, but don't do it haphazardly. As previously discussed, instead of simply abbreviating your message to make it "fit," consider turning as many concepts as possible into images. Studies have shown that people retain more information when they see images that relate to the words they are hearing.[25] And when people are presented information for a very short time, they remember images better than words.[27]

23. [24]
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27. [28]
28. [44]

TIP

An easy way to judge how much time your audience needs to read your slide silently, is to read the slide text to yourself in reverse order.

The ubiquitous use of bulleted lists is also hotly debated. PowerPoint is practically designed around the bulleted-list format, even though is it regularly blamed for dull, tedious presentations with either overly dense or overly superficial content.[29] Mostly this format is used (incorrectly) as a presenter's outline. "*No one can do a good presentation with slide after slide of bullet points. No One.*"[31] Reserve bulleted lists for specifications or explaining the order of processes. In all other

Figure 13.10

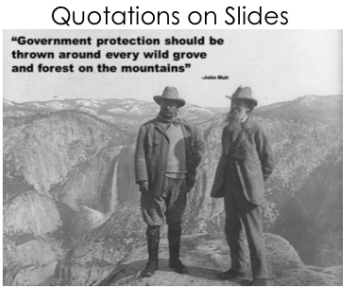

Figure 13.10 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

29. [30]
30. [45]
31. [32]
32. [46]

cases, look for ways to use images, a short phrase, or even no visual at all.

Quotes, on the other hand, are not as offensive to design when they are short, legible, and infrequently used. They can be a very powerful way to hammer a point home or to launch into your next topic.[33] See Figure 13.10 for an example. If you do use a quote in your slide show, immediately stop and read it out loud or allow time for it to be read silently. If the quote is important enough for you to include it in the talk, the quote deserves the audience's time to read and think about it. Alternately, use a photo of the speaker or of the subject with a phrase from the quote you will be reading them, making the slide enhance the point of the quote.

Images

Images can be powerful and efficient ways to tap into your audience's emotions. Use photographs to introduce an abstract idea, to evoke emotion, to present evidence, or to direct the audience attention, just make sure it is compatible with your message.[35] Photos aren't the only images available. You might consider using simplified images like silhouettes, line art, diagrams, enlargements, or exploded views, but these should be high quality and relevant. Simplified can be easier to understand, particularly if you are showing something that has a lot of detail. Simple images also translate better than words to a multicultural audience.[37] In

33. [34]
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36. [48]
37. [38]
38. [49]

all cases, choose only images that enhance your spoken words and are professional quality. This generally rules out the clip art that comes with slideware, whose use is a sign of amateurism. Select high-quality images and don't be afraid to use your entire slide to display the image. Boldness with images often adds impact.

When using images, do not enlarge them to the point that the image becomes blurry, also known as **pixelation**. Pixelation, (Figure 13.11) is caused when the resolution of your image is too low for your output device (e.g. printer, monitor, projector). When selecting images, look for clear ones that can be placed in your presentation without enlarging them. A common practice is to use images over 1,000 pixels wide for filling an entire slide. If your images begin to pixelate, either reduce the size of the image or select a different image.

Figure 13.11

Pixilated Image

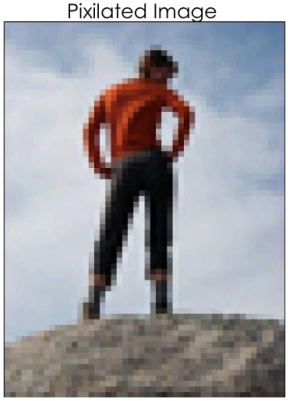

Figure 13.11 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Never use an image that has a **watermark** on it, as in Figure 13.2. A watermark is text or a logo that is placed in a digital image to prevent people from re-using it. It is common for companies that sell images to have a preview available that has a watermark on

it. This allows you, the potential customer, to see the image, but prevents you from using the image until you have paid for it. Using a watermarked image in your presentation is unprofessional. Select another image without a watermark, take a similar photo yourself, or pay to get the watermark-free version.

You can create images yourself, use free images from places like Pexels, or pay for images from companies like iStockphoto for your presentations. Purchasing images can get expensive quickly and searching for free images is time consuming. Be sure to only use images that you have permission or rights to use and give proper credit for their use. If you are looking for free images, try searching the Creative Commons database for images from places like Flickr, Google, and others. The creators of images with a **Creative Commons License** allow others to use their work, but with specific restrictions. What is and isn't allowed is described in the license for each image. Generally, images can be used in educational or non-commercial settings at no cost as long as you give the photographer credit. Also, images created by the U.S. government and its agencies are copyright free and can be used at no cost.

One final consideration with using images: having the same image on every page, be it part of the slide background or your company logo, can be distracting and should be removed or minimized. As mentioned earlier, the more you can simplify your slide, the easier it will be for your audience to understand your message.

Graphs and Charts

As we mentioned in the chapter on support materials, if you have numerical data that you want to present, consider using a graph or chart. You are trying to make a specific point with the data on the slide, so make sure that the point—the conclusion you want your audience to draw—is clear. This may mean that you reduce the

amount of data you present, even though it is tempting to include all of your data on your slide.

It is best to minimize the amount of information and focus instead on the simple and clear conclusion.[39] You can include the complete data set in your handout if you feel it is necessary.[41] Particularly when it comes to numerical data, identify the meaning in the numbers and exclude the rest. "Audiences are screaming 'make it clear,' not 'cram more in.' You won't often hear an audience member say, 'That presentation would have been so much better if it were longer."[43] In some cases you can even ditch the graph altogether and display the one relevant fact that is your conclusion.

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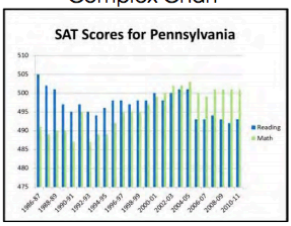
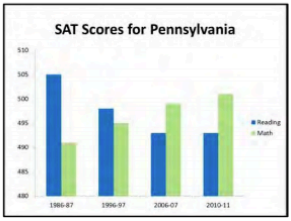
Figure 13.13

Complex Chart



Chart



Simple Graphic

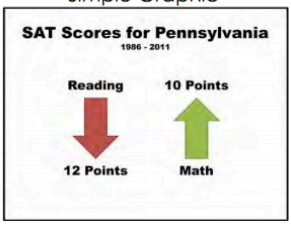
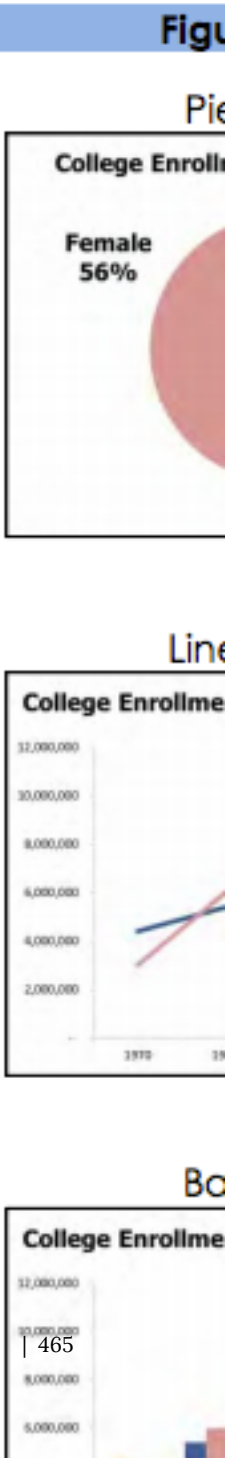


Figure 13.13 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.



Different charts have different purposes, and it is important to select the one that puts your data in the appropriate context to be clearly understood.[45] Pie charts show how the parts relate to the whole and are suitable for up to eight segments, as long as they remain visually distinct.[47] Start your first slice of the pie at 12:00 with your smallest portion and continue around the circle clockwise as the sections increase in size. Usea line graph to show trends over time or how data relates or interacts. Bar charts are good for showing comparisons of size or magnitude[49] and for showing precise comparisons.[51] There are other types of charts and graphs available, but these are the most common.

When designing charts, one should use easily distinguishable colors with clear labels. Be consistent with your colors and data groupings.[53] For clarity, avoid using 3-D graphs and charts, and remove as much of the background noise (lines, shading, etc.) as possible.[55] All components of your graph, once the clutter is removed, should be distinct from any background color. Finally, don't get too complex in any one graph, make sure your message is as clear as possible, and make sure to visually highlight the conclusion you want the audience to draw.

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46. [53]
47. [48]
48. [54]
49. [50]
50. [55]
51. [52]
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54. [57]
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57. Kosslyn 2007 ↲
58. Reynolds 2008 ↲

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Chapter Fifteen – Speaking to Inform

Functions of Informative Speeches

People encounter a number of formal and informal informative presentations throughout their day, and these presentations have several consequences. First, informative presentations *provide people with knowledge*. When others share facts or circumstances associated with some topic, our comprehension, awareness or familiarity is increased. The speaker imparts information, and this information is turned into knowledge. A music teacher describes the difference between a note and chord as an introduction to music. When issuing a warning to a teenager, a police officer explains the nature of the moving violation. A travel agent clarifies for customers the policies for airline ticket refunds. Participants at a cultural fair are enlightened by a shaman explaining her spiritual practices. Knowledge helps us to understand the world around us, enables us to make connections, and helps us to predict the future.

All men by nature desire knowledge. – Aristotle

Second, informative presentations *shape our perceptions*. These presentations can affect how people see a subject by bringing it to light or may influence what is seen as important by virtue of directing attention to the subject (Osborn & Osborn, 1991). Information helps us to interpret our experiences, it shapes our values and beliefs, it may alter our self-concept, and it gives meaning to situations. Imagine you meet your new boss, and she is very curt and pre-occupied during the first staff meeting. You may at first perceive her as being rude, unless later you find out that just before your meeting with her, she learned that her father had been hospitalized with a stroke. Learning this new information allowed you to see the situation from a different perspective. In the same way, informative presentations enable us to get a sense of "the big picture" and improve our ability to think and evaluate.

Some informative presentations may be aimed at helping listeners understand the number, variety, and quality of alternatives available to them (Hogan et al., 2010). Consequently, informative presentations also serve to *articulate alternatives*. A car sales associate might explain to you the features of one car in comparison

to another car in order to help you differentiate between the models. A doctor might explain to your grandmother her treatment options for arthritis. A fitness trainer may demonstrate to you several types of exercises to help you strengthen your abdominal muscles and reduce your waistline. If you go to a temporary employment agency, a staff member may provide you will a range of job options that fit your qualifications. Successful informative presentations provide information which improves listeners' ability to make wise decisions, because they understand all of their options (Jaffe, 1998).

Finally, informative presentations *enhance our ability to survive and evolve*. Our existence and safety depend upon the successful communication of facts and knowledge. An informative speech "helps keep countries developing, communicates valuable and useful information in thousands of areas, and continues to change, improve or upgrade the lives of audiences" (Wilbur, 2000, p. 99). For thousands of years, cultural and technical knowledge was passed from generation to generation orally. Even today with the presence of the internet, you are still likely to get a good amount of information verbally. We have all seen "how to" YouTube videos, and although these have a significant visual components, the "experts" still have to give a verbal explanation. Through meetings, presentations and face-to-face interactions, we gain information about how to perform and improve in our jobs. To keep our children safe, we don't give them an instruction manual, we sit down with them and explain things. All of the knowledge we accumulate while we live will be passed down to (hopefully) improve on the lives of those who come after us. Much of this information will be passed down in the form of a presentation.

Types of Informative Speeches

Erica Minton – Late Night Dry Erase Board Session – CC BY-NC 2.0.

For some speakers, deciding on a topic is one of the most difficult parts of informative speaking. The following subsections begin by discussing several categories of topics that you might use for an informative presentation. Then we discuss how you might structure your speech to address potential audience difficulties in understanding your topic or information.

Objects

The term "objects" encompasses many topics we might not ordinarily consider to be "things." It's a category that includes people, institutions, places, substances, and inanimate things. The following are some of these topics:

- Mitochondria
- Dream catchers
- Sharks
- Hubble telescope
- Seattle's Space Needle
- Malta
- Silicon chip
- Spruce Goose
- Medieval armor
- DDT insecticide
- Soy inks
- NAACP

You will find it necessary to narrow your topic about an object because, like any topic, you can't say everything about it in a single speech. In most cases, there are choices about how to narrow the topic. Here are some specific purpose statements that reflect ways of narrowing a few of those topics:

- To inform the audience about the role of soy inks in reducing toxic pollution
- To inform the audience about the current uses of the banned insecticide DDT
- To inform the audience about what we've learned from the Hubble telescope
- To inform the audience about the role of the NAACP in the

passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- To describe the significance of the gigantic Spruce Goose, the wooden airplane that launched an airline

These specific purposes reflect a narrow, but interesting, approach to each topic. These purposes are precise, and they should help you maintain your focus on a narrow but deep slice of knowledge.

People

This category applies both to specific individuals and also to roles. The following are some of these topics:

- Dalai Lamas
- Astronauts
- Tsar Nicholas II
- Modern midwives
- Mata Hari
- Catherine the Great
- Navajo code talkers
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Justice Thurgood Marshall
- Madame Curie
- Leopold Mozart
- Aristotle
- The Hemlock Society
- Sonia Sotomayor

- Jack the Ripper

There is a great deal of information about each one of these examples. In order to narrow the topic or write a thesis statement, it's important to recognize that your speech should not be a biography, or timeline, of someone's life. If you attempt to deliver a comprehensive report of every important event and accomplishment related to your subject, then nothing will seem any more important than anything else. To capture and hold your audience's interest, you must narrow to a focus on a feature, event, achievement, or secret about your human topic.

Here are some purpose statements that reflect a process of narrowing:

- To inform the audience about the training program undergone by the first US astronauts to land on the moon
- To inform the audience about how a young Dalai Lama is identified
- To inform the audience about why Gandhi was regarded as a mahatma, or "great heart"
- To inform the audience about the extensive scientific qualifications of modern midwives

Without a limited purpose, you will find, with any of these topics, that there's simply too much to say. Your purpose statement will be a strong decision-making tool about what to include in your speech.

Events

An event can be something that occurred only once, or an event that is repeated:

- The murder of Emmett Till
- The Iditarod Dogsled Race
- The Industrial Revolution
- The discovery of the smallpox vaccine
- The Bikini Atoll atomic bomb tests
- The Bay of Pigs
- The Super Bowl
- The Academy Awards

Again, we find that any of these topics must be carefully narrowed in order to build a coherent speech. Failure to do so will result in a shallow speech. Here are a few ways to narrow the purpose:

- To explain how the murder of Emmett Till helped energize the civil rights movement
- To describe how the Industrial Revolution affected the lives of ordinary people
- To inform the audience about the purpose of the Iditarod dogsled race

There are many ways to approach any of these and other topics, but again, you must emphasize an important dimension of the event. Otherwise, you run the risk of producing a time line in which the main point gets lost. In a speech about an event, you may use a **chronological order** but if you choose to do so, you can't include every detail. The following is an example:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the purpose of the Iditarod dogsled race.

Central Idea: The annual Iditarod commemorates the heroism of Balto, the sled dog that led a dog team carrying medicine 1150 miles to save Nome from an outbreak of diphtheria.

Main Points:

1. Diphtheria broke out in a remote Alaskan town.
2. Dogsleds were the only transportation for getting medicine.
3. The Iditarod Trail was long, rugged, and under siege of severe weather.
4. Balto the dog knew where he was going, even when the musher did not.
5. The annual race commemorates Balto's heroism in saving the lives of the people of Nome.

In this example, you must explain the event. However, another way to approach the same event would describe it. The following is an example:

Specific Purpose: To describe the annual Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Central Idea: It's a long and dangerous race.

Main Points:

1. The 1150-mile, ten- to seventeen-day race goes through wilderness with widely spaced checkpoints for rest, first aid, and getting fresh dogs.
2. A musher, or dogsled driver, must be at least fourteen years old to endure the rigors of severe weather, exhaustion, and loneliness.
3. Mushers are responsible for their own food, food for twelve to sixteen dogs, and for making sure they don't get lost.
4. Reaching the end of the race without getting lost, even in last place, is considered honorable and heroic.
5. The expense of participation is greater than the prize awarded to the winner.

By now you can see that there are various ways to approach a topic while avoiding an uninspiring time line. In the example of the Iditarod race, you could alternatively frame it as an Alaskan tourism topic, or you could emphasize the enormous staff involved in first aid, search and rescue, dog care, trail maintenance, event coordination, financial management, and registration.

Concepts

Concepts are abstract ideas that exist independent of whether they are observed or practiced, such as the example of social equality that follows. Concepts can include hypotheses and theories.

- The glass ceiling
- Ethnocentrism
- Honor codes
- Autism
- Karma
- Wellness
- Fairness theory
- Bioethics
- The American Dream
- Social equality

Here are a few examples of specific purposes developed from the examples:

- To explain why people in all cultures are ethnocentric
- To describe the Hindu concept of karma
- To distinguish the differences between the concepts of wellness and health
- To show the resources available in our local school system for children with autism
- To explain three of Dr. Stephen Suranovic's seven categories of fairness

Here is one possible example of a way to develop one of these topics:

Specific Purpose: To explain why people in all cultures are ethnocentric.

Central Idea: There are benefits to being ethnocentric.

Main Points:

1. Ethnocentrism is the idea that one's own culture is superior to others.
2. Ethnocentrism strongly contributes to positive group identity.
3. Ethnocentrism facilitates the coordination of social activity.
4. Ethnocentrism contributes to a sense of safety within a group.
5. Ethnocentrism becomes harmful when it creates barriers.

In an example of a concept about which people disagree, you must represent multiple and conflicting views as fully and fairly as possible. For instance:

Specific Purpose: To expose the audience to three different views of the American Dream.

Central Idea: The American Dream is a shared dream, an impossible dream, or a dangerous dream, depending on the perspective of the individual.

Main Points:

1. The concept of the American Dream describes a state of abundant well-being in which an honest and productive

American can own a home; bring up a family; work at a permanent, well-paying job with benefits; and retire in security and leisure.
2. Many capitalists support the social pattern of working hard to deserve and acquire the material comforts and security of a comfortable life.
3. Many sociologists argue that the American Dream is far out of reach for the 40 percent of Americans at the bottom of the economic scale.
4. Many environmentalists argue that the consumption patterns that accompany the American Dream have resulted in the depletion of resources and the pollution of air, water, and soil.

Processes

If your speech topic is a process, your goal should be to help your audience understand it or be able to perform it. In either instance, processes involve a predictable series of changes, phases, or steps.

- Soil erosion
- Cell division
- Physical therapy
- Volcanic eruption
- Paper recycling
- Consumer credit evaluations
- Scholarship money searches
- Navy Seal training
- Portfolio building

- The development of Alzheimer's disease

For some topics, you will need presentation aids in order to make your meaning clear to your listeners. Even in cases where you don't absolutely need a presentation aid, one might be useful. For instance, if your topic is evaluating consumer credit, instead of just describing a comparison between two different interest rates applied to the same original amount of debt, it would be helpful to show a graph of the difference. This might also be the sort of topic that would strongly serve the needs of your audience before they find themselves in trouble. Since this will be an informative speech, you must resist the impulse to tell your listeners that one form of borrowing is good and another is bad; you must simply show them the difference in numbers. They can reach their own conclusions.

Organizing your facts is crucially important when discussing a process. Every stage of a process must be clear and understandable. When two or more things occur at the same time, as they might in the development of Alzheimer's disease, it is important to make it clear that several things are occurring at once. For example, as plaque is accumulating in the brain, the patient is likely to begin exhibiting various symptoms.

Here's an example of the initial steps of a speech about a process:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about how to build an academic portfolio.

Central Idea: A portfolio represents you and emphasizes your best skills.

Main Points:

1. A portfolio is an organized selection containing the best examples of the skills you can offer an employer.
2. A portfolio should contain samples of a substantial body of written work, print and electronically published pieces, photography, and DVDs of your media productions.
3. A portfolio should be customized for each prospective employer.

4. The material in your portfolio should be consistent with the skills and experience in your résumé.

In a speech about the process of building a portfolio, there will be many smaller steps to include within each of the main points. For instance, creating separate sections of the portfolio for different types of creative activities, writing a table of contents, labeling and dating your samples, making your samples look attractive and professional, and other steps should be inserted where it makes the most sense, in the most organized places, in order to give your audience, the most coherent understanding possible.

You've probably noticed that there are topics that could be appropriate in more than one category. For instance, the 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helen's could be legitimately handled as an event or as a process. If you approach the eruption as an event, most of the information you include will focus on human responses and the consequences on humans and the landscape. If you approach the eruption as a process, you will be using visual aids and explanations to describe geological changes before and during the eruption. You might also approach this topic from the viewpoint of a person whose life was affected by the eruption. This should remind you that there are many ways to approach most topics, and because of that, your narrowing choices and your purpose will be the important foundation determining the structure of your informative speech.

Developing Informative Speeches

The first sections of this chapter explained the importance of informative speaking, the functions of informative speeches, and the four major types of informative speeches. This final section discusses three goals in developing informative speeches and advice for increasing the effectiveness of your speech. These three goals include 1) arousing the interest of your audience, 2) presenting information in a way that can be understood, and 3) helping the audience remember what you have said (Fujishin, 2000).

Generate and Maintain Interest

Use Attention-Getting Elements

Before you capture the interest of an audience, you have to get their attention. As you know, attention getters are used in the introduction of a speech, but **attention getters** can also be used throughout your speech to maintain an audience's attention. There are a number of techniques you can use that will naturally draw listeners' attention (German et al., 2010).

Shark. CC BY-NC-ND

Intensity refers to something that has a high or extreme degree of emotion, color, volume, strength or other defining characteristic. In a speech about sharks' senses, showing how sharks smell 10,000 times better than humans would be an example of the intensity principle.

Novelty involves those things that are new or unusual. Discussing the recent invention of the flesh-eating mushroom death suit

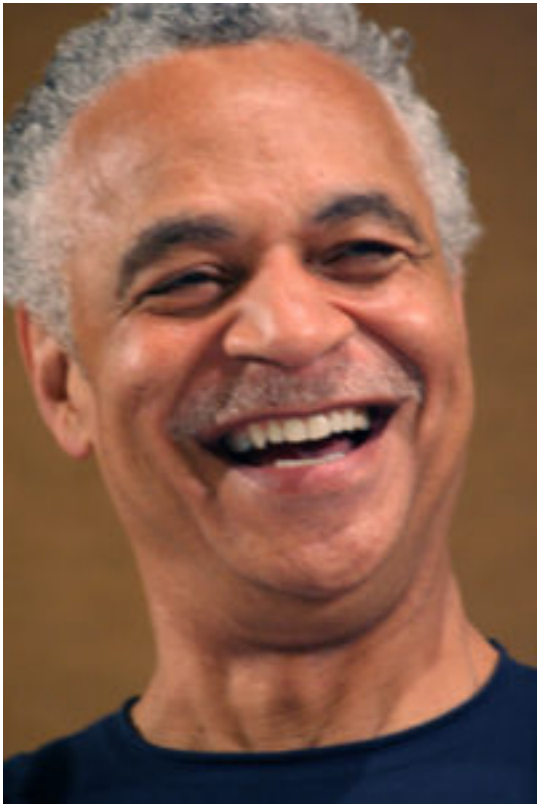
developed by Jae Rhim Lee would be novel. This suit is designed to help bodies decompose naturally above ground to avoid the use of dangerous embalming chemicals.

Hot Peppers. CC BY: Attribution

Contrast can also be used to draw attention through comparison to something that is different or opposite. This works best when the differences are significant. If you were showing the audience how to make hot sauce, and you showed a bar graph comparing the Scoville units (level of hotness) of different chili peppers, this would be contrast. Jalapenos rate at 2500–8000 Scoville units, habaneros rate at 100,000–350,000, and the naga jolokia rates at 855,000–1,041,241.

Audiences will also attend to movement or **activity**. To employ this technique, speakers can either use action words, well-chosen movements, an increased rate of speech, or show action with video. A speech describing or showing extreme sports with high levels of risk, a fast pace, or amazing stunts could be used to illustrate activity.

Finally, **humor** can be used to draw attention to a subject or point but be sure that it is relevant and in good taste. In a speech about the devotion of Trekkies (Star Trek fans), you could share the example of Tony Alleyne who designed and outfitted his flat in England as a replica of the deck of the Voyager. You could also direct the audience's attention to couples who have wedding ceremonies spoken in Klingon.



Tell a Story

Story telling is not only the basis for most of our entertainment; it is also one of the best ways to teach an audience (Carlson, 2005). Also known as narratives, stories typically have a beginning in which the characters and setting are introduced, a rise in action, some complication or problem, and a resolution. Stories with compelling characters can be used in a creative way to weave facts otherwise dry and technical facts together (Walters, 1995), as in a speech about preparing a space shuttle for take-off from a mouse's perspective. Jaffe (1998) differentiates between three types of narratives that can

be used in informative speeches. The first type of story is a natural reality in which natural or scientific facts are brought together in chronological accounts, as in the formation of the Grand Canyon. The second narrative involves social realities which detail historic events, and the development of cultures and institutions. The last kind of story, the ultimate reality, is focused on profound philosophical and spiritual questions like "Where do we come from?" and "What happens to us when we die?"

Nursery rhymes and song lyrics familiar to the audience can also be used in an interactive way to get listeners interested in the topic (Maxey & O'Connor, 2006). In a speech about the global population explosion, you could ask audience to finish the phrase "There was an old woman who lived in a shoe…" Common commercials, lyrics to Beatles songs, holiday songs, and children's games are universal.

> *The wisest mind has something yet to learn.* – George Santayna

Dom and Chris. CC BY: Attribution

Commercial jingles and song lyrics also work to get the audience involved. You could start a speech on boating safety with these lyrics: Just sit right back / And you'll hear a tale / A tale of a fateful trip / That started from this tropic port / Aboard this tiny ship (from *Gilligan's Island*). Depending on the make-up of your audience, you might use lyrics from Johnny Cash, Billy Holiday, The Doors, The Beatles, JayZ, The Judds or the Arctic Monkeys. Just remember you probably can't read all of the lyrics, you need to make sure the lyrics are directly linked to your topic, and you should be sure to cite the artist and song title.

Just for fun, can you name the artist who sang the lyrics below? Can you think of a speech topic that would correspond to the lyrics? (Answer at the end of the chapter)

Lyric	Artist	Speech Topic
Money, get away. Get a good job with good pay and you're okay. Money, it's a gas. Grab that cash with both hands and make a stash. New car, caviar, four star daydream Think I'll buy me a football team.		

Be Creative

Speakers who are different are memorable (Maxey & O'Connor, 2006). To give your speech impact, be imaginative and dare to push the envelope of conformity. When you have spent time researching a topic, you may be able to envision ways to incorporate surprising facts, props or visuals that make your presentation different from others, and therefore more memorable. You could dress like a Shakespearian actor for a speech about the famous playwright. You could have the audience move their chairs and take part in a yoga demonstration. Or you might use your own audience plants to help with a speech entitled "Behind the Scenes of TV Talk Shows." When one student got up to speak, he drew a row of houses on the blackboard and then began to drink a glass of water and speak about the life giving properties of water. After making a few comments, he threw the glass of water on the blackboard—erasing most of the houses. Then he began his speech on the devastating effects of a flood (be sure to get your professor's permission before you do something like this!). Another student giving a speech about "Clowning" had two actual clowns wait in the hall until she was ready to bring them in and show off their make-up and costumes. The speaker was wise to have her cohorts in the room just long enough to make the point (but not the entire time which would distract from the speaker), and the audience was attentive and

grateful for the variety. Hanks and Parry (1991) explain that anyone can be creative, if they want to be and are willing to make the effort.

For some tips on how to foster your creativity, see Table 15.2. However, you need to remember that creativity is just a tool to help you teach your audience. Do not overlook the requirements of the occasion, the content of your research, or the needs of your audience in your zeal to be creative.

TABLE 15.2 TIPS FOR JUMP STARTING YOUR CREATIVITY FROM EVERYDAY CREATIVITY BY CARLIN FLORA (2009)

- Take a different way to work
- Collaborate with others with complementary skills
- Seek inspiration in beautiful surroundings
- Start working on the problem right away
- Work in a blue room (it boosts creativity)
- Get a hobby or play music
- Think about your problem right before falling asleep

The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt. – Sylvia Plath

Stimulate Audience Intellect

Most people have a genuine desire to understand the world around them, to seek out the truth, and learn how to solve problems. The role of the informative speaker is to satisfy this desire to learn and know. To illustrate our quest for knowledge, consider the success of

the Discovery Channel, the Learning Channel, the History Channel, the Food Network and other educational broadcasts. So how do we appeal to the minds of listeners? Think about all of the information we encounter every day but do not have time to pursue. Think about subjects that you would like to know more about. Ask what information would be universally interesting and useful for listeners. Many people fly on airplanes, but do they know how to survive a plane crash? People also share many ordinary illnesses, so what are some common home remedies? All of the people on earth originated someplace, so who were our ancient ancestors?

In addition to finding topics that relate to listeners, the information we supply should be up to date. For instance, Egypt organized a revolution in 2011, and if you are giving a speech on traveling to the Pyramids, you should be aware of this. When you are talking about a topic that your audience is familiar with, you should share little known facts or paint the subject in a new light. In a speech about a famous person, you might depict what they are like behind the scenes, or what they were like growing up. In a speech about a new technology, you might also talk about the inventors. In a speech about a famous city, you could discuss the more infamous landmarks and attractions.

Create Coherence

Organize Logically

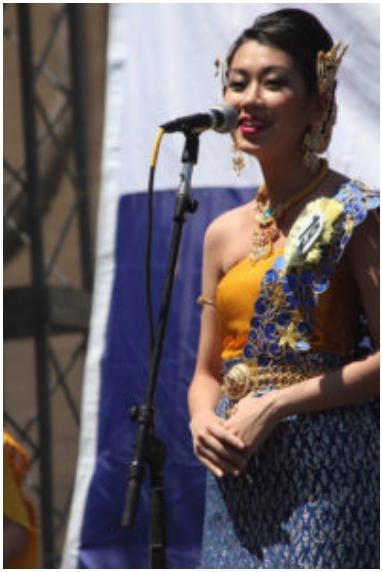
past present future. CC BY-SA

Several types of organizational patterns are discussed in Chapter 9. Using these as a starting point, you should make sure the overall logic of the speech is well thought out. If you were giving speech best suited to chronological order, but presented the steps out of order, it would be very difficult to follow. Those of you who have seen the movie *Memento* (which presented the sequence of events backwards), may have noticed how difficult it was to explain the plot to others. In a logical speech, the points you are trying to draw are obvious, the supporting materials are coherent and correspond exactly to the thesis, and the main points are mutually exclusive and flow naturally from start to finish. Clarity of thought is critical in presenting information. As Peggy Noonan (1998, p. 64) argues:

The most moving thing in a speech is always the logic. It's never the flowery words and flourishes, it's not sentimental exhortations, it's never the faux poetry we're all subjected to these days. It's the logic; it's the thinking behind your case. A good case well-argued and well said is inherently moving. It shows respect for the brains of the listeners. There is an implicit compliment in it. It shows that you are a serious person and that you are talking to other serious persons.

When planning your speech, ask questions like: What information needs to come first? What organizational pattern best suits the topic? What information must be shared or omitted to aid in audience understanding? What points or sub-points should be grouped together to aid listeners' understanding?

Use Simple Language



Speech. CC BY-SA

One common mistake that speech writers make when they are writing their speech is to use the same language that they would use in a written document. Experienced speech writers know that simple language and ideas are easier to understand than complex ones. "Clear speaking is not an alternative to intelligent discourse, but rather an enabler of intelligent discourse" (Carlson, 2005, p. 79).

Did you know that Lincoln's Gettysburg address contains only 271 words, and 251 of these words only have one or two syllables (Hughes & Phillips, 2000)? Another benefit of using simple language is that you are less likely to trip over or mispronounce simple words.

Refer to Chapter 12 on Language Use for further differences between the written word and spoken word.

Table 15.3 Simplify Your Language	
Low Impact	**High Impact**
Under the present circumstances	Currently
At the present time	Now
Are in agreement with	Agree
Due to the fact that	Because
Is fully operational	Works
In close proximity to	Near
Of sufficient magnitude	Big enough
In the event of	If
Each and every one	Each
In the course of	During
Never before or since	Never
Deciduous trees (jargon)	Trees that lose their leaves
Somnolent (jargon)	Drowsy
Awesome (slang)	Impressive
Put the bit on (slang)	Borrow
No brainer (cliché)	Easy decision
An arm and a leg	Expensive
Vertically challenged (euphemism)	Short
Gone to the great beyond (euphemism)	Dead

Instead of "protracted," say "drawn out." Instead of "conundrum," say "puzzle." And instead of "loquacious," say "talkative." As you are writing your speech you also want to avoid technical jargon, slang, clichés, and euphemisms. This type of language is difficult to understand and tends to be low impact, as we mentioned previously in the chapter on Language. Compare the *Low Impact* language column with the *High Impact* column in Table 15.3 above to see examples of ways to make your language more powerful.

Avoid Information Overload

No one is given an unlimited amount of time to speak. You can't cover everything that there is to know about your topic. And even if you could speak forever about everything there was to know about a subject, your listeners would never be able to take it all in. **Information overload** occurs when a person feels that they are faced with an overwhelming amount of information, with the effect that they are unable to process it all or unable to make decision. So, whether you have five minutes to give a presentation or three eight-hour days, you will need to narrow and focus your speech topic and objectives. If you know that you have ten minutes to speak, you will not be able to cover "Car Maintenance for Dummies," but you probably could give a good speech entitled "How to Change the Oil in Your Car." When planning your speech, be sure to determine the amount of information that can reasonably be covered in the time allowed. In fact, rather than taking the entire allotted speaking time, you should get into the practice of speaking only for 90—95% of the time that you are given (Reynolds, 2008). More is not always better—and your audience will appreciate it if you can skillfully make your point with time to spare.

> *Today knowledge has power. It controls access to opportunity and advancement.* – Peter Drucker

Make Your Speech Memorable

Build in Repetition

Audience retention is determined by a number of factors including listeners' interest, knowledge, physical and emotional state, level of

stress, background, and other competing demands (Fujishin, 2000). One way to help your audience remember the content of your speech is by repetition (Hughes & Phillips, 2000). There are three ways to incorporate repetition into your speech. The first form repetition involves restating your main points in your introduction, body and conclusion. When you do this, you will restate your points using different language—not repeat the points word for word. The second form of repetition is where a word or a phrase is repeated in a poetic way, either throughout the speech or at a critical point in the speech. One example of this would be Abraham Lincoln's "government of the people, by the people, for the people." Another example can be found in Sojourner Truth's speech, delivered in 1851 at a women's rights convention.

Osajus. CC BY: Attribution.

... That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere.
Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much
as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a

woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery,
and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

The final way to use repetition in your speech is through nonverbal communication. When you say the word "four" and you hold up four fingers, or when you verbally agree with a point and nod your head at the same time, you are reinforcing the idea verbally and nonverbally.

Appeal to Different Ways of Learning

Individuals have different learning style preferences, so some people prefer to learn visually [V], some aural [A], some by reading [R] and writing, and some prefer to learn kinesthetically [K] (Fleming, 2001). You can test your own learning style preference at www.varklearn.com. Understanding your own and others' learning styles is useful for two reasons. First, you will find that you tend to teach others using your own learning style. Second, regardless of your own learning styles, you need to appeal to as many different learning styles as possible in your informative speech. To see how each learning style prefers to be taught, see the table below.

Unfortunately, since the ear alone is a very poor information gathering device, steps must be taken to improve retention. Typically, listeners only retain only a small fraction of what is explained to them verbally. The first way to enhance retention is to appeal to as many of the senses as possible. Studies show that audiences retain 20 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, and 50 percent of what they hear *and* see (Westerfield, 2002). When the audience has an opportunity to *do* something (adding the kinesthetic sense), their retention increases to 80 percent (Walters, 1995). Or, if participation is not possible, a handout

will raise retention to an impressive 85 percent—if the audience can review the handout at least once (Slutsky & Aun, 1997).

Table 15.4 The VARK Model of Learning

Learning Style	Approach the Learner With...
Visual Learners	Maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, brochures, flow charts, highlighters, different colors, pictures, word pictures, and different spatial arrangements
Aural Learners	Explanations of new ideas, large and small group discussions, lectures, audio recordings, stories, and jokes
Read/ Write Learners	Lists, essays, reports, textbooks, definitions, printed handouts, readings, manuals, and web pages
Kinesthetic Learners	Field trips, hands-on projects, sensory stimulations, laboratories, recipes and solutions to problems, and collections of samples

From Hawk and Shaw (2007, p. 7) and Fleming (2001).

Another way to help your listeners remember is by the use of techniques like *association*, linking the new topic to things that the audience knows about or already understands. If you were giving a speech about rugby, you might compare it to soccer and football to help the audience understand the rules. The use of *acronyms* also aids retention. On the "*Krusty Krab Training Video*" episode of Spongebob Squarepants (a spoof on corporate training videos), they use the acronym "POOP." When I asked my then eight-year-old son if he remembered (several weeks after watching the episode) what "POOP" stood for, he immediately and correctly answered "People Order Our Patties." The final technique to help audiences remember information is the *simplicity criterion*. Information is best retained when it is explained from top to bottom (rather than bottom to top), when events are presented from first to last (rather than last to first), and when information is presented in the positive voice (rather than in the negative voice) (Devito, 1981).

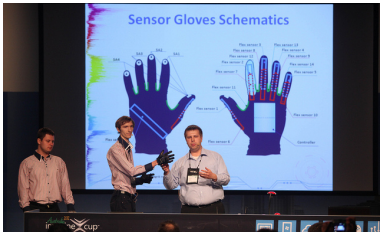
Link Current Knowledge to New Knowledge

Certain sets of knowledge are common to many people in your classroom audience. For instance, most of them know what Wikipedia is. Many have found it a useful and convenient source of information about topics related to their coursework. Because many Wikipedia entries are lengthy, greatly annotated, and followed by substantial lists of authoritative sources, many students have relied on information acquired from Wikipedia in writing papers to fulfill course requirements. All this is information that virtually every classroom listener is likely to know. This is the current knowledge of your audience.

Because your listeners are already familiar with Wikipedia, you can link important new knowledge to their already-existing knowledge. Wikipedia is an "open source," meaning that anyone can supplement, edit, correct, distort, or otherwise alter the information in Wikipedia. In addition to your listeners' knowledge that a great deal of good information can be found in Wikipedia, they must now know that it isn't authoritative. Some of your listeners may not enjoy hearing this message, so you must find a way to make it acceptable.

One way to make the message acceptable to your listeners is to show what Wikipedia does well. For example, some Wikipedia entries contain many good references at the end. Most of those references are likely to be authoritative, having been written by scholars. In searching for information on a topic, a student can look up one or more of those references in full-text databases or in the library. In this way, Wikipedia can be helpful in steering a student toward the authoritative information they need. Explaining this to your audience will help them accept, rather than reject, the bad news about Wikipedia.

Use Visuals



Imagine Cup Finalists. CC BY: Attribution

Visual aids can be a very powerful and efficient way to present facts that might otherwise be difficult to convey verbally. The benefits of visuals used for informative speeches include increasing interest, understanding, retention, and the speed at which your audience can understand complex facts. We live in a mediated culture, where people are visually oriented. This means that they expect to be visually stimulated with pictures, graphs, maps, video images and objects. Speakers who do not make use of visuals may be at a disadvantage when compared to speakers who use them. This is assuming of course that the visuals enhance what you are saying and that you use them well. As you know, plenty of people use Power Point, and it does not necessarily make their speech better or more memorable.

Perhaps the best reason to use visuals aids during an informative speech is to help your audience understand a concept that may be difficult to understand just by explaining it. In a speech about heart bypass surgery, would it be better to verbally describe the parts of the human heart, or to show a picture of it? How about a model of the heart? How about an actual human heart? Be sure to consider your audience! What if your speech is about an abstract concept that does not lend itself well to slick graphic representations? One way trainers get their audiences involved and make their presentations memorable is to provide handouts which the listeners complete (in part) themselves. Regardless of the type of visual media you select for your speech, just make sure that it does not overpower you or the subject. Work to keep the audience's attention

on you and what you are saying and use the visual to complement what *you* have to say.

Refer to Chapter 14 on Presentation Aids for more in-depth discussion of visual aids.

References

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Chapter Sixteen – Speaking to Persuade

On the first day of class, your instructor provided you a "lay of the land." They introduced you to course documents, the syllabus, and reading materials.

"It's important that you read your textbook," they likely shared. "The material will allow you to dive deeper into the course material and, even if you don't initially realize its importance, the reading material will build throughout the semester. The time spent reading will be worth it because without that knowledge, it will be difficult to complete assignments and receive full credit. The time spent reading will benefit you after you leave for the semester, too, and you'll have critical thinking skills that will permeate your life out of the classroom." Sound familiar?

This is persuasion. Your instructor is persuading you that reading the textbook is a good idea—that it's an action you should take throughout the semester. As an audience member, you get to weigh the potential benefits of reading the textbook in relation to the consequences. But if your instructor has succeeded in their persuasive attempt, you will read the book because they have done a good job of helping you to conclude in favor of their perspective.

Your instructor may have even gone a step further, introducing themselves and including their credentials, such as degrees earned, courses taught, years of teaching, books published, etc. That sounds like what Aristotle called *ethos*, right? This is another key to persuasion, which we will discuss further in Chapter 17.

Persuasion is everywhere. We are constantly inundated with ideas, perspectives, politics, and products that are requesting our attention. Persuasion is often positively paired with ideas of encouragement, influence, urging, or logic. Your instructors, for example, are passionate about the subject position and want you to succeed in the class. Sadly, persuasion can also be experienced as manipulation, force, lack of choice, or inducement. You might get suspicious if you think someone is trying to persuade you. You might not appreciate someone telling you to change your viewpoints.

In this chapter, we explore persuasive speaking and work through

best practices in persuasion. Because persuasion is everywhere, being critical and aware of persuasive techniques will allow you to both ethically persuade audiences and evaluate arguments when others attempt to persuade you. We'll start with the basics by answering the question, "what is persuasion?"

Introducing Persuasive Speaking

Persuasion is "the process of creating, reinforcing, or changing people's beliefs or actions" (Lucas, 2015, p. 306). Persuasion is important in all communication processes and contexts—interpersonal, professional, digital—and it's something that you do every day. Convincing a friend to go see the latest movie instead of staying in to watch TV; giving your instructor a reason to give you an extension on an assignment; writing a cover letter and resume and going through an interview for a job—all of these and so many more are examples of persuasion. In fact, it is hard to think of life without the everyday give-and-take of persuasion. In each example listed, Lucas's definition of persuasion is being implemented: you are asking a person or group to agree with your main idea.

When using persuasion in a public speech, the goal is to create, change, or reinforce a belief or action by addressing community problems or controversies. Remember that public speaking is a long-standing type of civic engagement; when we publicly speak, we are participating in democratic deliberation. **Deliberation**, or the process of discussing feasible choices that address community problems, is important in resolving community concerns because it allows all perspectives to be considered. **Persuasive speaking** means addressing a public controversy and advocating for a perspective that the speaker hopes the audience will adopt. If the issue isn't publicly controversial – if everyone agrees or if

there are not multiple perspectives – you are not persuading. You're informing.

So, what's a public controversy? **Public controversies** are community disputes that affect a large number of people. Because they involve a large number of people, public controversies often have multiple perspectives, leading to public deliberation and debate to resolve each dispute.

We experience public controversies daily. Through our social media feeds, we continuously scroll past shared articles, comments, or posts that provide different perspectives on community problems and potential solutions. You might, for example, join your local neighborhood (or dorm) Facebook group where neighbors share information and collaborate on solutions to specific problems facing the community. Each problem has consequences for different neighbors, and Facebook allows a space to deliberate and organize to address community priorities. They are controversial, however, because not all neighbors agree what which problems should be solved first or what those solutions are.

Sadly, there is no shortage of public controversies, and advocating for solutions to key community problems can feel overwhelming.

"How do I figure out *one* controversy to speak out about?" you may wonder.

Identify public controversies by listening and engaging with your community. What issues are affecting them? What are priorities? Once you're able to locate a key community dispute, ask yourself:

- **What is it?** What is the problem? Are there more than 1? Is this the key problem or are there other hidden issues?
- **What is the impact?** What will happen if the problem is not resolved?
- **Who's affected?** Who's being affected or implicated by this problem? Who are the audiences or stakeholders affected? Are the stakeholders a part of my formal audience?
- **What can solve it?** Are there suggested solutions?

Controversies arise when a community experiences a problem, so your job is to decipher the breadth and depth of that problem. It's impossible to address all issues in one speech, so researching and prioritizing are key to identifying what advocacy you find most urgent. For any controversy that you can address in a persuasive speech, keep context and power in mind.

Context

Your public speaking context always informs what's possible to accomplish during a speech. Remember, the public speaking context refers to both the physical space and cultural context.

The physical context will influence how much information you can provide to your audience. In other words, "Do I have time to talk about this issue?" "What is the most essential information to cover in a limited timeframe?" The broader cultural context can help you in situating your advocacy alongside other community conversations. What else is happening? Have other communities experienced this problem?

Power

As persuasive speakers, you are attempting to influence an audience. What you select and how you present that information will alter how audiences understand the world, and that's a pretty powerful thought. When you select an advocacy that addresses a public controversy, you are asking the audience to trust your perspective. To uphold that trust, it's key to examine who is empowered or disempowered by our perspective.

When you're considering a position toward a public controversy, you might ask, who's empowered or disempowered by this problem?

Who's left out of the research? How are communities being represented? What am I assuming about those communities? Who is affected by my advocacy?

We can be well-meaning in our advocacies, especially when we select a persuasive insight based on our own experience. We become passionate about issues that we have seen, and that's OK! Such passion can also, however, mean that we represent information in ways that are stereotypical or lead to the disempowerment of others.

If your city, for example, is deciding where to place a landfill, you may advocate against the plant being placed in your neighborhood. That advocacy, on face, makes sense!

"This will reduce our property values and just be plain stinky," you might argue.

When we think about the issue reflexively and with power in mind, however, we may find that landfills are much more likely to be placed in neighborhoods that are predominant people of color (Massey, 2004). Advocating against placing the plant in your home may inadvertently mean the plant is placed in more vulnerable neighborhoods. Those neighbors become disempowered in your attempt to empower your own community.

In this example, practicing reflexivity might include asking: What are the potential solutions? What options do I have to avoid disempowering groups? Using sound research skills, considering other alternatives or perspectives, and listening can be mechanisms to answer these inquiries

There are no easy answers, but we are confident that you can select advocacies that are meaningful and worthwhile.

Formulating Persuasive Propositions

Once you feel comfortable and confident about a controversial issue that is ethical, timely and contextually relevant, you will need to

identify what type of persuasive proposition that you'll use in your speech. There are three types of persuasive propositions: propositions of fact, value, or policy. Each type will require different approaches and may have different persuasive outcomes for your audience.

Propositions of Fact

Propositions of fact answer the question, "is this true?" Speeches with this type of proposition attempt to establish the truth of a statement. There is not a sense of what is morally right and wrong or what should be done about the issue, only that a statement is supported by evidence or not. Imagine these questions as *true* or *false*.

These propositions are not facts like "the chemical symbol for water is H20" or "Barack Obama won the presidency in 2008." Propositions or claims of fact are advocacies with evidence on different sides and/or spark disagreement. Imagine that you are a lawyer in the courtroom arguing if something is true or false, with evidence. Some examples of propositions of fact are:

- *Converting to solar energy can save homeowners money.*
- *John F. Kennedy was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald working alone.*
- *Coal exacerbates global warming.*
- *Climate change has been caused by human activity.*
- *Granting tuition tax credits to the parents of children who attend private schools will perpetuate educational inequity.*
- *Watching violence on television causes violent behavior in children.*
- *William Shakespeare did not write most of the plays attributed to him.*
- *John Doe committed the crime of which he is accused.*

Notice that no values—good or bad—are explicitly mentioned. The point of these propositions is to prove with evidence the truth of a statement, not its inherent value. Your goal is to persuade the audience to update their understanding or belief about the topic in question. Because you are likely not asking the audience to overtly act, it's necessary to embed arguments that highlight how or why this factual information is meaningful for them or how the factual statement resolves a public controversy.

Propositions of fact are meaningful persuasive claims when new evidence or scientific observations arise that your audience may not know. Facts, statistics, definitions, or expert testimony are common evidence types for these propositions.

Propositions of Value

Propositions of value argue that something is good/bad or right/wrong. When the proposition has a word such as good, bad, best, worst, just, unjust, ethical, unethical, moral, immoral, advantageous or disadvantageous, it is a proposition of value. Some examples include:

- *Hybrid cars are the best form of automobile transportation available today.*
- *Homeschooling is more beneficial for children than traditional schooling.*
- *The War in Iraq was not justified.*
- *The United States is not the greatest country on earth.*
- *Capital punishment is morally wrong.*
- *White supremacy is wrong.*
- *Running is the best form of exercise.*
- *A vegan diet is the healthiest one for adults.*

Communication is a key vehicle in understanding values because communication is how communities collectively determine what

is right or wrong. Because values are culturally situated and not universal, as a speaker, you must ground and describe what value or moral judgement you're utilizing. If a war is unjustified, what makes a war "just" or "justified" in the first place? What makes a form of transportation "best" or "better" than another? Isn't that a matter of personal approach? For different people, "best" might mean "safest," "least expensive," "most environmentally responsible," "most stylish," "powerful," or "prestigious."

Effective propositions of value rely on shared beliefs held by your audience. Developing confidence about your audience will allow you to determine what value systems they rely on and how your proposition relies on similar belief systems. We'll talk more about appealing to your audience below.

Exercise. Photo by Lara Jameson.

Propositions of Policy

Policy propositions identify a solution to correct the problem. These propositions call for a change in policy (including those in a government, community, or school) or call for the audience to adopt a certain behavior.

Speeches with propositions of policy try to instigate the audience to act immediately, in the long-term, or alter their perspective on an issue. A few examples include:

- *Our state should require mandatory recertification of lawyers every ten years.*
- *The federal government should act to ensure clean water standards for all citizens.*
- *The state of Georgia should require drivers over the age of 75 to take a vision test and present a certificate of good health from a doctor before renewing their licenses.*
- *Wyeth Daniels should be the next governor of the state.*
- *The Supreme Court should rule that migrant detention centers are unconstitutional.*

These propositions are easy to identify because they almost always have the word "should" in them.

Many policy propositions advocate for a solution through a specific organization or government agency. In the examples above, the federal government, the state, and the Supreme Court are all listed as relevant actors to resolve the problem.

Alternatively, you could advocate for your audience to make specific behavioral changes that lead to solutions. If you're addressing the consequences of climate change in your local community, do solutions require government or non-profit action? Could your audience make in-roads to reducing the negative effects of climate change alone? Thorough research will assist you in determining what actors – organizations or your audience—are best suited to implement your policy solution.

Policy propositions commonly embed a specific **call-to-action.** What should the audience do if they are persuading by your perspective? What actions can and should they take that can support your policy proposition? This can include "call your senator" (though more specificity is often helpful), but your call-to-action should be crafted with audience adaptation and information in mind.

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Organizing Persuasive Propositions

Organization plays a key role in comprehending an argument. While we have previously discussed organization, in this section, we discuss organizing persuasive speeches with a focus on propositions of policy.

Once you've identified your main argument, ask, "what organizational pattern best suits my argument?"

For propositions of fact or value, you might select a categorical organization. Essentially that means that you will have two to four discrete, separate arguments in support of the proposition. For example:

Proposition of Fact: Converting to solar energy can save homeowners money.

1. Solar energy reduces power bills.
2. Solar energy requires less money for maintenance.
3. Solar energy works when the power grid goes down.

For propositions of policy, the problem-solution organization pattern is commonly used. We do not typically feel any motivation to change unless we are convinced that some harm, problem, need, or deficiency exists, and even more, that it affects us personally. As the saying goes, "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" In a problem-solution pattern, you can spend ample and organized time outlining the consequences to inaction, i.e. the problem.

Although a simple problem-solution organization is permissible for a speech of actuation, you will probably do well to utilize the more detailed format called **Monroe's Motivated Sequence.**

This format, designed by Alan Monroe (1951), is based on John Dewey's reflective thinking process to consider audience listening patterns. This is one of the most commonly cited and discussed organizational patterns for persuasive speeches. The purpose of Monroe's motivated sequence is to help speakers "sequence supporting materials and motivational appeals to form a useful organizational pattern for speeches as a whole" (German et al., 2010). Each step is described below and fully developed following:

- **Attention**. This is the introduction, where the speaker brings attention to the importance of the topic as well as their own credibility and connection to the topic. To gain an audience's attention, we recommend that you think through three specific parts of the attention step. First, you need to have a

strong attention-getting device. As previously discussed, a strong attention getter at the beginning of your speech is very important. Second, you need to make sure you introduce your topic clearly. If your audience doesn't know what your topic is quickly, they are more likely to stop listening. Lastly, you need to explain to your audience why they should care about your topic.

- **Need.** Here the speaker establishes that there is a specific need or problem. It is important to make the audience see the severity of the problem, and how it affects them, their family, or their community. The harm or need can be physical, financial, emotional, educational, or social. It will have to be supported by evidence. In Monroe's conceptualization of need, he talks about four specific parts of the need: statement, illustration, ramification, and pointing. First, a speaker needs to give a clear and concise statement of the problem. This part of a speech should be crystal clear for an audience. Second, the speaker needs to provide one or more examples to illustrate the need. The illustration is an attempt to make the problem concrete for the audience. Next, a speaker needs to provide some kind of evidence (e.g., statistics, examples, testimony) that shows the ramifications or consequences of the problem. Lastly, a speaker needs to point to the audience and show exactly how the problem relates to them personally.
- **Satisfaction.** A need calls for satisfaction in the same way a problem requires a solution. Not only does the speaker present the solution and describe it, but they must defend that it works and will address the causes of the problem as well as the symptoms. Within this step, Monroe (1935) proposed a five-step plan for satisfying a need:

  1. Statement
  2. Explanation
  3. Theoretical demonstration
  4. Reference to practical experience

5. Meeting objections

First, you need to clearly state the attitude, value, belief, or action you want your audience to accept. The purpose of this statement is to clearly tell your audience what your ultimate goal is.

Second, you want to make sure that you clearly explain to your audience why they should accept the attitude, value, belief, or action you proposed. Just telling your audience they should do something isn't strong enough to actually get them to change. Instead, you really need to provide a solid argument for why they should accept your proposed solution.

Third, you need to show how the solution you have proposed meets the need or problem. Monroe calls this link between your solution and the need a theoretical demonstration because you cannot prove that your solution will work. Instead, you theorize based on research and good judgment that your solution will meet the need or solve the problem.

Fourth, to help with this theoretical demonstration, you need to reference practical experience, which should include examples demonstrating that your proposal has worked elsewhere. Research, statistics, and expert testimony are all great ways of referencing practical experience.

Lastly, Monroe recommends that a speaker respond to possible objections. As a persuasive speaker, one of your jobs is to think through your speech and see what counterarguments could be made against your speech and then rebut those arguments within your speech. When you offer rebuttals for arguments against your speech, it shows your audience that you've done your homework and educated yourself about multiple sides of the issue.

- **Visualization.** According to Monroe, visualization can be conducted in one of three ways: positive, negative, or contrast (Monroe, 1935). The positive method of visualization is where a speaker shows how adopting a proposal leads to a better

future (e.g., recycle, and we'll have a cleaner and safer planet). Conversely, the negative method of visualization is where a speaker shows how not adopting the proposal will lead to a worse future (e.g., don't recycle, and our world will become polluted and uninhabitable). Monroe also acknowledged that visualization could include a combination of both positive and negative visualization. In essence, you show your audience both possible outcomes and have them decide which one they would rather have.

- **Action**. In the action step, the goal is to give specific steps for the audience to take as soon as possible to move toward solving the problem. Whereas the satisfaction step explains the solution overall, the action step gives concrete ways to begin making the solution happen. For understanding purposes, we break action into two distinct parts: audience action and approval. Audience action refers to direct physical behaviors a speaker wants from an audience (e.g., flossing their teeth twice a day, signing a petition, wearing seat belts). Approval, on the other hand, involves an audience's consent or agreement with a speaker's proposed attitude, value, or belief.

When preparing an action step, it is important to make sure that the action, whether audience action or approval, is realistic for your audience. Asking your peers in a college classroom to donate one thousand dollars to charity isn't realistic. Asking your peers to donate one dollar is considerably more realistic. In a persuasive speech based on Monroe's motivated sequence, the action step will end with the speech's concluding device. As discussed elsewhere in this text, you need to make sure that you conclude in a vivid way so that the speech ends on a high point and the audience has a sense of energy as well as a sense of closure.

The more concrete you can make the action step, the better. Research shows that people are more likely to act if they know how accessible the action can be. For example, if you want students to be vaccinated against the chicken pox virus (after establishing that

it is a key public controversy), you can give them directions to and hours for a clinic or health center where vaccinations at a free or discounted price can be obtained.

Now that we have discussed Monroe's motivated sequence, let's look at how you could use Monroe's motivated sequence to outline a persuasive speech:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my classroom peers that the United States should have stronger laws governing the use of for-profit medical experiments.

Introduction (Attention): Want to make nine thousand dollars for just three weeks of work lying around and not doing much? Then be a human guinea pig. Admittedly, you'll have to have a tube down your throat most of those three weeks, but you'll earn three thousand dollars a week.

Main Points:

1. **Need:** Every day many uneducated and lower socioeconomic-status citizens are preyed on by medical and pharmaceutical companies for use in for-profit medical and drug experiments. Do you want one of your family members to fall prey to this evil scheme?
2. **Satisfaction:** The United States should have stronger laws governing the use of for-profit medical experiments to ensure that uneducated and lower-socioeconomic-status citizens are protected.
3. **Visualization:** If we enact tougher experiment oversight, we can ensure that medical and pharmaceutical research is conducted in a way that adheres to basic values of American decency. If we do not enact tougher experiment oversight, we could find ourselves in a world where the lines between research subject, guinea pig, and patient become increasingly blurred.

Conclusion (Action): In order to prevent the atrocities associated with for-profit medical and pharmaceutical experiments, please

sign this petition asking the US Department of Health and Human Services to pass stricter regulations on this preying industry that is out of control.

This example shows how you can take a basic speech topic and use Monroe's motivated sequence to clearly and easily outline your speech efficiently and effectively.

While Monroe's motivated sequence is commonly discussed in most public speaking textbooks, we do want to provide one minor caution. Thus far, almost no research has been conducted that has demonstrated that Monroe's motivated sequence is any more persuasive than other structural patterns. We add this sidenote because we don't want you to think that Monroe's motivated sequence is some kind of magic persuasive bullet. At the same time, research *does* support organized messages being perceived as more persuasive, so using Monroe's motivated sequence to think through one's persuasive argument could still be very beneficial.

Problem-Cause-Solution

Another format for organizing a persuasive speech is the problem-cause-solution format. In this specific format, you discuss what a problem is, what you believe is causing the problem, and then what the solution should be to correct the problem.

Specific Purpose: To persuade my classroom peers that our campus should adopt a zero-tolerance policy for hate speech.

Main Points:

1. Demonstrate that there is distrust among different groups on

campus that has led to unnecessary confrontations and violence.
2. Show that the confrontations and violence are a result of hate speech that occurred prior to the events.
3. Explain how instituting a campus-wide zero-tolerance policy against hate speech could stop the unnecessary confrontations and violence.

In this speech, you want to persuade people to support a new campus-wide policy calling for zero-tolerance of hate speech. Once you have shown the problem, you then explain to your audience that the cause of the unnecessary confrontations and violence is prior incidents of hate speech. Lastly, you argue that a campus-wide zero-tolerance policy could help prevent future unnecessary confrontations and violence. Again, this method of organizing a speech is as simple as its name: problem-cause-solution.

Comparative Advantages

The final method for organizing a persuasive speech is called the comparative advantages speech format. The goal of this speech is to compare items side-by-side and show why one of them is more advantageous than the other. For example, let's say that you're giving a speech on which e-book reader is better: Amazon.com's Kindle or Barnes and Nobles' Nook. Here's how you could organize this speech:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that the Nook is more advantageous than the Kindle.

Main Points:

1. The Nook allows owners to trade and loan books to other owners or people who have downloaded the Nook software, while the Kindle does not.
2. The Nook has a color-touch screen, while the Kindle's screen is black and grey and noninteractive.
3. The Nook's memory can be expanded through microSD, while the Kindle's memory cannot be upgraded.

As you can see from this speech's organization, the simple goal of this speech is to show why one thing has more positives than something else. Obviously, when you are demonstrating comparative advantages, the items you are comparing need to be functional equivalents—or, as the saying goes, you cannot compare apples to oranges.

Before we continue with the potential barriers to persuasive speaking, consider this TEDEd talk: How to Use Rhetoric to Get What You Want.

Barriers to Effective Persuasive Speaking

Persuasive speaking can provide opportunities to advocate for important community solutions. But persuasion is really difficult, and there are often barriers to effectively persuading our audience to change their beliefs or act in a new way.

Persuasion is hard because we have a bias against change. As much as we hear statements like "The only constant is change" or "Variety is the spice of life," the evidence from research and from our personal experience shows that, in reality, we do not

like change. Recent risk aversion research, for example, found that humans are concerned more with what we lose than what we gain. Change is often seen as a loss of something rather than a gain of something else, and that's stressful. We do not generally embrace things that bring us stress.

Given our aversion to change, audiences often go out of their way to protect their beliefs, attitudes, and values. We (as audience members) selectively expose ourselves to messages that we already agree with, rather than those that confront or challenge us. This selective exposure is especially seen in choices of mass media that individuals listen to, watch, and read. Not only do we selectively expose ourselves to information, but we also selectively attend to, perceive, and recall information that supports our existing viewpoints (referred to a **selective recall**).

This principle led Leon Festinger (1957) to form the theory of **cognitive dissonance**, which states, among other ideas, that when we are confronted with conflicting information or viewpoints, we reach a state of dissonance, or tension between ideas and beliefs. It often occurs when we're presented information that's out of line with our values or experiences. This state can be very uncomfortable, and we will do things to get rid of the dissonance and maintain "consonance." We don't want to accept that our beliefs may be wrong or inconsistent; we want to remain harmonious.

In a sense, not changing can outweigh very logical reasons to change. For example, you probably know a friend who will not wear a seatbelt in a car. You can say to your friend, "Don't you know that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2009) says, and I quote, '1,652 lives could be saved, and 22,372 serious injuries avoided each year on America's roadways if seat belt use rates rose to 90 percent in every state'?" What will your friend probably say, even though you have cited a credible source?

They will come up with some reason for not wearing it, even something as dramatic as "I knew a guy who had a cousin who was in an accident and the cop said he died because he *was* wearing his seatbelt." They may even say, "Well I am a good driver, so you

only need seat belts if you're driving poorly." You may have had this conversation, or one like it. Their argument may be less dramatic, such as "I don't like how it feels" or "I don't like the government telling me what to do in my car." For your friend, the argument for wearing a seat belt is not as strong as the argument against it, at least at this moment. Ideally, at least for a public speaker, the dissonance is relieved or resolved by being persuaded (changed) to a new belief, attitude, or behavior.

So, what is a speaker to do to overcome these barriers? We suggest making reasonable requests, articulating the benefits or consequences, and answering oppositional arguments.

Make Reasonable Requests

Setting reasonable persuasive goals is the first way to meet audience resistance. Since we resist change, we do not make many large or major changes in our lives. We do, however, make smaller, concrete, step-by-step or incremental changes every day. Over time these small shifts can eventually result in a significant amount of persuasion. Aim small, especially within a time constraint, and work to find future room to build.

Focus on Benefits and Consequences

When problems aren't resolved, there are consequences. When problems are resolved, there are positive benefits for the community. Because you are asking the audience to change something, they must view the benefits of acting as worth the stress of the change. A speaker should be able to engage the audience at the level of needs, wants, and values as well as logic and evidence.

Identify the benefits, advantages, or improvements that would

happen for the audience members who enacted your advocacy. If you do good audience analysis, you know that audiences are asking, "What's in it for me?" "Why do I need this?"

Alternatively, you could outline the short and long-term consequences of inaction and detail how the problem would negatively affect the audience and/or their community. In other words, you're identifying what would occur if the audience did nothing, if they choose not to act. Using Monroe's Motivated Sequences can assist in organizing these arguments.

Answer Oppositional Arguments

During a persuasive speech, audience members are holding a mental dialogue, and they are thinking through rebuttals or oppositional arguments to your advocacy. These mental dialogues could be called the "yeah-buts"—the audience members are saying in their minds, "Yeah, I see what you are arguing, but—". Reservations can be very strong, since, again, our human bias is to be loss averse and not to change our actions or beliefs.

If you're advocating a claim that humans are the primary cause of climate change, your audience may think, "yeah, but these consequences won't happen for a long time," or "yeah, but we have time to resolve these problems."

As a speaker, address these! Refute the arguments that may prohibit your audience from changing.

It's common to call oppositional arguments "misconceptions," "myths," or "mistaken ideas" that are widely held about the proposition. You may answer oppositional arguments around climate change by saying, "One common misconception about climate change is that we won't see the negative impacts for decades. A recent study determined that consequences are already upon us."

After acknowledging oppositional arguments and seeking to

refute or rebut the reservations, you must also provide evidence for your refutation. Ultimately, this will show your audience that you are aware of both sides of the issue you are presenting and make you a more credible speaker.

Additionally, keep in mind that you may be asking your audience for *passive agreement* or *immediate action.* Each is described below.

Gain Passive Agreement

When we attempt to gain the passive agreement of our audiences, our goal is to get our audiences to agree with what we are saying and our specific policy without asking the audience to do anything to enact the policy. For example, maybe your speech is on why the Federal Communications Commission should regulate violence on television like it does foul language (i.e., no violence until after 9 p.m.). Your goal as a speaker is to get your audience to agree that it is in our best interest as a society to prevent violence from being shown on television before 9 p.m., but you are not seeking to have your audience run out and call their senators or congressmen or even sign a petition. Often the first step in larger political change is simply getting a massive number of people to agree with your policy perspective.

Let's look at a few more passive agreement claims:

- Racial profiling of individuals suspected of belonging to known terrorist groups is a way to make America safer.
- Requiring American citizens to "show their papers" is a

violation of democracy and resembles tactics of Nazi Germany and communist Russia.
- Colleges and universities should voluntarily implement a standardized testing program to ensure student learning outcomes are similar across different institutions.

In each of these claims, the goal is to sway one's audience to a specific attitude, value, or belief, but not necessarily to get the audience to enact any specific behaviors.

Gain Immediate Action

The alternative to passive agreement is immediate action, or persuading your audience to start engaging in a specific behavior. Many passive agreement topics can become immediate action-oriented topics as soon as you tell your audience what behavior they should engage in (e.g., sign a petition, call a senator, vote). While it is much easier to elicit passive agreement than to get people to do something, you should always try to get your audience to act and do so quickly. A common mistake that speakers make is telling people to enact a behavior that will occur in the future. The longer it takes for people to engage in the action you desire, the less likely it is that your audience will engage in that behavior.

Here are some examples of good claims with immediate calls to action:

- College students should eat more fruit, so I am encouraging everyone to eat the apple I have provided you and start getting

more fruit in your diet.

- Teaching a child to read is one way to ensure that the next generation will be stronger than those that have come before us, so please sign up right now to volunteer one hour a week to help teach a child to read.
- The United States should reduce its nuclear arsenal by 20 percent over the next five years. Please sign the letter provided encouraging the president to take this necessary step for global peace. Once you've signed the letter, hand it to me, and I'll fax it to the White House today.

Each of these three examples starts with a basic claim and then tags on an immediate call to action. Remember, the faster you can get people to engage in a behavior the more likely they actually will.

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Chapter Seventeen – Methods of Persuasion

Developing the Persuasive Speech: Appealing to an Audience

Persuasion only occurs with an audience, so your main goal is to answer the question, "how do I persuade the audience to believe my proposition of fact, value, or policy?"

To accomplish this goal, identify your **target audience**—individuals who are willing to listen to your argument despite disagreeing, having limited knowledge, or lacking experience with your advocacy. Because persuasion involves change, you are targeting individuals who have not yet changed their beliefs in favor of your argument.

The **persuasive continuum** (Figure 17.1) is a tool that allows you to visualize your audience's relationship with your topic.

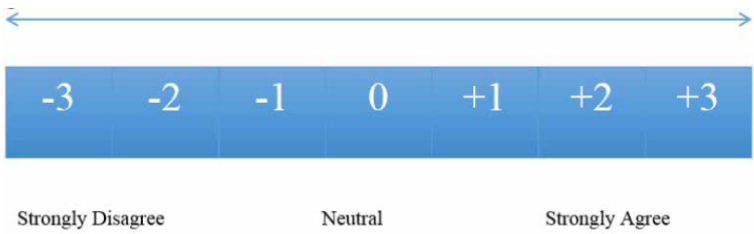

Figure 17.1

The persuasive continuum views persuasion as a line going both directions. Your audience members, either as a group or individually, are sitting somewhere on that line in reference to your thesis statement, claim, or proposition.

For example, your proposition might be, "The main cause of climate change is human activity." In this case, you are not denying that natural forces, such as volcanoes, can affect the climate, but you are claiming that human pollution is the central force behind global warming. To be an effective persuasive speaker, one of your

first jobs is determining where your audience "sits" on the continuum.

+3 means strongly agree to the point of making lifestyle choices to lessen climate change (such as riding a bike instead of driving a car, recycling, eating certain kinds of foods).
+2 means agree but not to the point of acting upon it.
+1 as mildly in favor of your proposition; that is, they think it's probably true, but the issue doesn't affect them personally.
0 means neutral, no opinion, or feeling uninformed enough to make a decision.
-1 means mildly opposed to the proposition but willing to listen to those with whom they disagree.
-2 means disagreement to the point of dismissing the idea pretty quickly.
-3 means strong opposition to the point that the concept of climate change itself is not even listened to or acknowledged as a valid subject.

Since everyone in the audience is somewhere on this line or continuum, persuasion means moving them to the right, somewhere closer to +3.

Your topic will inform which strategy you use to move your audience along the continuum. If you are introducing an argument that the audience lacks knowledge in, you are moving an audience from 0 to +1, +2, or +3. The audience's attitude will be a 0 because they have no former opinion or experience.

Thinking about persuasion as a continuum has three benefits:

- You can visualize and quantify where your audience lands on the continuum
- You can accept the fact that any movement toward +3 or to the right is a win.
- You can see that trying to change an audience from -3 to +3 in one speech is just about impossible. Therefore, you will need to

take a reasonable approach. In this case, if you knew most of the audience was at -2 or -3, your speech would be about the science behind climate change in order to open their minds to its possible existence. However, that audience is not ready to hear about its being caused mainly by humans or what action should be taken to reverse it.

As you identify where your target audience sits on the continuum, you can dig deeper to determine what values, attitude, or beliefs would prohibit individuals from supporting the proposition or values, attitudes, or beliefs that support your proposition. At the same time, avoid language that assumes stereotypical beliefs about the audience.

For example, your audience may value higher education and believe that education is useful for critical thinking skills. Alternatively, you may have an audience that values work experience and believes that college is frivolous and expensive. Being aware of these differing values will deepen your persuasive content by informing what evidence or insights to draw on and upon for each audience type.

Once you're confident about where your audience is on the continuum and what values they hold, you can select the appropriate **rhetorical appeals** – ethos, pathos, and logos—to motivate your audience toward action. Yes, we've discussed these rhetorical appeals before, but they are particularly useful in persuasive speaking, so let's review again.

Persuasive Strategies

Ethos

"Danny Shine Speaker's Corner" by Acapeloahddub. Public domain.

In addition to understanding how your audience feels about the topic you are addressing, you will need to take steps to help them see you as credible and interesting. The audience's perception of you as a speaker is influential in determining whether or not they will choose to accept your proposition. Aristotle called this element of the speech **ethos**, "a Greek word that is closely related to our terms *ethical* and *ethnic*."[1] He taught speakers to establish credibility with the audience by appearing to have good moral character, common sense, and concern for the audience's well-being.[2] Campbell & Huxman explain that ethos is not about conveying that you, as an individual, are a good person. It is about "mirror[ing] the characteristics idealized by [the] culture or group" (ethnic),[3] and demonstrating that you make good moral choices with regard to your relationship within the group (ethics).

While there are many things speakers can do to build their ethos throughout the speech, "assessments of ethos often reflect superficial first impressions," and these first impressions linger long after the speech has concluded.[4] This means that what you wear and how you behave, even before opening your mouth, can go far in shaping your ethos. Be sure to dress appropriately for the occasion and setting in which you speak. Also work to appear confident, but not arrogant, and be sure to maintain enthusiasm about your topic

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5. [1]
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8. [4]

throughout the speech. Give great attention to the crafting of your opening sentences because they will set the tone for what your audience should expect of your personality as you proceed.

> *I covered two presidents, LBJ and Nixon, who could no longer convince, persuade, or govern, once people had decided they had no credibility; but we seem to be more tolerant now of what I think we should not tolerate.* – Helen Thomas

Logic and the Role of Arguments

"Sharia Law Billboard" by Matt57. Public domain.

We use logic every day when we construct statements, argue our point of view, and in myriad other ways. Understanding how logic is used will help us communicate more efficiently and effectively. Even if we have never formally studied logical reasoning and fallacies, we can often tell when a person's statement doesn't sound right. Think about the claims we see in many advertisements today—Buy product X, and you will be beautiful/thin/happy or have the carefree life depicted in the advertisement. With very little critical thought, we know intuitively that simply buying a product will not magically change our lives. Even if we can't identify the specific fallacy at work in the argument (non causa in this case), we know there is some flaw in the argument.

In a persuasive speech, the **argument** will focus on the reasons for supporting your specific purpose statement. This argumentative approach is what Aristotle referred to as **logos**, or the logical means of proving an argument.[9]

Logic is the beginning of wisdom, not the end. – Leonard Nimoy

Logos

When offering an argument, you begin by making an assertion that requires a logical leap based on the available evidence.[10] One of the most popular ways of understanding how this process works was developed by British philosopher Stephen Toulmin.[11] Toulmin established a model that describes the structure of an argument or

9. [12]
10. [13]
11. [14]
12. [5]
13. [6]
14. [7]

method of reasoning, explaining that basic arguments tend to share three common elements: claim, evidence, and warrant. The **claim** is an assertion that you want the audience to accept. **Evidence** refers to proof or support for your claim. It answers the question, "how do I know this is true?" For example, if I saw large gray clouds in the sky, I might make the claim that "it is going to rain today." The gray clouds (evidence) are linked to rain (claim) by the **warrant**, an oft-unstated general connection, that large gray clouds tend to produce rain. The warrant is a connector that, if stated, would likely begin with "since" or "because." In our rain example, if we explicitly stated all three elements, the argument would go something like this: There are large gray clouds in the sky today (evidence). Since large gray clouds tend to produce rain (warrant), it is going to rain today (claim). In this common situation, we often recognize the underlying warrant without it being explicitly stated. However, in a formal speech, having a clear warrant will increase the clarity of your argument.

To strengthen the basic argument, you will need **backing** for the claim. Backing provides foundational support for the claim[15] by offering examples, narratives, facts, statistics, and/or testimony, which further substantiates the argument. We discussed these kinds of support material in Chapter 8. To substantiate the rain argument we have just considered, you could explain that the color of a cloud is determined by how much light the water in the cloud is reflecting. A thin cloud has tiny drops of water and ice crystals which scatter light, making it appear white. Clouds appear gray when they are filled with large water droplets which are less able to reflect light.[16]

Claim, Evidence, Warrant

Arguments have the following basic structure:

Claim: the main proposition crafted as a declarative statement.
Evidence: the support or proof for the claim.
Warrant: the connection between the evidence and the claim.

Each component of the structure is necessary to formulate a compelling argument.

Evidence and warrants are the specifics that make your ideas, arguments, assertions, points, or concepts real and concrete by relating the information to your audience. Not all audiences are compelled by the same evidence, for example, so creating a well-structured argument also means being responsive to audiences.Consider going to lunch with a friend. Your friend suggests a restaurant that you have not heard of, so you request some additional information, proof, or evidence of their choice. We could map the argument like this:

15. [17]
16. [18]
17. [8]
18. [9]

Claim: "Let's go to Jack's Shack for lunch."

Evidence: "I have been there a few times and they have good servers."

So far, your friend is highlighting *service* as the evidence to support their claim that Jack's Shack is a good choice for lunch. However, the warrant is still missing. For a warrant, they need to demonstrate why good service is sufficient proof to support their claim. Remember that the warrant is the connection. For example:

Warrant: "You were a server, so I know that you really appreciate good service. I have never had a bad experience at Jack's Shack, so I am confident that it's a good lunch choice for both of us."

In this case, they do a good job of both connecting the evidence to the claim *and* connecting the argument to their audience – you! They have selected evidence based on your previous experience as a server (likely in hopes to win you over to their claim!).

Additionally, take this example: consider the claim that "communication studies provide necessary skills to land you a job." To support that claim, you might locate a statistic and argue that, "The New York Times had a recent article stating that 80% of jobs want good critical thinking and interpersonal skills." It's unclear, however, how a communication studies major would prepare someone to fulfill those needs. To complete the argument, you could include a warrant that explains, "communication studies classes facilitate interpersonal skills and work to embed critical thinking activities throughout the curriculum." You are connecting the job skills (critical thinking) from the evidence to the discipline (communication studies) from your claim.

Despite their importance, warrants are often excluded from arguments. As speechwriters and researchers, we spend lots of time with our information and evidence, and we take for granted what we know. If you are familiar with communication studies, the connection between the New York Times statistic referenced above and the assertion that communication studies provides necessary

job skills may seem obvious. For an unfamiliar audience, the warrant provides more explanation and legitimacy to the evidence.

Using "claim, evidence, and warrant" can assist you in verifying that all parts of the argumentative structure are present.

Using Evidence

With any type of evidence, there are three overarching considerations.

First, is this the most timely and relevant type of support for my claim? If your evidence isn't timely (or has been disproven), it may drastically influence the credibility of your claim.

Second, is this evidence relatable and clear for my audience? Your audience should be able to understand the evidence, including any references or ideas within your information. Have you ever heard a joke or insight about a television show that you've never seen? If so, understanding the joke can be difficult. The same is true for your audience, so stay focused on their knowledge base and level of understanding.

Third, did I cherry-pick? Avoid cherry-picking evidence to support your claims. While we've discussed claims first, it's important to arrive at a claim after seeing all the evidence (i.e. doing the research). Rather than finding evidence to fit your idea (cherry-picking), the evidence should help you arrive at the appropriate claim. Cherry-picking evidence can reduce your ethos and weakened your argument.

The elements that Toulmin identified may be arranged in a variety of ways to make the most logical argument. As you reason through

your argument you may proceed inductively, deductively, or causally, toward your claim.

"Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling unit on fire" by US Coast Guard. Public domain.

Defining Deduction

Deductive reasoning means moving from a general principle to a claim regarding a specific instance. In order to move from general to specific we tend to use **syllogisms**. A syllogism begins with a major (or general) premise, then moves to a minor premise, then concludes with a specific claim. For example, if you know that all dogs bark (major premise), and your neighbor has a dog (minor premise), you could then conclude that your neighbor's dog barks (specific claim). To verify the accuracy of your specific claim, you must verify the truth and applicability of the major premise. What evidence do you have that all dogs bark? Is it possible that only *most* dogs bark? Next, you must also verify the accuracy of the minor premise. If the major premise is truly generalizable, and both premises are accurate, your specific claim should also be accurate.

For your argument to succeed, remember you must use evidence, not assumptions.

Deductive reasoning refers to an argument in which the truth of its premises guarantees the truth of its conclusions. The key focus in deductive arguments is that it must be impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion to be false. The classic example is:

All men are mortal.
Socrates is a man.
Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

We can look at each of these statements individually and see each is true in its own right. It is virtually impossible for the first two propositions to be true and the conclusion to be false. Any argument which fails to meet this standard commits a logical error or fallacy. Even if we might accept the arguments as good and the conclusion as possible, the argument fails as a form of deductive reasoning.

Another way to think of deductive reasoning is to think of it as moving from a general premise to a specific premise. This need for truth sets up deductive reasoning as a very rigid form of reasoning.

If either one of the first two premises isn't true, then the entire argument fails. The basic line of reasoning looks like this:

"*Deductive Reasoning*" CC-BY-NC-ND.

Let's turn to world events for an example.

"US Invasion Deductive Reasoning Example" CC-BY-NC-ND.

In the debates over whether the United States should take military action in Iraq, this was the basic line of reasoning used to justify an invasion. This logic was sufficient for the United States to invade

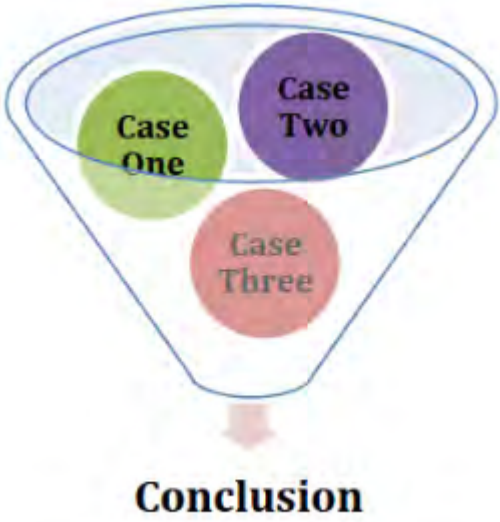
Iraq; however, as we have since learned, this line of reasoning also shows how quickly logic can go bad. We subsequently learned that the "experts" weren't quite so confident, and their "evidence" wasn't quite as concrete as originally represented.

Defining Induction

Inductive reasoning moves from specific examples to a more general claim. For example, if you read online reviews of a restaurant chain called Walt's Wine & Dine and you noticed that someone reported feeling sick after eating at a Walt's, and another person reported that the Walt's they visited was understaffed, and another commented that the tables in the Walt's they ate at had crumbs left on them, you might conclude (or claim) that the restaurant chain is unsanitary. To test the validity of a general claim, Beebe and Beebe encourage speakers to consider whether there are "enough specific instances to support the conclusion," whether the specific instances are typical, and whether the instances are recent.[1]

Unlike deductive reasoning, there is no standard format inductive arguments must take, making them more flexible. We can define an inductive argument as one in which the truth of its propositions lends support to the conclusion. The difference here in deduction is the truth of the propositions establishes with absolute certainty the truth of the conclusion. When we analyze an inductive argument, we do not focus on the truth of its premises. Instead, we analyze inductive arguments for their strength or soundness.

1. [2]
2. [11]



"Inductive Reasoning Model" CC-BY-NC-ND.

Another significant difference between deduction and induction is inductive arguments do not have a standard format.

Let's return to the world stage for an example. After the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, we heard variations of the following arguments:

1. The terrorists were Muslim (or Arab or Middle Eastern)
2. The terrorists hated America.
3. Therefore, all Muslims (or Arabs or Middle Easterners) hate America.

"1993 Word Trade Center bombing" by Bureau of ATF 1993 Explosives Incident Report. Public domain.

Clearly, we can see the problem in this line of reasoning. Beyond being a scary example of hyperbolic rhetoric, we can all probably think of at least one counter example to disprove the conclusion. However, individual passions and biases caused many otherwise rational people to say these things in the weeks following the attacks. This example also clearly illustrates how easy it is to get tripped up in your use of logic and the importance of practicing self-regulation.

Your reasoning may also proceed causally. **Causal reasoning** examines related events to determine which one caused the other. You may begin with a cause and attempt to determine its effect. For example, when the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, scientists explained that because many animals in the Gulf were nesting and reproducing at the time, the spill could wipe out "an entire generation of hundreds of species."[1] Their argument reasoned that the spill (cause) would result in species loss (effect). Two years later, the causal reasoning might be reversed. If we were seeing species loss in the Gulf (effect), we could reason that it was a result of the oil spill (cause). Both of these claims rely on the evidence available at the time. To make the

first claim, scientists not only offered evidence that animals were nesting and reproducing, but they also looked at the effects of an oil spill that occurred 21 years earlier in Alaska.[3] To make the second claim, scientists could examine dead animals washing up on the coast to determine whether their deaths were caused by oil.

To help stress the importance of it, the Foundation for Critical Thinking has set forth universal standards of reasoning. These standards can be found in Table 17.3.

Table 17.3
Universal Standards of Reasoning
All reasoning has a purpose.
All reasoning is an attempt to figure something out, to settle some question, to solve some problem.
All reasoning is based on assumptions.
All reasoning is done from some point of view.
All reasoning is based on data, information, and evidence.
All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, concepts and ideas.
All reasoning contains inferences or interpretations by which we draw conclusions and give meaning to data.
All reasoning leads somewhere or has implications and consequences.

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2. [12]
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4. [13]

Pathos

While we have focused heavily on logical reasoning, we must also recognize the strong role that emotions play in the persuasive process. Aristotle called this element of the speech **pathos**. Pathos draws on the emotions, sympathies, and prejudices of the audience to appeal to their non-rational side.[12] Human beings are constantly in some emotional state, which means that tapping into an audience's emotions can be vital to persuading them to accept your proposition.[3]

One of the most helpful strategies in appealing to your audience's emotions is to use clear examples that illustrate your point. Illustrations can be crafted verbally, nonverbally, or visually. To offer a verbal illustration, you could tell a compelling story. For example, when fundraising for breast cancer research, Nancy Brinker, creator of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, has plenty of compelling statistics and examples to offer. Yet, she regularly talks about her sister, explaining:

Nancy Brinker. CC BY: Attribution

Susan G. Komen fought breast cancer with her heart, body and soul. Throughout her diagnosis, treatments, and endless days in the hospital, she spent her time thinking of ways to make life better for other women battling breast cancer instead of worrying about her own situation. That concern for others continued even as Susan neared the end of her fight.[4]

Brinker promised her sister that she would continue her fight against breast cancer. This story compels donors to join her fight.

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6. [16]
7. [17]
8. [18]

Speakers can also tap into emotions using nonverbal behaviors to model the desired emotion for their audience. In the summer of 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives debated holding the Attorney General in contempt for refusing to release documents concerning a controversial gun-tracking operation. Arguing for a contempt vote, South Carolina Representative Trey Gowdy did not simply state his claim; instead, he raised his voice, slowed his pace, and used hand motions to convey anger with what he perceived as deception on the part of the Attorney General.[1] His use of volume, tone, pace, and hand gestures
enhanced the message and built anger in his audience.

> *Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel. It is to bring another out of his bad sense into your good sense.*
> – Ralph Waldo Emerson

In addition to verbal and nonverbal illustrations, visual imagery can enhance the emotional appeal of a message. For example, we have all heard about the dangers of drugs, and there are multiple campaigns that attempt to prevent people from even trying them. However, many young adults experiment with drugs under the assumption that they are immune from the negative effects if they only use the drug recreationally. To counter this assumption regarding methamphetamines, the Montana Meth project combines controversial statements with graphic images on billboards to evoke fear of the drug (see the Montana Meth Project for some disturbing examples). Young adults may have heard repeated warnings that meth is addictive and that it has the potential to cause sores, rotten teeth, and extreme weight loss, but Montana Meth Project's visual display is more compelling because it turns the audience's stomach, making the message memorable. This image, combined with the slogan, "not even once," conveys the persuasive point without the need for other forms of evidence and rational argument.

Appeals to fear, like those in the Montana Meth Project ads, have proven effective in motivating people to change a variety of behaviors. However, speakers must be careful with their use of this

1. ^{2}
2. [19]

emotion. Fear appeals tend to be more effective when they appeal to a high-level fear, such as death, and they are more effective when offered by speakers with a high level of perceived credibility.[3] Fear appeals are also more persuasive when the speaker can convince the audience they have the ability to avert the threat. If audiences doubt their ability to avoid or minimize the threat, the appeal may backfire.[4]

> *I would rather try to persuade a man to go along, because once I have persuaded him, he will stick. If I scare him, he will stay just as long as he is scared, and then he is gone.* – Dwight D. Eisenhower

David Brooks argues that "emotions are not separate from reason, but they are the foundation of reason because they tell us what to value."[5] Those values are at the core of fostering a credible ethos. All of Aristotle's strategies, ethos, logos, and pathos, are interdependent. The most persuasive speakers will *combine* these strategies to varying degrees based on their specific purpose and audience.

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4. [7]
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Ethics of Persuasion

"Speakers Corner Speaker 1987" by Deborah MacLean. Public domain.

In addition to considering their topic and persuasive strategy, speakers must take care to ensure that their message is ethical. Persuasion is often confused with another kind of communication that has similar ends, but different methods—coercion. Like persuasion, **coercion** is a process whereby thoughts or behaviors are altered. But in coercive acts, deceptive or harmful methods propel the intended changes, not reason. Strong and Cook contrasted the two: "persuasion uses argument to compel power to give way to reason while coercion uses force to compel reason to give way to power."[9] The "force" that Strong and Cook mention frequently manifests as promises for reward or punishment, but sometimes it arises as physical or emotional harm. Think of almost any international crime film you have seen, and you are likely to remember a scene where someone was compelled to out their compatriots by way of force. Jack Bauer, the protagonist in the American television series 24, became an infamous character by

doing whatever it took to get captured criminals to talk. Although dramatic as an example, those scenes where someone is tortured in an effort to produce evidence offer a familiar reference when thinking about coercion. To avoid coercing an audience, speakers should use logical and emotional appeals responsibly.

The pendulum of the mind alternates between sense and nonsense, not between right and wrong. – Carl Jung

9. [10]
10. [14]

Understanding and Avoiding Fallacies

Persuasive speakers must be careful to avoid using **fallacies** in their reasoning. Fallacies are errors in reasoning that occur when a speaker fails to use appropriate or applicable evidence for their argument. There are a wide variety of fallacies, and it is not possible to list them all here, however, nine common fallacies are described below.

False Cause

False cause is a fallacy that assumes that one thing causes another, but there is no logical connection between the two. In a false cause fallacy, the alleged cause might not be strong or direct enough. For example, there has been much debate over the causes of the recession in 2008. If someone said, "The exorbitant salaries paid to professional athletes contributed to the recession" that would be the fallacy of false cause. Why? For one thing, the salaries, though large, are an infinitesimal part of the whole economy. Second, those salaries only affect a small number of people. A cause must be direct and strong, not just something that occurred before a problem arose.

Slippery Slope

A **slippery slope** fallacy is a type of false cause which assumes that taking a first step will lead to subsequent events that cannot be

prevented. The children's book, *If You Give a Moose a Muffin*, is a good example of slippery slope; it tells all the terrible things (from a child's point of view) that will happen, one after another, if a moose is given a muffin. If A happens, then B will happen, then C, then D, then E, F, G and it will get worse and worse and before you know it, we will all be in some sort of ruin. So, don't do A or let A happen because it will inevitably lead to Z, and of course, Z is terrible.

This type of reasoning fails to look at alternate causes or factors that could keep the worst from happening, and often is somewhat silly when A is linked directly to Z. Slippery slope arguments are often used in discussions over emotional and hot button topics that are linked with strong values and beliefs. One might argue that "If guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns," a bumper sticker you may have seen. This is an example of a slippery slope argument because it is saying that any gun control laws will inevitably lead to no guns being allowed at all in the U.S. and then the inevitable result that only criminals will have guns because they don't obey gun control laws anyway.

In any instance where you're identifying potential consequences if action is or is not taken, credible evidence and ethical warrants are good checks against our tendency to slippery-slope to the audience.

Hasty Generalization

Making a **hasty generalization** means making a generalization with too few examples. It is so common that we might wonder if there are any legitimate generalizations. Consider this hastily generalized argument:

A college degree is unnecessary. For example, Mark Zuckerberg dropped out of college, invented Facebook, and made billions of dollars. As this example demonstrates, dropping out of college leads to great financial success, so a complete degree is pointless.

The key to generalizations is how the conclusions are "framed"

or put into language. The conclusions should be specific about the limited nature of the sample.

Straw Person

A **straw person** fallacy is a fallacy that shows only the weaker side of an opponent's argument in order to more easily tear it down. The term "straw person" brings up the image of a scarecrow, and that is the idea behind the expression. Even a child can beat up a scarecrow; anyone can.

A straw person fallacy happens when an opponent in a debate misinterprets or takes a small part of their opponent's position in a debate and makes it a major part of the opponent's position. This is often done by ridicule, taking statements out of context, or misquoting.

Politicians, unfortunately, commit the straw person fallacy quite frequently. If someone states, "College A is not as good as College B because the cafeteria food at College A is not as good" is a pretty weak argument—and making too big of a deal over of a minor thing—for attending one college over another.

False Dilemma

False Dilemma is often referred to as the "either-or" fallacy. When you are given only two options, and more than two options exist, that is false dilemma. Usually in false dilemma, one of the options is undesirable and the other is the one the persuader wants you to take. False dilemma is common. "America: Love it or Leave It." "If you don't buy this furniture today, you'll never get another chance." "Vote for Candidate Y or see our nation destroyed."

Appeal to Tradition

Appeals to tradition is the argument that "We've always done it this way." This fallacy happens when traditional practice is the only reason for continuing a policy. Tradition is a great thing. We do many wonderful things for the sake of tradition, and it makes us feel good. But doing something only because it's always been done a certain way is not an argument.

You've likely experienced this through politicians. For example, if a politician says that we should support coal mining because "it's a great American tradition and we've coal mined for decades," it certainly highlights values inherent within the speaker, but it's a fallacy.

Bandwagon

This fallacy, the **bandwagon**, is also referred to as "appeal to majority" and "appeal to popularity," using the old expression of "get on the bandwagon" to support an idea. Bandwagon is a fallacy that asserts that because something is popular (or seems to be), it is therefore good, correct, or desirable.

You've probably heard that "Everybody is doing it" or "more than 50% of the population supports this idea." Just because 50% of the population is engaging in an activity does not make that a wise choice based on sound reasoning. Historically, 50% of the population believed or did something that was not good or right. In a democracy we make public policy to some extent based on majority rule, but we also have protections for the minority or other vulnerable populations. This is a wonderful part of our system. It is sometimes foolish to say that a policy is morally right or wrong or wise just because it is supported by 50% of the people.

Red Herring

A herring is a fish, and it was once used to throw off or distract foxhounds from a particular scent. A **red herring**, then, is creating a diversion or introducing an irrelevant point to distract someone or get someone off the subject of the argument. When a politician in a debate is asked about their stance on immigration, and the candidate responds, "I think we need to focus on reducing the debt. That's the real problem!" they are introducing a red herring to distract from the original topic under discussion.

Ad Hominem

This is a fallacy that attacks the person rather than dealing with the real issue in dispute. A person using **ad hominem** connects a real or perceived flaw in a person's character or behavior to an issue he or she supports, asserting that the flaw in character makes the position on the issue wrong. Obviously, there is no connection. In a sense, ad hominem is a type of red herring because it distracts from the real argument. In some cases, the "hidden agenda" is to say that because someone of bad character supports an issue or argument, therefore the issue or argument is not worthy or logical.

A person using ad hominem might say, "Climate change is not true. It is supported by advocates such as Congressperson Jones, and we all know that Congressperson Jones was convicted of fraud last year." This is not to say that Congressperson Jones should be re-elected, only that climate change's being true or false is irrelevant to their fraud conviction. Do not confuse ad hominem with poor credibility or ethos. A speaker's ethos, based on character or past behavior, does matter. It just doesn't mean that the issues they support are logically or factually wrong.

There are some positive steps you can take to avoid these pitfalls

of persuasive speaking and ensure that you are presenting your message in the most ethical manner. We have already discussed some of these, such as offering credible evidence for your arguments and showing concern for the audience's well being. However, you should also offer a transparent goal for your speech. Even with a hostile audience, where you may wait until later in the speech to provide the specific purpose statement, you should be forthcoming about your specific purpose. In fact, be truthful with your audience throughout the speech.

It is appropriate to use fictional scenarios to demonstrate your point but tell the audience that is what you are doing. You can accomplish this by introducing fictional examples with the phrase, "hypothetically," or "imagine," to signal that you are making it up.[11] Additionally, be sure to offer a mix of logical and emotional appeals. Blending these strategies ensures that you have evidence to back up emotional claims, and that you are sensitive to the audiences' emotional reactions to your logical claims. Attending to both aspects will help you be more ethical and more persuasive.

The most important persuasion tool you have in your entire arsenal is integrity. – Zig Ziglar

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Chapter Eighteen – Special Occasion Speeches

Sometimes, the speaking opportunities life brings our way have nothing to do with informing or persuading an audience; instead, we are asked to speak during special occasions in our lives. Whether you are standing up to give a speech at an awards ceremony or create a tribute, knowing how to create an effective aesthetic experience in a variety of different contexts is the nature of ceremonial (or special occasion) speaking.

The goal of a ceremonial speech is to captivate an audience and create a felt sense in response to the situation or occasion. The occasion will, of course, inform what kind of experience the speaker is creating, and different occasions have different expectations for speakers based on values that they rely on: inspiring, commemorating, accepting, or unifying.

You've likely experienced a ceremonial speech as an audience member—perhaps lots! If you attended a campus orientation, the chancellor or provost may have welcomed you in a formal speech. Attended a wedding? If so, it's likely you heard a toast. The more special occasion speeches you attend, the more you'll realize that effective speaking means "giving the people what they want," so to speak – it means crafting and delivering a speech that reflects the occasion.

On the surface, special occasion speaking may seem detached from advocacy, but remember: when you speak at a special occasion, it's your job to bring the community together by elevating and advocating for a perspective that's appropriate to the contextual values. If you're giving a tribute to someone, for example, you're advocating for the audience to view them in a particular light – likely a positive one that honors their accomplishments and

contributions. You're speaking about something or someone that you believe in.

In this chapter, we are going to explore what special occasion speeches are, types of speeches, and strategies for effective language and aesthetic delivery.

Types of Special Occasion Speeches

Special occasion speeches cover broad territory and allow for a wider range of topics, events, and approaches to be employed. We won't cover all types of special occasion speeches, but the information below should assist as you approach speaking at different ceremonial events.

Speeches of Introduction

The first type of special occasion speech is the **speech of introduction**, which is a mini speech given by the host of a ceremony that introduces another speaker. Few things are worse than an introduction that says, "This is Wyatt Ford. He's going to talk about stress." While we did learn the speaker's name and the topic, the introduction falls flat. Audiences won't be the least bit excited about listening to Wyatt's speech.

Just like any other speech, a speech of introduction should be a complete speech and have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion—and you should do it all in under two minutes. This brings up another "few things are worse" scenario: an introductory speaker who rambles on for too long or who doesn't focus their remarks on the person being introduced.

The Introduction: For an introduction, think of a hook that will make your audience interested in the upcoming speaker. Did you read a news article related to the speaker's topic? Have you been impressed by a presentation you've heard the speaker give in the past? You need to find something that can grab the audience's attention and make them excited about hearing the main speaker.

Transition

The Body: The body of your speech of introduction should be devoted to telling the audience about the speaker's topic, why the speaker is qualified, and why the audience should listen (notice we now have our three main points). First, tell your audience in general terms about the overarching topic of the speech. Most of the time as an introducer, you'll only have a speech title and maybe a paragraph of information to help guide this part of your speech. That's all right. You don't need to know all the ins and outs of the main speaker's speech; you just need to know enough to whet the audience's appetite. Next, you need to tell the audience why the speaker is a credible speaker on the topic. Has the speaker written books or articles on the subject? Has the speaker had special life events that make them qualified? Lastly, you need to briefly explain to the audience why they should care about the upcoming speech. The outline can be adjusted; for example, you can give the biographical information first, but these three areas should be covered.

Transition

Conclusion: The final part of a good introduction is the conclusion, which is generally designed to welcome the speaker to the lectern. Many introducers will conclude by saying something like, "I am looking forward to hearing how Wyatt Ford's advice and wisdom can help all of us today, so please join me in welcoming Dr. Wyatt Ford." At this point, you as the person introducing the speaker are "handing off" the speaking duties to someone else, so it is not uncommon to end your speech of introduction by clapping as the speaker comes on stage or shaking the speaker's hand.

Speeches of Presentation

The second type of special occasion speech is the speech of presentation. A **speech of presentation** is a brief speech given to accompany a prize or honor. Speeches of presentation can be as

simple as saying, "This year's recipient of the Lavache Public Speaking prize is Ryann Curley," or could last up to five minutes as the speaker explains why the honoree was chosen for the award.

> **Example Alert:** An interesting example of a speech presenting an award is this one by Zoe Saldana for J.J. Abrams.

When preparing a speech of presentation, it's always important to ask how long the speech should be. Once you know the time limit, then you can set out to create the speech itself.

The following format can assist as you craft speeches of presentation:

- First, you should explain what the award or honor is and why the presentation is important.
- Second, you can explain what the recipient has accomplished in order for the award to be bestowed. Did the person win a race? Did the person write an important piece of literature? Did the person mediate conflict? Whatever the recipient has done, you need to clearly highlight their work.
- Lastly, if the race or competition was conducted in a public forum and numerous people didn't win, you may want to recognize those people for their efforts as well. While you don't want to steal the show away from winner (as Kanye West did to Taylor Swift during the 2009 MTV Music Video Awards, for example) you may want to highlight the work of the other competitors or nominees.

Speeches of Acceptance

Acceptance speeches complement a speech of presentation. The **speech of acceptance** is a speech given by the recipient of a prize or honor. For example, in the above video clip from the 2009 MTV Music Video Awards, Taylor Swift starts by expressing her appreciation, gets interrupted by Kanye West, and ends by saying, "I would like to thank the fans and MTV, thank you." While obviously not a traditional acceptance speech because of the interruption, she did manage to get in the important parts.

There are three typical components of a speech of acceptance:

- Thank the givers of the award or honor: You want to thank the people who have given you the award or honor and possibly those who voted for you. We see this done every year during the Oscars, "First, I'd like to thank the Academy and all the Academy voters."
- Thank those who helped you achieve your goal: You want to give credit to those who helped you achieve the award or honor. No person accomplishes things in life on their own. We all have family members, friends, and colleagues who support us and help us achieve what we do in life, and a speech of acceptance is a great time to graciously recognize those individuals.
- Put the award or honor into perspective. Tell the people listening to your speech why the award is meaningful to you. If you know you are up for an award, the odds of your winning are high. In order to avoid blubbering through an acceptance speech, have one ready. A good rule to remember is: Be thankful, be gracious, be short.

After-Dinner Speeches

After-dinner speeches are humorous speeches that make a serious point. These speeches get their name from the fact that they historically follow a meal of some kind. After-dinner speakers are generally asked to speak (or hired to speak) because they have the ability both to speak effectively and to make people laugh. First and foremost, after-dinner speeches are speeches and not stand-up comedy routines. All the basic conventions of public speaking previously discussed in this text apply to after-dinner speeches, but the overarching goal of these speeches is to be entertaining and to create an atmosphere of amusement.

After-dinner speaking is an extremely difficult type of speaking to do well because it is an entertaining speech that depends on the successful delivery of humor. People train for years to develop comic timing, or the verbal and nonverbal delivery used to enhance the comedic value of a message. But after-dinner speaking is difficult, not impossible.

You may be wondering, "What kind of topics are serious that I can joke about?" The answer to that, like the answer to most everything else in the book, is dependent on your audience and the speaking situation, which is to say any topic will work, while at the same time you need to be very careful about how you choose your topic.

First, use all that you have learned about informative or persuasive speeches to prepare a real informative or persuasive speech roughly two-thirds the length of what the final speech will become. That is, if you're going to be giving a ten-minute speech, then your "real" informative or persuasive speech should be six or seven minutes in length.

Next, go back through the speech and look for opportunities to insert humorous remarks. The table below lists various forms of verbal humor that are often used in the textual portion of a speech.

Forms of Verbal Humor

Type of Humor	Example
Acronym/ Abbreviation	CIA—Certified Idiots Anonymous
	LAPD—Lunatics And Punishment Dispensers
Humorous Advertisement or News Headline	"Tiger Woods Plays with Own Balls, Nike Says"
	"A-Rod Goes Deep, Wang Hurt"
	"Federal Agents Raid Gun Shop, Find Weapons"
Aside	They are otherwise known as oxymorons, which are not people who don't know how to use acne medication.
	Colostomy, wasn't he one of the Greek Gods?
Definition	"A banker is a fellow who lends you his umbrella when the sun is shining and wants it back the minute it begins to rain." Mark Twain
	Spoiled rotten, or what happens to kids after spending just ten minutes with their grandparents.
Oxymoron	Scheduled emergency
	Gourmet spam
	Recreational hospital
Pleonasm	Frozen ice
	Sharp point
	Killed dead
Malapropism	He's a vast suppository of information (*suppository* should be *repository*).
	This is bound to create dysentery in the ranks (*dysentery* should be *dissent*).
One-Liner or Quotation	Better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak and remove all doubt. —Abraham Lincoln
	A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kick boxing. —Emo Philips
	Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened. —Winston Churchill
	In the first place God made idiots; this was for practice. Then he made school boards. —Mark Twain

Type of Humor	Example
Self-Effacing Humor	I looked over at my clock and it said 7:30, and I had to be at work by 8:00. I got up, got dressed, and sped to the office. Only then did I realize that it was 7:30 p.m. and not 7:30 a.m.
	"Thomas Jefferson once said, 'One should not worry about chronological age compared to the ability to perform the task.'...Ever since Thomas Jefferson told me that I stopped worrying about my age." —Ronald Reagan
Word Combination with Unusual Visual Effects	That kid was about as useful as a football bat.
	He was finer than frog hair.

Each of these is a possible humor device that could be implemented in a speech. Read the following speech delivered by Mark Twain on his seventieth birthday for a good example of an after-dinner speech Seventieth Birthday Speech.

Once you've looked through your speech, examining places for verbal humor, think about any physical humor or props that would enhance your speech. Physical humor is great if you can pull it off without being self-conscious. One of the biggest mistakes any humorist makes is to become too aware of what their body is doing because it's then harder to be free and funny. As for props, after-dinner speakers have been known to use everything from oversize inflatable baseball bats to rubber clown noses. The goal for a funny prop is that it adds to the humor of the speech without distracting from its message.

Last, and probably most important, try the humor out on real, live people. This is important for three reasons.

First, the success of humor depends heavily on delivery, and especially timing in delivery. You will need practice to polish your delivery so that your humor comes across. If you can't make it through one of your jokes without cracking up, you will need to either incorporate the self-crackup into your delivery or forgo using that joke.

Second, just because you find something unbelievably funny in your head doesn't mean that it will make anyone else laugh. Often, humor that we have written down on paper just doesn't translate when orally presented. You may have a humorous story that you love reading on paper, but find that it just seems to drone on once you start telling it out loud. Furthermore, remember there is a difference between written and verbal language, and this also translates to how humor is interpreted.

Third, you need to make sure the humor you choose will be appropriate for a specific audience. What one audience finds funny another may find offensive. Humor is the double-edged sword of public speaking. On one side, it is an amazing and powerful speaking tool, but on the other side, few things will alienate an audience more than offensive humor. If you're ever uncertain about whether a piece of humor will offend your audience, don't use it.

The following are some other tips for using humor from people who have professionally given after-dinner speeches and learned the hard way what to do and what to avoid:

- Personalize or localize humor when possible.
- Be clear about which words need emphasis with verbal humor.
- Be sure the punch line is at the end. Don't let on where the joke is going.
- Don't announce, "This is funny." or "I'm not very good at telling jokes, but…"
- Don't try to use humor that you don't know well.
- Don't use humor that you personally don't find funny.
- Don't apologize if others don't laugh.
- Don't try to explain the humor if it fails—just move on.
- Don't drag it out! Remember, brevity is the soul of wit.
- Know when to stop joking and be serious.
- Be natural and have fun!

Keynote Address

A **keynote address** is a speech focused on a key theme or idea—generally defined by the event or occasion— with the purpose of unification. Speakers are commonly selected to give a keynote if they have expertise or experience in the theme or idea being presented.

Because the keynote likely takes place at a larger event, convention, institution, etc., it's important to pay attention to circumstances and make sure that your information elevates the ideas from that event. For example, if you're speaking at a convention, who's there? What's the convention theme? Who else is speaking? This information will help you tailor your content to fit the occasion and audience (we talk more about this in the last sections of this chapter).

Motivational Speaking

A motivational speech is a type of keynote address which is designed not only to make an audience experience emotional arousal (fear, sadness, joy, excitement) but also to motivate the audience to do something with that emotional arousal. Whereas a traditional persuasive speech may want listeners to purchase product X or agree with ideology Y, a motivational speech helps to inspire people

in a broader fashion, often without a clearly articulated end result in mind. As such, motivational speaking is a highly specialized form of persuasive speaking commonly delivered in schools, businesses, religious, and club or group contexts. *The Toastmasters International Guide to Successful Speaking* lists four types of motivational speeches: hero, survivor, religious, and success.

Powerful. Photo by Binti Malu.

The hero speech is a motivational speech given by someone who is considered a hero in society (e.g., military speakers, political figures, and professional athletes). Just type "motivational speech" into YouTube and you'll find many motivational speeches given by individuals who can be considered heroes or role models. The following clip presents a speech by Jimmy Valvano:

Jimmy Valvano's 1993 ESPY Speech

In this speech, Jimmy V talks about overcoming obstacles and enjoying life to its fullest. The V Foundation for Cancer Research was founded by ESPN and legendary basketball coach Jim Valvano with one goal in mind: to achieve victory over cancer. Since its start in 1993, the V Foundation has awarded over $250 million in cancer research grants nationwide and has grown to become one of the premier supporters of cutting-edge cancer research funds. Jimmy V died 58 days after this ceremony.

The survivor speech is a speech given by someone who has survived a personal tragedy or who has faced and overcome serious adversity. In the following clip, cancer survivor Becky M. Olsen discusses her life as a cancer survivor.

Becky M. Olson Speech

Becky Olsen goes all over the country talking with and motivating cancer survivors to beat the odds.

The religious speech is fairly self-explanatory; it is designed to incorporate religious ideals into a motivational package to inspire an audience into thinking about or changing aspects of their religious lives. One highly sought-after religious speaker in the United States is Joel Osteen, head minister at Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas. The following speech highlights his speaking strengths:

Choose To Be Happy

The final type of motivational speech is the success speech, which is given by someone who has succeeded in some aspect of life and is giving back by telling others how they too can be successful. In the following clip the then CEO of Xerox, Anne Mulcahy, speaks before a group of students at Dartmouth College discussing the spirit of entrepreneurship.

Leadership Lessons Learned on the Firing Line

In this speech, Mulcahy shares the leadership lessons she had learned as the CEO of Xerox.

Commemorative Speeches

Commemorative speeches encompass a broad range of occasions, and their purpose is to commemorate an extraordinary person, place, thing, or idea. **Commemorative speeches** allow you to pay tribute publicly by honoring, remember, or memorializing. For example, commemorative speeches include:

- Paying tribute to a local art teacher;
- Toasting your boss at the company's retirement party;
- Honoring the founder at a national convention.

When you commemorate, your focus is highlighting the thing being commemorated through a dedication, toast, eulogy, or a commencement address. While we won't list every type of commemorative speech, if you're honoring or paying tribute, you're likely delivering a commemorative address.

We'll talk through some specific commemorative speeches below but remember that the focus of commemorative speeches is the person, place, thing, or idea, so stay focused on connecting the audience to the specific occasion.

Speeches of Dedication

A **speech of dedication** is delivered when a new store opens, a building is named after someone, a plaque is placed on a wall, a new library is completed, and so on. These speeches are designed to highlight the importance of the project and possibly those to whom the project has been dedicated. Maybe your great-aunt has passed away and opted to donate funds to your university, so the college has decided to rename one of the residence halls after them. In this case, you may be asked to speak at the dedication.

When preparing a speech of dedication:

- Start by explaining how you are involved in the dedication. If the person to whom the dedication is being made is a relative, tell the audience that the building is being named after your great-aunt who bestowed a gift to their alma mater.
- Second, you want to explain what is being dedicated, why, and who was involved in the project. If the project is a new structure, talk about the people who built the structure or designed it. If the project is a preexisting structure, talk about the people who put together and decided on the dedication.
- Lastly, explain why the project is important for the community in which it is located. If the dedication is for a new store, talk about how the store will bring in new jobs and new shopping opportunities. If the dedication is for a new wing of a hospital, talk about how patients will be served and the advances in medicine the new wing will provide the community.

Toasts

At one time or another, almost everyone is going to be asked to deliver a toast. A **toast** is a speech designed to congratulate, appreciate, or remember. Toasts can be delivered for the purpose of

congratulating someone for an honor, a new job, or getting married. You can also toast someone to show your appreciation for something that they have done. Lastly, we toast people to remember them and what they have accomplished.

When preparing a toast, the first goal is always to keep your remarks brief. Toasts are generally given during the middle of some kind of festivities (e.g., wedding, retirement party, farewell party), and you don't want your toast to take away from those festivities for too long. Second, the goal of a toast is to focus attention on the person or persons being toasted—not on the speaker. Finally, if you're being asked to toast, it likely means you have a noteworthy personal or professional relationship with the person or people involved, so make it personal!

Toasts are certainly common, but that doesn't mean they don't require effort and preparation. A frequent trap is that people often think of toasts as corny. As a result, they don't prepare seriously but rather stand up to speak with the idea that they can "wing it" by acting silly and telling a few jokes. Instead of being entertaining, the speech falls flat.

Finally, while you are speaking, you need to focus your attention on the people being toasted, both by physically looking at them and by keeping your message about them. You should also avoid any inside jokes between you and the people being toasted because toasts are public and should be accessible for everyone who hears them. To conclude a toast, simply say something like, "Please join me in recognizing Gina for her achievement" and lift your glass. When you lift your glass, this will signal to others to do the same and then you can all take a drink, which is the end of your speech.

Toast. Photo by cottonbro.

Roasts

The **roast** speech is a very interesting and peculiar speech because it is designed to both praise and good-naturedly insult a person being honored. Generally, roasts are given at the conclusion of a banquet in honor of someone's life achievements. The television station Comedy Central has been conducting roasts of various celebrities for a few years.

In this clip, watch as Stephen Colbert, television host of *The Colbert Report*, roasts President George W. Bush.

Colbert Roasts Bush

Let's pick this short clip apart. You'll notice that the humor doesn't pull any punches. The goal of the roast is to both praise and insult in a good-natured manner. You'll also see that the roaster, in this case Stephen Colbert, is standing behind a lectern while the roastee, President George W. Bush, is clearly on display for the audience to

see, and periodically you'll see the camera pan to President Bush to take in his reactions. Half the fun of a good roast is watching the roastee's reactions during the roast, so it's important to have the roastee clearly visible by the audience.

How does one prepare for a roast? First, you want to really think about the person who is being roasted. Do they have any strange habits or amusing stories in their past that you can discuss? When you think through these things you want to make sure that you cross anything off your list that is truly private information or will really hurt the person. The goal of a roast is to poke at them, not massacre them. Second, when selecting which aspects to poke fun at, you need to make sure that the items you choose are widely known by your audience. Roasts work when the majority of people in the audience can relate to the jokes being made. If you have an inside joke with the roastee, bringing it up during roast may be great fun for the two of you, but it will leave your audience unimpressed. Lastly, end on a positive note. While the jokes are definitely the fun part of a roast, you should leave the roastee knowing that you truly do care about and appreciate the person.

Speeches to Eulogize and Memorialize

A **eulogy** is a speech given in honor of someone who has passed away. (Don't confuse "eulogy" with "elegy," a poem or song of mourning.) Closely related, **speeches that memorialize** are longer speeches that celebrate and honor the person or group of individuals on a significant date – Veterans Day, for example.

Unless you are a minister, priest, rabbi, imam, or other form of religious leader, you'll probably not deliver too many eulogies in your lifetime. However, when the time comes to deliver a eulogy, it's good to know what you're doing and to adequately prepare your remarks. Watch the following clip of then-Senator Barack Obama delivering a eulogy at the funeral of civil rights activist Rosa Parks in November of 2005.

Barack Obama at Rosa Parks Funeral

In this eulogy, Senator Obama delivers the eulogy by recalling Rosa Parks importance and her legacy in American history.

If you are ever asked to give a eulogy, that means you were probably close to the deceased and are experiencing shock, sadness, and disbelief at your loved one's passing. The last thing that you will want to do (or be in a mental state to do) is figure out how to structure your eulogy. To that end, here are three parts of a eulogy (i.e. main points) you can use to write one without worrying about being original with structure or organizational patterns.

When preparing, gather and brainstorm meaningful information about the person. The more information you have about the person, the more personal you can make the eulogy. Second, although eulogies and speeches that memorialize are delivered on the serious and sad occasion of a funeral or service, it is very helpful to look for at least one point to be lighter or humorous. In some cultures, in fact, the friends and family attending the funeral will expect the eulogy to be highly entertaining and amusing.

Knowing the deceased and the audience is vital when deciding

on the type and amount of humor to use in a eulogy. A story that everyone can appreciate is often recommended. Ultimately, the goal of the humor or lighter aspects of a eulogy is to relieve the tension that is created by the serious nature of the occasion.

Praise

The first thing you want to do when remembering someone who has passed away is remind the audience what made that person so special. So, you will want to praise their accomplishments. This can include notable achievements (being an award winner; helping with charities), personal qualities ("they were always willing to listen to your problems and help in any way they could"), or anecdotes and stories (being a great parent; how they drove to college to visit you when you were homesick). While you can rely on your own information if you were close to the deceased, it is always a good idea to ask friends and relatives of the deceased for their memories, as these may add important facets that may not have occurred to you. Of course, if you were not very close to the deceased, you will need to ask friends and family for information.

Lament

The second thing you want to do in a eulogy is to lament the loss. To lament means to express grief or sorrow, which is what everyone at a funeral has gathered to do. You will want to acknowledge that everyone is sad and that the deceased's passing will be difficult to get through. Here you might mention all the things that will no longer happen as a result of the death. "Now that Grandpa is gone, there won't be any more Sunday dinners where he cooks chicken on the grill or bakes his famous macaroni and cheese." While eulogies are delivered on the serious and sad occasion of a funeral or memorial service for the deceased, it can be helpful to look for at least one lighter or humorous point. In some cultures, in fact, the friends and family attending the funeral will expect the eulogy to be highly entertaining and amusing. While eulogies are not roasts, one goal of the humor or lighter aspects of a eulogy is to relieve the tension that is created by the serious nature of the occasion.

Console

The final step (or main point) in a eulogy is to console the audience, or to offer comfort in a time of grief. What you must remember (and many people often forget) is that a eulogy is not a speech for the person who has died; it is a speech for the people who are still living to try to help them deal with the loss. You will want to end your eulogy on a positive note. Tell the audience about who this person was and what the person stood for in life. The more personal you can make a eulogy, the more touching it will be for the deceased's friends and families. The eulogy should remind the audience to celebrate the person's life as well as mourn their death.

Using the Praise-Lament-Console format for eulogies gives you a simple system where you can fill in the sections with 1) why was the person good, 2) why you will miss them, and 3) how you and the audience will get through this loss. It sometimes also helps to think of the three points in terms of Past-Present-Future: you will praise the deceased for what they did when they were alive (the past), lament the loss you are feeling now (the present), and console your audience by letting them know that things will be all right (the future).

Commencement Address

A **speech of commencement** (or, as it is more commonly known, a "commencement speech") is designed to recognize and celebrate the achievements of a graduating class or other group of people. These typically take place at graduation ceremonies. Nearly all of us have sat through commencement speeches at some point in our lives. And if you're like us, you've heard good ones and bad ones.

> **Example Alert:** Numerous celebrities and politicians have been asked to deliver commencement speeches at colleges and universities. Famed Harry Potter author J. K. Rowling gave a now-famous and well-thought-out commencement speech at Harvard University in 2008. Rowling's speech has the perfect balance of humor and inspiration, which are two of the main ingredients of a great commencement speech.

If you're ever asked to deliver a commencement speech, there are some key points to think through when deciding on your speech's content:

- If there is a specific theme for the graduation, make sure that your commencement speech addresses that theme. If there is no specific theme, come up with one for your speech. Some common commencement speech themes are commitment, competitiveness, confidence, decision making, discipline, ethics, failure (and overcoming failure), faith, generosity, integrity, involvement, leadership, learning, persistence, responsibility, and self-respect. Think of a theme as something that ties the content of your speech together. For example, one of our authors was the commencement speaker at her

undergraduate institution, and she used the "yellow brick road" as a metaphor for progress.

- Talk about your life and how graduates can learn from your experiences to avoid pitfalls or take advantages of life. Place the commencement speech into the broader context of the graduates' lives. Show the graduates how the advice and wisdom you are offering can be utilized to make their own lives better. How can your life inspire the graduates in their future endeavors?
- Make the speech humorous. Commencement speeches should be entertaining and make an audience laugh (but be appropriate, of course!).
- Be brief! Nothing is more painful than a commencement speaker who drones on and on. Remember, the graduates are there to get their diplomas; their families are there to watch the graduates walk across the stage.
- Remember, while you may be the speaker, you've been asked to impart wisdom and advice for the people graduating and moving on with their lives, so keep it focused on them.

Overall, it's important to make sure that you have fun when delivering a commencement speech. Remember, it's a huge honor and responsibility to be asked to deliver a commencement speech, so take the time to really think through and prepare your speech.

Speeches of Farewell

A **speech of farewell** allows speakers to say good-bye to one part of their lives as they move on to the next part. Maybe you've accepted a new job and are leaving your current job, or you're graduating from college and entering the work force. Whatever the case may be, periods of transition are often marked by speeches of farewell. Watch the following clip of Derek Jeter's 2008 speech saying farewell to Yankee Stadium, built in 1923, before the New York Yankees moved to the new stadium that opened in 2009.

Derek Jeter's farewell to the Yankees

In this speech, Derek Jeter is not only saying good-bye to Yankee Stadium but also thanking the fans for their continued support.

When preparing a speech of farewell, the goal should be to thank the people in your current position and let them know how much you appreciate them as you make the move to your next position in life. In Derek Jeter's speech, he starts by talking about the history of the 1923 Yankee Stadium and then thanks the fans for their support. Second, you want to express to your audience how much the experience has meant to you. A farewell speech is a time to commemorate and think about the good times you've had. As such, you should avoid negativity during this speech. Lastly, you want to make sure that you end on a high note. Derek Jeter concludes his speech by saying, "On behalf of this entire organization, we just want to take this moment to salute you, the greatest fans in the world!" at which point Jeter and the other players take off their ball caps and hold them up toward the audience.

The Nature of Special Occasion Speeches

To help us think through how to be effective in delivering these types of speeches, let's look at four key ingredients: preparation, adaptation to the occasion, adaptation to the audience, and mindfulness about the time.

Be Prepared

Notes. Photo by Steve Johnson.

First, and foremost, the biggest mistake you can make when standing to deliver an entertaining speech is to underprepare or simply not prepare at all. We've stressed the need for preparation throughout this text, so just because you're giving a wedding toast or a eulogy doesn't mean you shouldn't think through the speech before you stand up and speak out. If the situation is impromptu, even jotting some basic notes on a napkin is better than

not having any plan for what you are going to say. Remember, when you get anxious, as it inevitably happens in front of an audience, your brain doesn't function as well as when you are having a relaxed conversation with friends. You often forget information. By writing down some simple notes, you'll be less likely to deliver a bad speech.

Be Adaptive to the Occasion

Not all content is appropriate for all occasions. If you are asked to deliver a speech commemorating the first anniversary of a school shooting, then obviously using humor and telling jokes wouldn't be appropriate. But some decisions about adapting to the occasion are less obvious. Consider the following examples:

- You are the maid of honor giving a toast at the wedding of your younger sister.
- You are receiving a Most Valuable Player award in your favorite sport.
- You are a sales representative speaking to a group of clients after a mistake has been discovered.
- You are a cancer survivor speaking at a high school student assembly.

How might you adapt your message and speaking style to successfully entertain these various audiences?

Remember that being a competent speaker is about being both personally effective and socially appropriate. Different occasions

will call for different levels of social appropriateness. One of the biggest mistakes entertaining speakers can make is to deliver one generic speech to different groups without adapting the speech to the specific occasion. In fact, professional speakers always make sure that their speeches are tailored for different occasions by getting information about the occasion from their hosts. When we tailor speeches for special occasions, people are more likely to remember those speeches than if we give a generic speech.

Beach wedding. Photo by Miriam Salgado.

Be Adaptive to Your Audience

Once again, we cannot stress the importance of audience adaptation enough in this text. Different audiences will respond

differently to speech material, so the more you know about your audience the more likely you'll succeed in your speech. One of our coauthors was once at a conference for teachers of public speaking. The keynote speaker stood and delivered a speech on the importance of public speaking. While the speaker was good and funny, the speech really fell flat. The keynote speaker basically told the public speaking teachers that they should take public speaking courses because public speaking is important. Right speech, wrong audience!

Be Mindful of the Time

The last major consideration for delivering entertaining speeches successfully is to be mindful of your time. Different entertaining speech situations have their own conventions and rules with regard to time. Acceptance speeches and toasts, for example, should be relatively short (typically under five minutes). A speech of introduction should be extremely brief—just long enough to tell the audience what they need to know about the person being introduced in a style that prepares them to appreciate that person's remarks. In contrast, commencement speeches and speeches to commemorate events can run ten to twenty minutes in length.

It's also important to recognize that audiences on different occasions will expect speeches of various lengths. For example, although it's true that graduation commencement speakers generally speak for ten to twenty minutes, the closer that speaker heads toward twenty minutes the more fidgety the audience becomes. To hold the audience's attention and fulfill the goal of

entertaining, a commencement speaker would do well to make the closing minutes of the speech the most engaging and inspiring portion of the speech. If you're not sure about the expected time frame for a speech, either ask the person who has invited you to speak or do some quick research to see what the average speech times in the given context tend to be.

Shorter Lengths	Gray Area	Longer Lengths
Speeches of Introduction	Eulogies	Commencement Speeches
Speeches of Preparation	After-Dinner	Keynote Address
Acceptance Speeches	Commemorative Speeches	
Toasts		

Aesthetics

It's important to consider all elements of the aesthetic experience for the audience when preparing for a special occasion speech. In fact, audiences often expect to leave with *the feels* after special occasion speeches, so attention to language and aesthetic delivery are key.

Special Occasion Language

Special occasion speaking is so firmly rooted in the use of good language that it makes sense to address it here. More than any other category of speech, the special occasion speech is arguably one where the majority of your preparation time will be specifically allocated towards the words you choose, and you should spend ample time crafting emotional and evocative phrases that convey the sentiment your speech is meant to impart. This isn't to say you shouldn't have used good language in your informative and

persuasive speeches, but that the emphasis shifts slightly in a special occasion speech.

Paying attention to your language doesn't mean "I should use big words!" Do not touch a thesaurus! Good language isn't about trying to impress us with fancy words. It's about taking the words you are already comfortable and familiar with and putting them in the best possible order.

Consider the following example from the then-president of the Ohio State University, Gordon Gee, giving a commencement address at Florida State University in 1997:

As you look back on your years at Florida State I hope you remember many good things that have happened. These experiences are, for the most part, events of the mind. The memories, ladies and gentlemen, however, are treasures of the heart.

Notice three things about his use of language: first, he doesn't try to use any fancy words, which he certainly could if he wanted to. Every word in this portion of his speech is one that all of us knew by the time we left elementary school, so again, don't mistake big words for good language. Using a five-syllable word when a two-syllable word will work just as well often means a speaker is trying too hard to sound smart. And given that the use of those big words often comes off sounding awkward or inappropriate, you're better off just sticking with what you know.

Second, notice how he uses those basic words to evoke emotion and wonderment – "treasures of the heart." Putting the words you know into the best possible order, when done well, will make your speech sound extremely eloquent and emotional.

Third, he uses parallelism in this brief snippet. The use of "events of the mind" and "treasures of the heart" to compare what is truly important about the college experience is powerful. Indeed, Gee's commencement is full of various rhetorical devices, with the twelve-minute speech, including alliteration.

As you know, your language is part of the aesthetic experience for the audience, so it's a must-have for special occasion speeches.

Refer to Chapter 12 on Vivid Language to further understand the importance of language devices in special occsion speeches.

Verbal and Nonverbal Delivery

Just as the language for special occasion speaking is slightly different, so too are the ways in which you will want to deliver your speech. First and foremost, since you will be spending so much time crafting the perfect language to use and putting your words in the right order, it is imperative that you say exactly what you have written; otherwise, what was the point? To that end, your delivery for a special occasion speech may skew slightly more in favor of manuscript speaking. While it is still vital to establish eye contact with your audience and to not sound like you are reading, it is also important to get the words exactly right.

So, you guessed it, rehearse! You need to know what you are going to say and feel comfortable knowing what is coming next. This is not to say you should have your speech memorized, but you need to be able to take your eyes off the page in order to establish and maintain a rapport with your audience. Rapport is a vital element in special occasion speaking because of the emotional component at the core of these speeches. Knowing your speech will also allow you to counteract the flow of adrenaline into your system, something particularly important given that special occasion speeches tend to be very emotional, not just for the audience, but for you as well.

One note: humor is often used in special occasion speeches, and when you're funny, people laugh! It can be difficult to account for laughter in your rehearsal, but try to predict where you may need to pause. If you speak over laughter, your audience will miss what you've said and may find it difficult to follow moving forward.

Basically, knowing your speech well allows you to incorporate the emotion that a special occasion speech is meant to convey, something that is hard to do when you read the entirety of your

speech. In this way your audience will sense the pride you feel for a graduating class during a commencement speech, the sorrow you feel for the deceased during a eulogy, or the gratitude you have when accepting an award.

Conclusion

Special occasion speaking is the most varied type of speaking to cover; however, there are some general rules to keep in mind regardless of what type you are engaged in. Remember that using vivid, evocative language is key, and that it is important that you deliver your speech in a way that both conveys the proper emotion for the occasion and allows you to give the speech exactly as you wrote it.

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eyeglasses-on-table-1485657

LICENSES

Speak Out, Call In: Public Speaking as Advocacy by Meggie Mapes

Chapter Nineteen – Speaking Online

Speaking online is becoming ever more important to consider as technology advances and opportunities open for various classroom options.

In an online environment, the "sense of urgency" may be gone, but this doesn't mean that preparation and practice are no longer necessary. The *way* in which you prepare and your virtual set up is much more important. Below, we discuss how to prepare and how to create an optimal viewing experience.

How do I speak in an Online Class?

Most instructors in an online class require a live audience of a prescribed number of people (4-6 potentially) and/or in a venue like a classroom (not the student's living room). Always check with your instructor about speech requirements. If you are delivering a speech online, keep these guidelines in mind:

1. Film your whole body—not just your head and shoulders.
2. Do tech walk-throughs and make sure your camera is working well and picking up your voice.
3. Make sure you can get the recording to your instructor. You probably will not be able to just send it through email because the file will be too big. You will have to post it to the cloud or to the learning management system in some manner. Many instructors require posting the video as [unlisted] YouTube file.
4. Wear appropriate clothing. Not being in class may tempt you to wear something too informal. This might be an opportunity to go a step beyond in your clothing. Make sure, also, that it looks good on camera in terms of color and lighting in your setting. Some patterns do not look good on camera.
5. Along that line, since you probably won't have professional lighting, get the room as bright as you possibly can, but do not point the camera in the direction of a bright light. The light should be coming from *behind* the camera.

See the images below for examples of how to frame yourself and how to set up your technology, whether a smart phone or computer device.

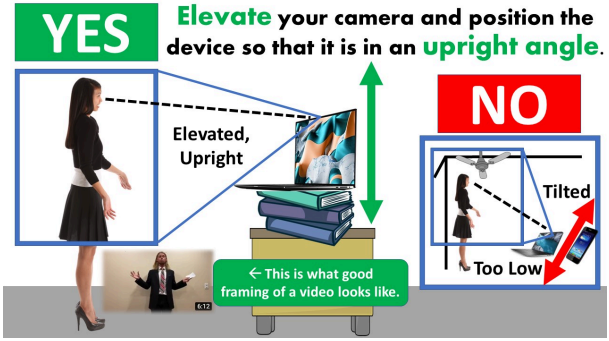


Figure 1. Camera angle for online speaking. Photo courtesy of Franklin Reynolds, 2020.

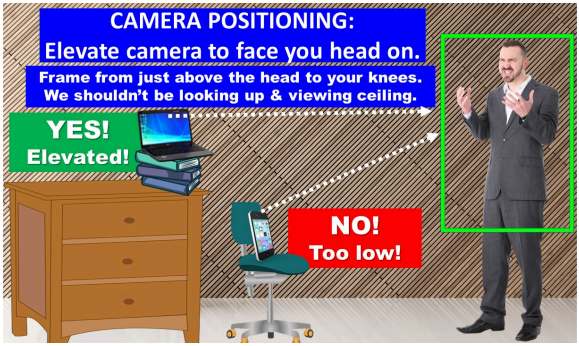
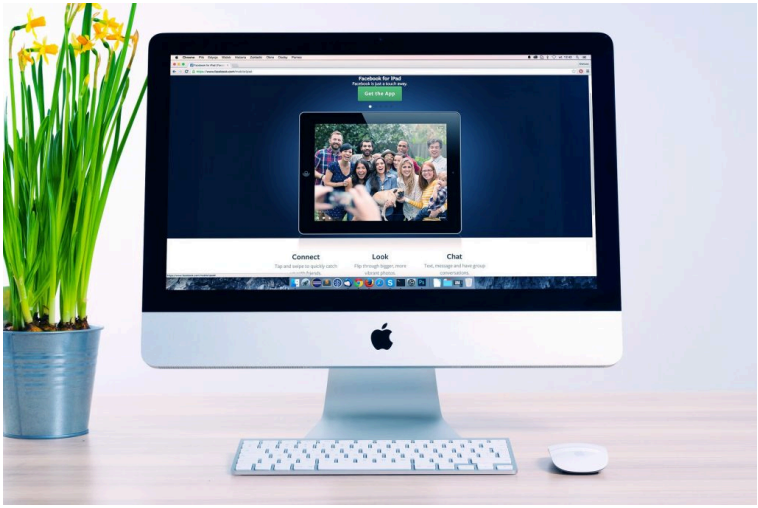


Figure 2. Camera positioning for online speaking. Photo courtesy of Franklin Reynolds, 2020.

Figure 3. Camera framing for online speaking. Photo courtesy of Franklin Reynolds, 2020.

How do I Prepare for Online Speaking?



Computer Apple Office Social Media Flowers, by unknown, licensed under CC0

First, recognize that this is a different type of venue. You have two main tools: your voice and your visuals (slides).

If monotone and monorate speaking is horrible for face-to-face speaking, it is truly the "Kiss of Death" for web speaking. The key word is "energy"— an energetic voice has variety and interest to it. Since we tend to have a lower energy level when we sit, some experts suggest that web conference speakers stand to approximate the real speaking experience. This suggestion makes sense. As we have mentioned repeatedly through this book, preparing means practicing your speech orally and physically, many times. Audio-

recording yourself during your practice on your smartphone or other device is a good first step, followed by critically and honestly thinking about whether your voice if listless, flat, low-energy, and likely to induce snoozing.

Second, your visuals. Most of us are tempted to put far too much text and too many graphics on the slides, and since the slides are the primary thing the audience will see (rather than your full body), the temptation is even stronger. As one expert on web speaking suggested, if your presentation in the workforce is likely to be graph, data, and information heavy because it's all information the audience must know, send the information in a report ahead of time. We've mentioned information overload before – speeches are not for dumping a great deal of information on audiences.

Therefore, keep your visuals simple. They do not have to have lots of clip art and photographs to keep attention. One rule business speakers like to use is the "10-20-30: rule: No more than 10 slides, no more than 20 words on the slides, and no font smaller than 30 point." Using 30 point font will definitely minimize the amount of text. Inserting short videos and planning interactivity (such as polls, which the software supports) are also helpful. Refer to Chapter 14 on Presentation Aids for further guidance on visuals.

Also in the realm of preparation, avoid two other problems that are common in webinars. Since some of your presentation might be visible, be sure your background is "right." Many people perform webinars in their offices, and let's be honest, some offices provide backgrounds that are less than optimal. They are either messy and disorganized or have distracting decorations. In other cases, you could be sitting in a neutral place with a blank wall behind you, but that setting can have its own issues. Use contrasting colors – if you're wearing white, don't stand in front of a white background; you'll disappear.

It goes without saying that the web speaker must be master of the technology, not be mastered by it. Technology messes up. That is a fact of life. Even if your internet connection is strong, the speaker must know what buttons to push on the software. For this reason,

it might be a good idea to have an "assistant" who handles the technology and makes sure it works so that you can focus on the communication.

Experts give a few other preparation tips:

1. Make sure you will not be interrupted during the web conference. This can be extremely embarrassing as well as ineffective. You have probably seen the priceless video from the BBC of an interview with an expert on Korea. His children photobomb the interview and then the mother tries to clean up the damage. It is hilarious, but the same situation won't be for you. Lock the door, put a big sign on the door not to be disturbed, and silence phones.
2. Have notes and anything else you need within immediate reach.
3. If you can be seen, be seen—use the technology to your advantage so that you are not an entirely disembodied voice talking over slides.

Finally, in preparing, think humor. Humor is a great attention – cartoons, short videos, funny anecdotes, and visual humor can help you work against the audience's temptations to multitask or daydream in a webinar. There is a limit, and it should be tasteful and relevant, but humor might be one of your best allies. Plus, it might increase your own energy level and fun with the webinar.

What do I do During the Web Speech?

One of the most important things you can do is start on time. This might seem obvious, but if you have ever been in an online meeting or webinar, it's harder said than done–mainly because participants log on at the start of the meeting rather than early and it takes a while for the technology to kick in. Therefore, one suggestion is to

have a “soft” introduction for the punctual and a “hard” opening for the late-comers. The soft intro could be the fun, attention-getting one (video, interactivity) and the hard one the “this is why the topic matters let’s get down to business” opening.

It goes without saying that you as the speaker should be online well before the beginning of the meeting, and ready to go technology- and presentation-wise.

Web speaking is often scheduled for a longer period of time than a face to-face speech, which does not add to attention level of the audience. For this reason, your presentation should include time for questions and input from the audience. However, this should be planned at intervals, perhaps between main sections of the speech, so that the speaker isn’t interrupting at inconvenient times.

Going deeper, perhaps we should ask the fundamental question of purpose. What is your intent in this webinar speech? To educate? To persuade/ sell? To contribute to or facilitate a decision? Something else? Everything else you do comes from that intent or purpose, just like your face-to-face speech comes from the specific purpose speech. What do you really want to accomplish from this meeting?

The other fundamental question is about your audience. Who are they? Where are they? In fact, in some cases the audience is in a different time zone! And that really matters in how a listener responds.

Other experts suggest the following:

1. Along with standing up for your presentation, smile. People can hear a smile even when they don’t see you.
2. Your anxiety does not go away just because you cannot see everyone in your “web audience.” Also, you might not have ever met the people to whom you are speaking. Be aware of the likelihood of anxiety— it might not hit until you are “on air.” As Ron Ashkenas says, “Anxiety in speaking is like static on the radio.”
3. In your use of periodic questions, be specific. The typical “Any questions?-pause- let’s go on” is really pretty ineffective. First,

it's not directed or specific, and second, people need time to formulate their questions and articulate them. Even saying, "What questions do you have?" is better, but even better is to ask specific questions about what you've been addressing. Many times you can forecast possible questions, and use those.

4. The issue of a question-and-answer period brings up a logistical question. Some participants will question orally through the webcam set-up. Others, with limited technology, will use the chat feature. It takes time to type in the chat feature. Be prepared for pauses.
5. Remember the power of transitions. Many people think that slides don't need transitions because, well, they change, isn't that enough? No, it's not. The speaker needs to tie the messages of the slides together.
6. Verbal pauses can be helpful. Since one of the things that put audiences to sleep is continual, non-stop flow of words, a pause can get attention.
7. Look at the camera, not the screen. You will appear more professional in those cases where the audience can see you.

Ending

As mentioned before, web conferences and webinars can go long—don't let it. End on time. Allow participants to email you questions if needed, but don't take advantage of people's time by entertaining questions longer than the scheduled time. Software allows for recording and archiving, so the audience should know how to access the recording.

When giving a virtual speech with others, you have a couple options:

1. Have only the person speaking appear on the screen with the rest of the team members hidden. This keeps the audience from being distracted by the movement of the other team members but we also lose seeing how interested the other team members are in the speaker.
2. Have all team members showing on the screen at once. We can still see the person who is speaking. If this is the option you choose be sure all team members stay attentive to the speaker and do not try to multitask. Keep as still as possible because any movement will draw the audience's attention.

Here are a two more important tips to make your virtual speech effective.

1. There is a lag time on many computers with the sound. This makes it even more important to *speak slowly* and enunciate your words.
2. Be sure and *introduce the next person* who speaks after you. For example: "I've just finished talking to you about the benefits of the on campus messages, now Derek is going to share with you how to sign up for them and where they are located." Introducing the next person on your team makes for smooth transitions and makes your team look cohesive and organized.

What are the etiquette guidelines for a virtual audience?

When listening to a speaker or instructor in an online environment, you as a listener may have several options as to how visible you are.

1. Your name is visible.
2. An image of your choice is visible. For example: a flower, symbol, avatar.
3. A photo of yourself is visible.
4. A live image of yourself is visible.

If we are working from home, it is tempting to stay in our pajamas and be as invisible as possible in the online class or meeting encounters. We can eat, drink, stretch out, multitask or dare I say sleep? Neither the speaker nor the rest of the participants know or is bothered by our behavior. *Or are they*?!

Just like face-to-face encounters, there is etiquette for online encounters. Keep these guidelines in mind:

1. *Live image*. Turn your live image screen/camera mode ON. Participants and the speaker need to see your face and your reactions to the information being shared. It builds trust. It may also be assumed if we can't see your face you have snuck out of the meeting. This is disrespectful.
2. *Mute button*. Turn your mute button on unless you have been signaled by the speaker to share a comment. As soon as you have shared be sure and turn your mute button back on. If your mute button is off, even if you are quiet, the sounds in the room around you, a dog, creaky pipes, cars passing the building, will add to the noise of the meeting. Sometimes the speaker or host of the meeting will turn all mute buttons on to manage the noise in the meeting.
3. *Raised hand*. Most online platforms have a button you can

select that shows you are raising your hand to ask a question or make a comment. This acts just like when you raise your hand when you are face-to-face and should be used when you want to participate in the conversation. After you have been called upon by the host (either your instructor or speaker) be sure and "un-raise" your hand so the hand icon is not left up on your image.

4. *Language*. Just like in face-to-face conversations, pay attention to your language. Refrain from using disparaging words, discriminatory or foul language either verbally or in the chat option. It is ok to critique ideas or behavior but not people. "I don't think that idea will work within our budget." (Ok. A criticism of the idea.) "What stupid person thought of that idea!" (Not ok. A criticism of the person.)
5. *Enunciate*. When you speak, remember there is a lag time in online communication. Speak a little slower than you are used to and enunciate well.
6. *Chat functions*. Oftentimes there is a "chat" function where comments can also be posted as the meeting progresses. This is for comments for the whole group and not to be misused to have private conversations with someone else in the meeting instead of paying attention to the speaker.
7. *Leave meeting.* If for any reason you must leave the meeting before it is over, a message in the chat saying so and why is the polite thing to do. "I need to take a quick restroom break. I'll be back in 2 minutes." "I need to leave for the manager's meeting. Thank you for all the good ideas." If you can come back, indicate in the chat that you have returned. This lets the speaker know where you are and when you have returned so they can expect your participation again. "This is Steve. I'm back."
8. *Reduce multitasking*. This last one is the most difficult of all but will pay big dividends. It may be tempting to answer an email, respond to a text message, order something online while you are in an online meeting, however, instead you should:

1. participate,
2. take notes,
3. ask questions,
4. stay an attentive listener.

This is good online audience etiquette and will enable you to get more out of each meeting!

Links that might help with this topic:

- 10 tips for giving great online presentations
- How to give a killer online presentation
- Great online presentation
- Five guidelines for effective online presentations
- How to bypass the 5 worst mistakes in online presentations
- 10 tips effective live online presentations
- 10 tips giving effective virtual presentations
- Presenting the perfect online presentation
- Selective attention test

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2. Unknown. *Computer apple office social media flowers* [Image]. Max Pixel. https://www.maxpixel.net/Computer-Apple-Office-Social-Media-Flowers-605503

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Chapter Twenty – Dealing with Nervousness and Practicing the Speech

Now that you have learned what it takes to prepare and deliver a well-crafted speech, it's finally time to deliver your speech! Read the following to help as you practice your speech delivery and deal with potential nervousness on your speech day.

Reducing Communication Apprehension

Freddie Pena – Nervous? – CC BY-NC 2.0.

Experiencing some nervousness about public speaking is normal. The energy created by this physiological response can be functional if you harness it as a resource for more effective public speaking. In this chapter, we suggest a number of steps that you can take to

channel your stage fright into excitement and animation. We will begin with specific speech-related considerations and then briefly examine some of the more general anxiety management options available.

Speech-Related Considerations

Communication apprehension does not necessarily remain constant throughout all the stages of speech preparation and delivery. One group of researchers studied the ebb and flow of anxiety levels at four stages in the delivery of a speech. They compared indicators of physiological stress at different milestones in the process:

- anticipation (the minute prior to starting the speech),
- confrontation (the first minute of the speech),
- adaptation (the last minute of the speech), and
- release (the minute immediately following the end of the speech) (Witt, et. al., 2006).

These researchers found that anxiety typically peaked at the anticipatory stage. In other words, we are likely to be most anxious right before we get up to speak. As we progress through our speech, our level of anxiety is likely to decline. Planning your speech to incorporate techniques for managing your nervousness at different times will help you decrease the overall level of stress you

experience. We also offer a number of suggestions for managing your reactions while you are delivering your speech.

Enjoy this TED talk on the science of stage fright!

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://mtsu.pressbooks.pub/principlesofpublicspeaking/?p=74#oembed-1

Think Positively

As we mentioned earlier, communication apprehension begins in the mind as a psychological response. This underscores the importance of a speaker's psychological attitude toward speaking. To prepare yourself mentally for a successful speaking experience, we recommend using a technique called **cognitive restructuring**. Cognitive restructuring is simply changing how you label the physiological responses you will experience. Rather than thinking of public speaking as a dreaded obligation, make a conscious decision to consider it an exciting opportunity. The first audience member

that you have to convince is yourself, by deliberately replacing negative thoughts with positive ones. If you say something to yourself often enough, you will gradually come to believe it.

We also suggest practicing what communication scholars Metcalfe, Beebe, and Beebe call positive self-talk rather than negative self-talk (Metcalfe, 1994; Beebe, 2000). If you find yourself thinking, "I'm going to forget everything when I get to the front of the room," turn that negative message around to a positive one. Tell yourself, "I have notes to remind me what comes next, and the audience won't know if I don't cover everything in the order I planned." The idea is to dispute your negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones, even if you think you are "conning" yourself. By monitoring how you talk about yourself, you can unlearn old patterns and change the ways you think about things that produce anxiety.

Reducing Anxiety through Preparation

As we have said previously, uncertainty makes for greater anxiety. Nothing is more frightening than facing the unknown. Although no one can see into the future and predict everything that will happen during a speech, every speaker can and should prepare so that the "unknowns" of the speech event are kept to a minimum. You can do this by gaining as much knowledge as possible about whom you will

be addressing, what you will say, how you will say it, and where the speech will take place.

Analyze Your Audience

The audience that we imagine in our minds is almost always more threatening than the reality of the people sitting in front of us. The more information you have about the characteristics of your audience, the more you will be able to craft an effective message. Since your stage fright is likely to be at its highest in the beginning of your speech, it is helpful to open the speech with a technique to prompt an audience response. You might try posing a question, asking for a show of hands, or sharing a story that you know is relevant to your listeners' experience. When you see the audience responding to you by nodding, smiling, or answering questions, you will have directed the focus of attention from yourself to the audience. Such responses indicate success; they are positively reinforcing, and thus reduce your nervousness.

Group. Photo by Matheus Bertelli.

Clearly Organize Your Ideas

Being prepared as a speaker means knowing the main points of your message so well that you can remember them even when you are feeling highly anxious, and the best way to learn those points is to create an outline for your speech. With a clear outline to follow, you will find it much easier to move from one point to the next without stumbling or getting lost.

A note of caution is in order: you do not want to react to the stress of speaking by writing and memorizing a manuscript. Your audience will usually be able to tell that you wrote your speech out verbatim, and they will tune out very quickly. You are setting yourself up for

disaster if you try to memorize a written text because the pressure of having to remember all those particulars will be tremendous. Moreover, if you have a momentary memory lapse during a memorized speech, you may have a lot of trouble continuing without starting over at the beginning.

You should prepare a simple outline that reminds you of the progression of ideas in your speech. What is important is the order of your points, not the specifics of each sentence. It is perfectly fine if your speech varies in terms of specific language or examples each time you practice it. (Remember, that is the essence of **extemporaneous** speaking.)

It may be a good idea to reinforce this organization through visual aids. When it comes to managing anxiety, visual aids have the added benefit of taking attention off the speaker.

Adapt Your Language to the Oral Mode

Another reason not to write out your speech as a manuscript is that to speak effectively you want your language to be adapted to the oral, not the written, mode. You will find your speaking anxiety more manageable if you speak in the oral mode because it will help you to feel like you are having a conversation with friends rather than delivering a formal proclamation.

Appropriate oral style is more concrete and vivid than written

style. Effective speaking relies on verbs rather than nouns, and the language is less complex. Long sentences may work well for novelists such as William Faulkner or James Joyce, where readers can go back and reread passages two, three, or even seven or eight times. Your listeners, though, cannot "rewind" you in order to catch ideas they miss the first time through.

Don't be afraid to use personal pronouns freely, frequently saying "I" and "me"—or better yet, "us" and "we." Personal pronouns are much more effective in speaking than language constructions, such as the following "this author," because they help you to build a connection with your audience. Another oral technique is to build audience questions into your speech. Rhetorical questions, questions that do not require a verbal answer, invite the audience to participate with your material by thinking about the implications of the question and how it might be answered. If you are graphic and concrete in your language selection, your audience is more likely to listen attentively. You will be able to see the audience listening, and this feedback will help to reduce your anxiety.

Watch What You Eat

The butterflies in your stomach are likely to be more noticeable if you skip normal meals. While you should eat normally, you should avoid caffeinated drinks because they can make your shaking hands worse. Carbohydrates operate as natural sedatives, so you may want to eat carbohydrates to help slow down your metabolism and to avoid fried or very spicy foods that may upset your stomach. Especially if you are speaking in the morning, be sure to have

breakfast. If you haven't had anything to eat or drink since dinner the night before, dizziness and light-headedness are very real possibilities.

Practice in Conditions Similar to Those You Will Face When Speaking

It is not enough to practice your speech silently in your head. To reduce anxiety and increase the likelihood of a successful performance, you need to practice out loud in a situation similar to the one you will face when actually performing your speech. Practice delivering your speech out loud while standing on your feet. If you make a mistake, do not stop to correct it but continue all the way through your speech; that is what you will have to do when you are in front of the audience.

If possible, practice in the actual room where you will be giving your speech. Not only will you have a better sense of what it will feel like to actually speak, but you may also have the chance to practice using presentation aids and potentially avoid distractions and glitches like incompatible computers, blown projector bulbs, or sunlight glaring in your eyes.

Two very useful tools for anxiety-reducing practice are a clock and a mirror. Use the clock to time your speech, being aware that

most novice speakers speak too fast, not too slowly. By ensuring that you are within the time guidelines, you will eliminate the embarrassment of having to cut your remarks short because you've run out of time or of not having enough to say to fulfill the assignment. Use the mirror to gauge how well you are maintaining eye contact with your audience; it will allow you to check that you are looking up from your notes. It will also help you build the habit of using appropriate facial expressions to convey the emotions in your speech. While you might feel a little absurd practicing your speech out loud in front of a mirror, the practice that you do before your speech can make you much less anxious when it comes time to face the audience.

Some acting coaches (and speech teachers) encourage their students to practice in front of mirrors, so that they can watch themselves perform and evaluate how they move. In acting, this can be very useful; but in speaking, it is less so. When you practice your presentation, the most important element is expressiveness. You want to become more familiar with the volume of material, the order in which you plan to present it, and the phrasing you think would be most effective to express it. Watching yourself perform in a mirror will focus your attention on your appearance first—and on what you express second. This makes using a mirror during practice a distraction from what the practice ought to achieve.

Plus, consider what you are seeing in the mirror as you practice. Obviously, it is you! But more to the point, what you see in the mirror (your reflection) will not resemble, in any way, the audience that you would see while delivering your presentation. Just as you want to visualize success in yourself as part of your preparation; you also want to visualize success in your audience—which means that you want to imagine the members of your audience reacting positively to your presentation, paying close attention and nodding their heads as you make your points.

Women sitting in chairs. Photo by Dani Hart.

Techniques for Building Confidence

Prepare Well

The correlation between preparation and nervousness is consistent. More practice results in less nervousness. The best, most consistent and direct way to minimize the level of nervousness you feel is through effective preparation. This is always true. Importantly, the best sort of practice is the kind that prepares you properly.

Michael Jordan was once asked the best way to learn how to shoot free throws. He said that you cannot learn to shoot free throws by walking into a gym with a ball, walking up to the line, and shooting. Instead, he described how the first step in learning to shoot free throws is to run sprints. Most importantly, his advice was to run until your body was under the same stress as it would be in a game when you needed to make those free throws—because only under those conditions would your practice become truly productive. *Only then* do you pick up the ball and shoot. And when you managed to catch your breath? All types of preparation and practice yield some benefits, but there is a significant difference between practice that is merely *helpful* and practice that is *sufficient*.

Michael Jordan. CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike

There is a difference between "knowing what you are talking about," and "knowing what you are going to say." Thinking about your presentation can be helpful, but that sort of preparation will not give you a sense of what you are actually going to say. Athletes know that the best practices will re-create game conditions and test their abilities to perform in real-life scenarios. Studying a playbook? This is helpful, but not sufficient. Going over a speech in your mind? Again, it is helpful, but not sufficient.

Many students do not practice effectively, and this can result in the wrong idea that practice isn't helpful. Unfortunately, these same students usually have had little, if any, training in how one might prepare for a presentation, and so they employ the scholastic training they are most familiar with—how to write a paper. This is not the same activity as presenting, and so the lack of proper preparation only contributes to the lack of confidence. Let's look at a few elements of effective practice.

Visualize Success

Athletes and performers are often coached to visualize what they are trying to do as a way to perform correctly. Baseball players need to anticipate what they will do if the ball is hit their way so that they are ready to perform without having to make split-second choices. Football and basketball players must envision how each member of the team will move during a particular play because team success depends on speedy and flawless coordination between individuals. Dancers and divers are trained to visualize the form and positioning of their bodies as they execute their moves. Golfers are coached to visualize the flight and arc of the shot they are about to attempt. Engaging the imagination in this way can be beneficial to performance.

Kellee Santiago. CC BY: Attribution

Speakers too, should visualize success. As you practice, visualize yourself presenting with confidence to a receptive audience. "See" your relaxed facial expressions and "hear" your confident vocal tone. Imagine yourself moving gracefully, complementing what you say with expressive gestures. Imagine the audience reacting appropriately — nodding appreciatively and giving thoughtful consideration to your points. Imagine the gratification of watching the audience really "get it." When you can honestly envision yourself performing at this level, you are taking an important step toward achieving that goal.

Avoid Gimmicks

Some acting coaches (and speech teachers) encourage their students to practice in front of mirrors, so that they can watch themselves perform and evaluate how they move. In acting, this can be very useful; but in speaking, it is less so. When you practice your presentation, the most important element is expressiveness. You want to become more familiar with the volume of material, the order in which you plan to present it, and the phrasing you think would be most effective to express it. Watching yourself perform in a mirror will focus your attention on your appearance first – and on what you express second. This makes using a mirror during practice a distraction from what the practice ought to achieve.

Plus, consider what you are seeing in the mirror as you practice. Obviously, it is you! But more to the point, what you see in the mirror (your reflection) will not resemble, in any way, the audience that you would see while delivering your presentation. Just as you want to visualize success in yourself as part of your preparation; you also want to visualize success in your audience – which means that you want to imagine the members of your audience reacting positively to your presentation, paying close attention and nodding their heads as you make your points.

For some reason, the myth persists that imagining your audience in their pajamas—or something similarly silly—is an effective way to make standing in front of them seem less scary. Many of my students have discussed hearing "tips" like imagining the audience wearing pink bunny-ears as a way to make them less intimidating. These sorts of gimmicks don't work! In fact, concentrating on anything other than what you are doing is distracting and not beneficial at all. Do your best to avoid such advice. Visualize success!

Breathe. Let go. And remind yourself that this very moment is the only one you know you have for sure. – Oprah Winfrey

Breathe and Release

One type of pre-presentation exercise that might be helpful is based on a therapeutic idea called **systematic de-sensitization**, which is a multi-stage regimen to help patients deal with phobias through coping mechanisms. Going through both the cognitive and behavioral aspects of systematic desensitization often requires weeks of concerted effort to overcome the body's involuntary reactions to stress. That sort of psychological therapy involves gradual exposure to what produces the anxiety, long-term self-reflection, and mental discipline. Here, we will discuss a shortened version called "**breathe and release**." This is a short-cut relaxation technique that could be useful for nervous speakers—especially those who are concerned with the physical manifestations of nervousness, such as shaky hands or knees. The key to "breathe and release" is to understand that when nervous tension results in minor trembling, the effort of trying to keep one's hands from shaking can

contribute to the whole situation—that is, trying to stop literally can make it worse!

Therefore, the best approach is through relaxation.

"Breathe and Release" involves three steps:

1. Imagine the nervousness within your body. Imagine that energy bubbling inside you, like liquid being cooked.
2. Draw that energy to a high point within your body with a deep, cleansing breath. Imagine this cleansing breath to be acting like a vacuum—drawing up all of the bubbling liquid.
3. Release the energy by deliberately relaxing the entirety of your upper extremities—not just your hands, or even your hands and arms—but all the way from your fingertips to the bottom edges of your shoulder blades. Imagine how keeping any part of your upper extremities tense would result in a "kink" in the release valve, and so complete relaxation is the key to success. Remember: Relax *everything* from the fingertips to the very bottom edges of your shoulder blades.

"Breathe and Release" is something that can be done even as one walks to the front of the classroom or boardroom to begin speaking. Many speakers, especially those who are concerned about the physical manifestations of nervousness, have used this relaxation technique effectively.

I've a grand memory for forgetting. – Robert Louis Stevenson

Minimize What You Memorize

One important hint for speech preparation involves avoiding the

writing of an entirely scripted version of the presentation. Many people have the impression that writing a script of the entire speech is the necessary first step in preparation; that practicing can only happen after you are done writing the entire speech. Unfortunately, this common impression is mistaken. Remember that lunch with your friends? When you were describing the movie plot, you were being **conversant** in a prepared way. This means that you knew what you were describing, but you were not concerned with the specific words you were using. Being ***conversant*** is *the condition of being prepared to discuss an issue intelligently*. Fans of sports are conversant about their favorite teams. Experts are *conversant* in their fields. A well-prepared speaker is *conversant* with regard to her topic. Consider how being *conversant* in this manner allows freer, more fluid communication, with no stress associated with your ability to remember what words you wanted to use. Being conversant also gives the speaker the best chance to recognize and react to audience feedback. If you are completely focused on the integrity of scripted comments, then you will be unable to read and react to your audience in any meaningful way. Imagine how frustrating it would be for your friends at that lunch if you would not respond to any of their questions until you were finished reading a few descriptive paragraphs about the movie. They would probably just wait until you were done reading and then try to engage you in a conversation!

> *If you wish to forget anything on the spot, make a note that this thing is to be remembered.* – Edgar Allan Poe

Many people have had experience being in a stage play or some other type of performance that involved memorized recitation of a script. Many of us might recall moments during rehearsals when our minds would "freeze" and we might need just a quick reminder—the next word or phrase, the next few notes—to get back on track. This is because people do not memorize in units, but in phrases or chunks. The mind attaches to a rhythm—not to each individual unit, word, or note. This is why it is best to minimize what you memorize.

Prepare your opening carefully so that you start smoothly. Prepare your closing comments so that you can end sharply and with style. But avoid preparing and then memorizing an entire script.

Preparing for a speech by memorizing a written script engages your mind at a different level from that of a *conversant* speaker. Concentrating on remembering words is different from paying attention to how one's audience is reacting. The pressure that arises from trying to remember the next word can be considerable, yet that pressure is entirely avoidable. The goal of public speaking should never be about loyal recreation of a script—it is about getting the appropriate response from your audience. Trying to remember an entirely scripted speech can result in the rather ironic situation of a person being able confidently and smoothly to discuss the topic in casual conversation, but still quite stressed about their ability to remember their scripted comments.

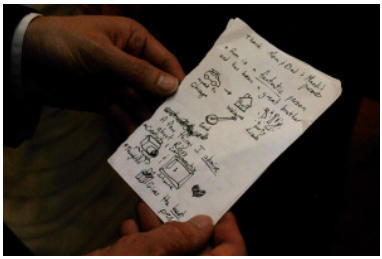
Many students forget their lines while discussing topics like their families and hometowns. Of course, they knew what they were talking about, but their minds were focused on the task of remembering specific words—a task different from effective speaking. So, should you write any prepared comments at all? Yes, of course you should. Specifically, the feedback you should be most concerned with will happen during the body of the speech—when you are discussing the substance of your presentation. It is during the body of the speech when you especially need the ability to adjust to audience feedback. Thus, memorizing your entire speech is ultimately detrimental to your ability to react to your audience. However, during the introduction and conclusion of your speech, the primary concerns are about connecting with your audience personally, which is something best assured through consistent eye contact. So, carefully preparing the introduction and the conclusion of your speech is a smart strategy—but don't make the mistake of scripting everything that you plan to say. The best rule here: Minimize what you memorize—familiarize instead!

If I don't train enough, of course I'm nervous. – Haile Gebrselassie

Preparing Notes

Once you have created a comprehensive outline and have thought through your speech, you should be able to create your note cards or whatever you might be using (notes or an iPad for instance). Every speaker is a bit different, and different speech topics and organizational patterns may require different notation techniques.

Your note cards (or cue sheets) must have enough information on them to be able to deliver the speech without missing details and organized in the precise order that you have planned. A common technique is to print the outline in a font that is large enough to be read from a distance.



"Best man's speech notes" by stacey shintani. CC-BY-NC-SA.

You should be able to glance at the cards, get your bearings, and look back at the audience. If you are reading the cards word-for-word, there are too many words on them, unless it is an extended exact quote, or group of statistics that must be delivered precisely.

If you have multiple note cards, be sure your notes or cards are numbered (e.g., boldly in the upper right-hand corner), so you can keep them organized. Color-coding is often done to easily distinguish the cards at a glance. Losing your place can be very stressful to you and distracting to the audience.

Rehearse your speech using the notes that you will bring to the podium. Be sure you can glance at the notes, get your information, and look up to have eye contact with the audience.

All the real work is done in the rehearsal period. – Donald Pleasence

Practice Out Loud

Rita Levi-Montalcini. CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike

Remember the very first time you tried to do anything—a game, a sport, an activity, anything at all. How good were you out of the gate? Perhaps you had talent or were gifted with a "feel" for what you were doing. But even then, didn't you get better with more experience? Nobody does anything the very best they can on their very first attempt, and everyone—even the most talented among us—will benefit from effective practice.

Speaking in public is no different from any other activity in this way. To maximize the chance that your presentation will come out smooth and polished, you will need to hear it all the way through. By practicing out loud, from the beginning to the ending, you will be able to listen to your whole speech and properly gauge the flow of your entire presentation. Additionally, without at least one complete *out-loud practice*, there will be no way to accurately estimate the length of your speech and your preparation will remain insufficient. When dealing with communication apprehension, the last thing you want is to leave some questions unanswered in your own mind! The out-loud "dress rehearsal" is the single, most important element to your preparation. Without it, you will be delivering your presentation in full for the first time when it counts the most. Putting yourself at that sort of disadvantage isn't wise and is easily avoided.

Consider your current method of preparing a public presentation. At some point, you will have gathered notes and information together. That represents an opportune moment for your first out-loud practice. You might even consider trying that initial practice without the benefit of any notes. Stand up; start speaking; see what comes out! Such a practice can serve as an "oral first draft" in the same vein as any written first draft of a paper, and can answer a number of questions for you:

1. Where, during your presentation, are you most—and least—conversant?
2. Where, during your presentation, are you most in need of supportive notes?
3. What do your notes need to contain?

Prepare for your public presentation by speaking and listening to yourself, rather than by writing, editing, and rewriting. Remember that when you are having a conversation, you never use the same sort of language and syntax as you do when you are writing a formal paper. Practice with the goal of becoming *conversant* in your topic, not fluent with a script.

> *You can't hire someone to practice for you.* – H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Figure 20.1: Rehearsal Checklist

- Rehearse a few days before you deliver your speech
- Use the note sheets or cards you will be using or delivery
- Practice with the presentation aids you will be using [if applicable]
- Time your speech and cut or expand as necessary
- Rehearse with a colleague or an audience if possible
- Record yourself so that you can get a real sense of what the audience will see and hear
- Phrase the speech as you will phrase it in the actual delivery (and listen for verbal pauses and filler words)
- If you can, rehearse in the room with the podium you will use
- Plan what you will do with your hands
- Plan and practice your opening and closing carefully, so you can deliver them fluently

> *Stress is an important dragon to slay — or at least tame — in your life.* – Marilu Henner

Reducing Nervousness during Delivery

Anticipate the Reactions of Your Body

There are a number of steps you can take to counteract the negative physiological effects of stress on the body. Deep breathing will help to counteract the effects of excess adrenaline. You can place symbols in your notes, like "slow down" or ☺, that remind you to pause and breathe during points in your speech. It is also a good idea to pause a moment before you get started to set an appropriate pace from the onset. Look at your audience and smile. It is a reflex for some of your audience members to smile back. Those smiles will reassure you that your audience members are friendly.

Physical movement helps to channel some of the excess energy that your body produces in response to anxiety. If at all possible, move around the front of the room rather than remaining imprisoned behind the lectern or gripping it for dear life (avoid pacing nervously from side to side, however). Move closer to the audience and then stop for a moment. If you are afraid that moving away from the lectern will reveal your shaking hands, use note cards rather than a sheet of paper for your outline. Note cards do not

quiver like paper, and they provide you with something to do with your hands.

Vocal warm-ups are also important before speaking. Just as athletes warm up before practice or competition and musicians warm up before playing, speakers need to get their voices ready to speak. Talking with others before your speech or quietly humming to yourself can get your voice ready for your presentation. You can even sing or practice a bit of your speech out loud while you're in the shower (just don't wake the neighbors), where the warm, moist air is beneficial for your vocal mechanism. Gently yawning a few times is also an excellent way to stretch the key muscle groups involved in speaking.

Immediately before you speak, you can relax the muscles of your neck and shoulders, rolling your head gently from side to side. Allow your arms to hang down your sides and stretch out your shoulders. Isometric exercises that involve momentarily tensing and then relaxing specific muscle groups are an effective way to keep your muscles from becoming stiff.

Focus on the Audience, Not on Yourself

During your speech, make a point of establishing direct eye contact with your audience members. By looking at individuals, you establish a series of one-to-one contacts similar to interpersonal

communication. An audience becomes much less threatening when you think of them not as an anonymous mass but as a collection of individuals.

A colleague once shared his worst speaking experience when he reached the front of the room and forgot everything he was supposed to say. When I asked what he saw when he was in the front of the room, he looked at me like I was crazy. He responded, "I didn't see anything. All I remember is a mental image of me up there in the front of the room blowing it." Speaking anxiety becomes more intense if you focus on *yourself* rather than concentrating on your *audience* and your material.

Maintain Your Sense of Humor

No matter how well we plan, unexpected things happen. That fact is what makes the public speaking situation so interesting. When the unexpected happens to you, do not let it rattle you. At the end of a class period late in the afternoon of a long day, a student raised her hand and asked me if I knew that I was wearing two different colored shoes, one black and one blue. I looked down and saw that she was right; my shoes did not match. I laughed at myself, complimented the student on her observational abilities and moved on with the important thing, the material I had to deliver.

Stress Management Techniques

As William Ball noted in his book for actors and directors, *A Sense of Direction*, getting in front of a group and speaking is people's greatest fear (greater than fear of death). Fear and stress result in psychological and physical manifestations that can affect a speech. Even when we employ positive thinking and are well prepared, some of us still feel a great deal of anxiety about public speaking. When that is the case, it can be more helpful to use stress management than to try to make the anxiety go away.

One general technique for managing stress is positive visualization. **Visualization** is the process of seeing something in your mind's eye; essentially it is a form of self-hypnosis. Frequently used in sports training, positive visualization involves using the imagination to create images of relaxation or ultimate success. Essentially, you imagine in great detail the goal for which you are striving, say, a rousing round of applause after you give your speech. You mentally picture yourself standing at the front of the room, delivering your introduction, moving through the body of your speech, highlighting your presentation aids, and sharing a memorable conclusion. If you imagine a positive outcome, your body will respond to it as through it were real. Such mind-body techniques create the psychological grounds for us to achieve the goals we have imagined. As we discussed earlier, communication apprehension has a psychological basis, so mind-body techniques such as visualization can be important to reducing anxiety. It's important to keep in mind, though, that visualization does not mean you can skip practicing your speech out loud. Just as an athlete still needs to work out and practice the sport, you need to practice your speech in order to achieve the positive results you visualize.

Stress physically also causes muscles to tighten, often including vocal cords. This raises, and often limits, the vocal pitch of the speaker under stress. The tempo of the speech may also be affected. Novice speakers tend to rush as though to be anxious to "get it over with." It is a factor to remember in a corporate or business meeting: the speaker should speak slowly enough because what he has to say is important, and the audience should listen. Remember, as noted above, rushing gives the impression that the speaker thinks the message is not worth the time. Stress can also make the mouth and throat feel dry. Sipping water is a simple solution.

Simultaneously while exercising the body, it is a good idea to warm up the voice. The vocal cords are muscles, which should not be jump-started. Physical exercises will likely help relaxing for better posture and hand and body gestures. As part of the relaxation process, actors "warm up" physically before performances and often do relaxation exercises to help concentration and relieve stress.

You may find this TED talk especially helpful when preparing to deliver your speech, as it encourages awareness of your body:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://mtsu.pressbooks.pub/principlesofpublicspeaking/?p=74#oembed-2

If her TED talk resonates with you, read Cuddy's book, *Presence* (2015) for even more empowering approaches to challenges.

Delivering the Speech

You have taken all of the right steps before stepping up to the podium or lectern. You have selected a good topic. You have researched the topic. You have organized the best information in a compelling way. You have rehearsed your speech. You have received feedback on your rehearsal from an objective listener. You have carefully constructed your notes and practiced with them. You have planned and practiced your speech introduction and conclusion verbatim. You have checked out the room and the equipment. You did something to reduce your stress before your speech. You did vocal warm-ups. You chose the perfect outfit to wear. You made sure your gum was discarded and your hair pulled back. You arrived at least 15 minutes before your speech. You leapt to the podium with great enthusiasm when introduced.

Now you must deliver. If you look up the word "deliver," you will find it means more than to just "give." To "give" is a willingness to offer something without obligation or the expectation of something in return. To "give" also implies a pre-determined responsibility. You have a responsibility as a speaker to "deliver" information that will help your audience or enlighten them in some way. Speeches are delivered.

Figure 20.2: Steps for Effective Delivery

1. Approach the podium as you rehearsed.
2. Stand with confident posture.
3. Deliver your brilliant opening.
4. Realize you are a hit with the audience.
5. Breathe.
6. Spontaneously interject a humorous observation related to your topic.
7. Make all your points without hesitation, "*um*s," "*like*s," or "*uh*s."

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Chapter Twenty-One - Presenting as a Group

Imagine you have been assigned to a group for a project requiring a presentation at the end. "Now is the busiest time in my schedule and I do not have time to fit all these people into it," the voice in your head reminds you. Then you ask the question: "Is there ever a non-busy time for assembling a group together for a presentation?" These thoughts are a part of a group presentation assignment. The combined expertise of several individuals is becoming increasingly necessary in many *vocational* (related to a specific occupation) and *avocational* (outside a specific occupation) presentations.

Group presentations in business may range from a business team exchanging sales data; research and development teams discussing business expansion ideas; to annual report presentations by boards of directors. Also, the government, private, and public sectors have many committees that participate in briefings, conference presentations, and other formal presentations. It is common for group presentations to be requested, created, and delivered to bring together the expertise of several people in one presentation. Thus, the task of deciding the most valuable information for audience members has become a coordination task involving several individuals. All group members are responsible for coordinating things such as themes, strong support/evidence, and different personalities and approaches in a specified time period. **Coordination** is defined in the dictionary as harmonious combination or interaction, as of functions or parts.

This chapter focuses on how the group, the speech assignment, the audience, and the presentation design play a role in the harmonious combination of planning, organization, and delivery for group presentations.

Preparing All Parts of the Assignment

In group presentations, you are working to coordinate one or two outcomes—outcomes related to the content (product outcomes) and/or outcomes related to the group skills and participation (process outcomes). Therefore, it is important to carefully review and outline the prescribed assignment of the group before you get large quantities of data, spreadsheets, interview notes, and other research materials.

Types of Group Presentations

A key component of a preparation plan is the type of group presentation. Not all group presentations require a format of standing in front of an audience and presenting. According to Sprague and Stuart (2005), there are four common types of group presentations:

- A structured argument in which participants speak for or against a pre-announced proposition is called a **debate.** The proposition is worded so that one side has the burden of proof, and that same side has the benefit of speaking first and last. Speakers assume an advocacy role and attempt to persuade the audience, not each other.
- The **forum** is essentially a question-and-answer session. One or more experts may be questioned by a panel of other experts, journalists, and/or the audience.
- A **panel** consists of a group of experts publicly discussing a topic among themselves. Individually prepared speeches, if any, are limited to very brief opening statements.
- Finally, the **symposium** is a series of short speeches, usually informative, on various aspects of the same general topic.

Audience questions often follow (p. 318).

These four types of presentations, along with the traditional group presentation in front of an audience or on-the-job speaking, typically have pre-assigned parameters. Therefore, all group members must be clear about the assignment request.

Dr. Anthony Junior, left, education programs manager for the Office of Naval Research, moderates a panel discussion during the World Diversity Leadership Summit at the El Museo del Barrio in New York City in 2011. A panel is one example of a type of group presentation. (Credit: U.S. Navy photo by John F. Williams/US Navy 110907-N-PO203-063/Public domain)

Establishing Clear Objectives

For the group to accurately summarize for themselves who is the audience, what is the situation/occasion, and what supporting materials need to be located and selected, the group should establish clear objectives about both *the process* and *the product* being assessed.

Assessment plays a central role in optimizing the quality of group interaction. Thus, it is important to be clear whether the group is being assessed on the product(s) or outcome(s) only or will the processes within the group—such as equity of contribution, individual interaction with group members, and meeting deadlines—also be assessed. Kowitz and Knutson (1980) argue that three dimensions for group evaluation include (1) *informational*—dealing with the group's designated tasks; (2) *procedural*—referring to how the group coordinates its activities and communication; and (3) *interpersonal*—focusing on the relationships that exist among members while the task is being accomplished. Groups without a pre-assigned assessment rubric may use the three dimensions to effectively create a group evaluation instrument.

The group should determine if the product includes both a written document and an oral presentation. The written document and oral presentation format may have been pre-assigned with an expectation behind the requested informative and/or persuasive content. Although the two should complement each other, the audience, message, and format for each should be clearly outlined. The group may create a product assessment guide (see **Table 21)**. Additionally, each group member should uniformly write down the purpose of the assignment. You may think you can keep the purpose in your head without any problem. Yet the goal is for each member to consistently have the same outcome in front of them. This will bring your research, writing, and thinking back to focus after engaging in a variety of resources or conversations.

Once the assignment has been coordinated in terms of the product and process objectives, type of presentation, and logistics, it is important for the group to clearly write down the agreed outcomes. Agreed outcomes about the product include a **purpose statement** that reflects an agreement with the prescribed assignment (i.e. "at the end of our group presentation the audience will be informed or persuaded about the prescribed assignment"). It also includes the key message or thesis to be developed through

a **presentation outline**, a full-sentence outline of virtually everything the speaker intends to say. The outline allows the speakers to test the structure, the logic, and persuasive appeals in the speech (DiSanza & Legge, 2011, p. 131). This was discussed in Chapter 11.

Table 21: Sample Product Assessment Guide:

Accuracy:	• Did we edit and proofread to eliminate redundancy, grammatical, spelling, and/or punctuation errors in all pieces including PowerPoint?
Approach:	• Is the tone appropriate to the purpose, audience, and content?
Clarity:	• Is the central purpose clearly stated and maintained as the focal point?
Development:	• Is the material arranged in a coherent and logical sequence?
Style:	• Did we use action verbs, active voice, and correct MLA or APA style?

Logistics for Group Members

As a group, be very clear about the length of your presentation and its preparation. The length of the presentation refers to your time limit, and whether there is a question and answer period involved. Assignment preparation may or may not have a prescribed deadline. If the assignment does not have a deadline, then set one as a group.

If there is a deadline, then the group begins by creating a schedule from the final deadline. As a group, create an action timetable explicitly listing all processes and outputs, as well as communication update points.

As a group, decide the best way to leave enough time in the end to put all the pieces together and make sure everything is complete. If there is a written document, it should be completed prior to the oral presentation rather than at the same time. As a group, realize not everyone may work off a physical calendar. Thus, do not hesitate to require each member to write down all deadlines.

Next, the group can strategically add meeting dates, times, and venues to the action timetable. A meeting is a structured conversation among a small group of people who gather to accomplish a specific task (Beebe & Mottet, 2010). For group presentations, meetings do not always include the entire group. So a schedule of who meets with whom and when is useful for planning work and agendas. In addition, all meetings do not serve the same purpose. For example, *informational meetings* may be called simply to update all group members; *solicitation meetings* are called to solicit opinions or request guidance from group members; group-building meetings are designed to promote unity and cohesiveness among group members; and *problem-solving meetings* result in making decisions or recommendations by the time the meeting convenes.

Once the group is unified about the assignment objectives and time frame, it is vital to predetermine the type of note-taking required of each group member (which may vary) and the variety of information exchange. The more systematic a group is in these two areas, the more unified the process and the product. The system begins with each group member writing down the message, specific purpose, and central ideas for the group presentation. If these are still to be determined, then have each group member identify the areas of background information needed and basic information gathering. Next, simply create a general format for note-taking—whether typed or handwritten and what types of details

should be included especially sources. Also with the increasing use of electronic databases be very clear on when related articles should be forwarded to group members. The email inbox flooded with PDF files is not always a welcome situation.

The group should be clear on the explicit requirements for locating recent, relevant, and audience-appropriate source material for the presentation. All of this leads to the foundation of clearly defining the responsibilities of each group member. All tasks should be listed, given deadlines, and assigned people. A means for tracking the progress of each task should be outlined. The group should be clear on what are individual, joint (involving more than one group member), and entire group tasks. Throughout the entire process, all group members should be supportive and helpful but should not offer to do other people's work.

Organizing for Your Audience

Organizing for your audience relates to how the gathered content can be best arranged for them. According to Patricia Fripp (2011), a Hall of Fame keynote speaker and executive speech coach, any presentation can be intimidating but the key is to remember "your goal is to present the most valuable information possible to the members of the audience" (p. 16). Now what you think is most valuable and what the audience thinks is most valuable must be coordinated because of differences in perception (the process by which we give meaning to our experience). Therefore, organizing for your audience is focused on content, structure, packaging, and human element—not for you, not for the assignment, but for the audience. A customized plan of organization will assist your group in creating relevant messages that satisfy others' personal needs and goals (Keller, 1983).

Content

Audience members are interested in your expertise that has been developed from solid research and preparation. Audience members may have expectations about what foundational literature and key sources should be contained within your presentation. Therefore as a group, you need to go beyond providing a variety of supporting material within your presentation to considering who will be present, levels of expertise, and their expectations. In general, organizing the content should be focused on usage, knowledge levels, and objectives. First, *usage* refers to how audience members expect to use your presentational content which will help the group transform ideas into audience-centered speech points. Second, *knowledge level* means the audience's knowledge level about the topic within the audience which assists the group in developing supporting material for the entire audience. Third, the *objectives* are linked to how the content serves the audience's needs and assists the group in being intentional about helping the audience see the reason for their involvement and receive value for the time they devoted to attend. Overall, the content is coordinated in a way that keeps at the forefront who the decision-makers are and what specifics they need to know, would be nice to know, and do not need to know.

Structure

Next professionally packaging a presentation for the audience deals with the structure or how you arrange points. The structure takes into consideration a strong opening, logical order, relevant key points, conciseness, and use of supplementary visual aids. In addition, the linking of points involves conversational language and the appropriate use of acronyms and technical jargon for inclusion

or exclusion. The focus is geared to the perception of trustworthiness. Three strategic questions to answer include:

1. What qualities as a group will demonstrate your trustworthiness to this audience?
2. What content order needs to be achieved to give a consistent perception of fairness?
3. What content requires repeating and how should that be achieved—through comparisons, examples, illustrations, etc.?

Packaging

The packaging of successful group presentations revolves around the type of relationship with the audience, the division of time, and enthusiasm. An important dynamic of group presentations is for your group to know if audience members will be required to give an internal presentation or briefing from your presentation. As a group, know if you are packaging a one-time presentation, bidding for a long-term relationship, continuing a relationship for offering expertise, or if the presentation is tied to internal pressures to performance appraisals. Such knowledge will aid your group in developing talking points which can be re-presented with accuracy.

The type of presentation will help you divide the time for your presentation. The majority of the time is always spent on the body of the speech. A typical 30-minute speech might be divided into 4 minutes for the introduction, 10 – 15 minutes for the body, and 4 minutes for the conclusion. The remaining 8-10 minutes is for the audience to ask questions, offer objections, or simply to become part of the discussion. It is important to leave enough time for the audience to contribute to the intellectual content. Therefore, always design group presentations with the intent not to run out of time before the audience can participate. All group presentations should have enthusiasm. Group members should be enthusiastic about the

audience, message, and occasion. Planned enthusiasm should play a role in creating the introduction, conclusion, and body of your presentations. The consistent use of enthusiasm can be planned throughout the speech outline.

Human Element

Now it is time to focus on compatibility. As a group, consider what will it take to get this audience to pay attention to your presentation. Answer questions such as:

1. What can your group do to develop an introduction, transitions, and conclusions in a way to connect with this audience?
2. What types of stories are common or relatable to this audience?
3. What are the attitudes, beliefs, and values of this audience?

Delivering Your Presentation as One

By completing the other levels of coordination, the group will have decided on the key message, thoroughly researched the supporting material, developed logical conclusions, and created realistic recommendations. Therefore all that stands between you and success is the actual presentation—the vehicle that carries the facts and the ideas to your audience. Here it is important to recognize that if an assignment required both a written document and an oral presentation then be sure one effectively complements the other. Although you can reference the written document during the oral presentation, the oral presentation should be planned with the thought in mind that not everyone is given the written document.

Therefore, the oral presentation may be the only content they receive. Since you will not always know who receives the written document, it is best to coordinate the presentation as if no one has the full written document, which can serve as a reference tool for gaining content requiring further explanation or accessibility to detailed information. At the same time, if the entire audience is provided written material keep in mind different decision-makers may be in the audience. For example, the creative director may be only interested in your creative concepts, whereas a vice president of finance may be only interested in figures.

The presentation preparation primarily focuses on your group's ability to develop a clear plan and execution of delivery. A delivery plan includes essential elements such as (1) purpose, (2) oral content, (3) dress, (4) room, (5) visuals, (6) delivery, and (7) rehearsal to ensure that the group presentation is both captivating and useful to your audience, as well as worth their time.

Purpose

Group members should keep at the forefront of their minds the answer to the question "Was the general purpose—to inform or to persuade—achieved?" As a group, practice keeping the purpose of the presentation explicit for the audience. The purpose should never become hidden during the presentation. Each group member's awareness of the purpose is important in maintaining the right kind of delivery. It is possible to have great content for a presentation and miss the entire purpose of the presentation. For example, say your group had been asked to do a presentation about Facebook and how it could be used in the financial industry. You could take an informative or persuasive approach. However, if the audience—banking professionals—attends a presentation where the content is focused on Facebook rather than having a focus on its use in the financial industry, then the purpose was not achieved.

The delivery plan will help you evaluate if the purpose of the presentation is clearly aimed at the primary audience. In addition, the group can determine when and how clearly they are articulating the explicit purpose of the presentation. The purpose is complemented by a clear preview, the audience members' awareness of what decisions are at issue, and the audience's desire to get important information first.

Oral Content

Up to this point the majority of the group's engagement with the content has been in terms of reading and writing. It is time to orally interact with the selected content to ensure that it has been developed for *this* audience, properly structured, and clearly articulated. The delivery plan is a time to evaluate word choice, idioms, and antidotes. When working with this content, make sure that it is suited to the purpose, and that the key message is explicit so the audience remembers it well.

The introduction of group members, transitions, and internal summaries are all important elements of the delivery plan. A proper introduction of group members and the content will not happen automatically. Therefore, it is important to practice it to determine if introductions fit better at the beginning of the presentation, if names need to be emphasized through the wearing of name tags, or if names are better used as a part of transition content. The use of name only may not be effective in some speaking situations. Therefore, the group needs to determine what a proper group member introduction includes beyond the name. Plus, be consistent; that is, determine if everyone is using first name only or full name, do they need to know your positions, some background, or can you simply state it in a written format such as a team resume. Speech content is not useful if the audience does not accept your credibility.

Dress

As in all presentations, an awareness of your physical appearance is an important element in complementing the content of your speech. Do not hesitate to talk about and practice appropriate dress as a group. It is important to look like a group. Really consider defining a group's speaking uniform by deciding how formal or informal the dress code is.

As a group, the overall question you want to be able to answer is: *Did our dress provide an accurate first impression not distracting from the content? So what kinds of things can be distracting?* The most common are colors, busy patterns, and large or clinking jewelry. As a group determine what type of dress is effective in coordinating your group's credibility. It is important to take into consideration cultural, occupational, and regional norms. In addition, it is important to think about branding choices. Often groups want to brand themselves for the audience. It is not necessary to mimic your audience. For example, a sales presentation to cranberry association members may entice a group to wear red. However, the cranberry association may not be the only sale your group needs to make so you will be forced to ask the question: Will each sales presentation audience determine the color we accent in dress? In short, do not let the speaking occasion brand you. Simply know what is considered professional for this presentation. You have spent a lot of time on preparing the content for this audience so do not detract from it.

Facilities

It is not always feasible to practice your delivery in the actual room where you will deliver your speech. However, it is extremely important that you actively plan your delivery for the room by

recreating the speaking environment. If prior access to the room is not available, then you will need to do your planning by asking a series of questions of the presentation planner. Some common things to find out include the size of the room; if a projector is available and its location within the room; is there a platform and/or a stationary lectern; is there a sound system and how many microphones; where the group will be seated before being introduced; will the presentation be recorded; what is the availability of the room in advance of the presentation; and what is the number of seats and seating arrangement so the group can plan for the zone of interaction.

When preparing for a group presentation, it is important to know what the facilities are like prior to your presentation to plan for how you will deliver the presentation and what visual aids might be possible. (Credit: Wiki4des at English Wikipedia/DMI conference/CC BY 3.0)

Visuals

The term visuals refers to both non-technology visual aids (handouts, posters, charts, etc.) and presentation technology. Visuals should not appear as though several individuals made them but rather as uniform to the group's presentation. All visuals should blend smoothly into the speech. All group members should be clear on what visuals or documents were pre-requested (so you do not eliminate them as unnecessary during rehearsal). Many times it is better to simply project or display visuals. At other times, visuals may need to be assembled in a presentation packet for all audience members. Bohn & Jabusch (1982) suggest that there are several researched-based reasons why visual aids enhance presentations including (a) *enhanced understanding*—helps audience comprehend what they hear and see; (b) *enhanced memory*—serves as a visual reinforcement; (c) enhanced organization—visually displays your organizational strategy; (d) *enhanced attention*—grabs and maintains audience interest; and (e) *enhanced sequencing*—shows rather than describes.

Delivery

The four modes of delivery—memorized, impromptu, manuscript, and extemporaneous—are all valuable in group presentations. However, the most common mode of delivery is extemporaneous. Earlier in this text, developing a preparation outline and presentation outline was discussed. The step of transforming your presentation outline—an abbreviated version of the preparation outline (DiSanza & Legge, 2011)—is a significant part of planning delivery. The ultimate goal is to figure out how the group can be confident that the entire presentation stays together and does not just exist in pieces. The delivery outline may go as far as to stipulate

vocal and gesture instructions. The delivery outline is not created to be read from; therefore, the group also should determine how speaker notes will be used. The delivery outline should be provided to every group member, so everyone is familiar with the entire presentation. It is important to set up contingency plans for who will present content if someone is absent on the day of the presentation—the presenter who gets stuck in morning traffic or the professional who had a flight delay.

The key is for all group members to remain conversational in their delivery style. This may be best achieved by utilizing effective delivery strategies such as appropriate gestures, movement, and posture; appropriate facial expressions including eye contact; and appropriate vocal delivery—articulation, dialect, pitch, pronunciation, rate, and volume. Group members should evaluate each other on audibility and fluency.

Rehearsal

Rehearsals are for the final polishing of your presentations. It is a time to solidify logistics of how many group members are presenting, where they will stand, and the most appropriate transitions between each speaker. Group members should grow more comfortable with each other through rehearsals. A key aspect of polishing involves identifying gaps in content and gaining feedback on content (oral and visual), style, and delivery. The rehearsals are a good time to refine speaker notes and to practice the time limit. The number of scheduled rehearsals is dependent on your group and the amount of preparation time provided. The most important element for the group is to adapt their rehearsal timetable based on an honest evaluation of the speaking skills represented within the group.

The only part of a group presentation that you may not be able to rehearse is responding to the *actual* audience members' questions

and objections. However, you can anticipate the types of questions and practice a simple strategy of how you will respond—repeating the question, stating who from the group will respond, and answering succinctly. Four of the most common types of questions are follow-up questions; action-oriented questions focused on what would you do if; hypothetical questions focused on different scenarios; and information-seeking questions. A primary way to practice is to think of at least three questions you would like to answer, prepare the answer, and practice it during rehearsal(s).

Conclusion

The foundation of a group presentation is constructed from all the guidelines you use in an individual presentation coupled with additional strategies for working effectively with others. Group presentations primarily entail group communication, planning, organization, and delivery. Effective groups communicate about interaction roles, decision-making, and conflict resolution. Such communication helps the group reflect on group dynamics, customize communication for *this* speaking group, and establish a unified commitment and collaborative climate.

Review & Reflection Questions

- How might a group presentation be different than presenting individually?
- In preparing for a group presentation, what are some key questions and considerations for your

group?
- How can you ensure your group presentation is effective and appears 'as one'?

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from “Preparing All Parts of the Assignment” and “Delivering Your Presentation as One” written by Jennifer F. Wood, Ph.D., in Chapter 18 Group Presentations. from the Public Speaking Project. This content is licensed under a CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License. The only modification to the content was to change the timeline for length of group presentations to better reflect a public speaking course.

A Note about Reflection

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As we established at the beginning of this text, speech preparation is one part of the speech process, while speech delivery is another. The final piece to the puzzle is *reflection*, that is, reflecting on our performance in order to improve for the next speech.

Think about your favorite athletes — what do they do to improve? Watch game tape. Yep, that's what you should do, too! While it's no one's favorite pastime, watching *your* "game tape" can be incredibly helpful.

This author recommends watching your video recording once to get over the awkwardness of seeing and hearing yourself. The thought, "*Do I **really** sound like that*?!" will inevitably come across your mind. Once you have watched it at least once and can be (more) objective, consider the following questions:

Did I accomplish all objectives in my Introduction? Conclusion?
Were they delivered fluently? Did I make eye contact with my audience?
Did I have logical, balanced, and separate main points?
Did I use clear transitions between my main points?
Did I clearly cite my sources, supporting my claims with statistics, testimony, and examples?
Were my arguments sound and based on compelling and credible research?
Was my voice loud enough for all to hear? Did I change my inflection and speed?
Was my voice assertive, fluent, and expressive?
Did I use filler words and vocalized pauses?
Did my facial expressions, gestures, and posture match my message?
Did I adapt my remarks to the feedback from my audience?
Did I look professional and appropriate for the occasion?

Finally, ask yourself what you can do differently to prepare for your next speech, so that you can be *even better*.

As we noted in the chapter on Listening, you will inevitably *listen* to more speeches than you will *give*, so what can you learn from the speeches you have observed?

PART III

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT WORK

This section provides examples of student outlines, visual aids, and speeches. Use these to help inform your choices as you begin formatting your informative, persuasive, and/or commemorative speeches.

Example Outlines, Visual Aids, and Speeches

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Outline Examples

The following are example outlines using the Paragraph Style, with the Introduction & Conclusion in paragraphs, while the Body is formatted in an outline, with consistent symbols and indentations throughout. Each point may have further explanation with a subpoint or even a sub-sub-point. A works cited/reference page follows. The following outlines use the Paragraph Style and are works created from students at Middle Tennessee State University.

Making Guacamole like a Pro

Katie Gruber, Spring 2022
Informative Preparation Outline Example

Tennessee Lax Laws

Savannah Bowen, MTSU student, Fall 2019
Edited by Katie Gruber, Fall 2022
Persuasive Speech Outline Example

Addressing Anxiety & Stress

MTSU student, Fall 2022
Persuasive Final Draft_Anxiety

Tennessee Gun Laws

Donovan Bates, MTSU student, Fall 2022
FD Outline_Persuasive

Reforming the TSA

Christopher Keys, MTSU student, Fall 2022
Persuasive Speech Outline Final Draft

Getting Rid of Daylight Savings Time

MTSU student, Fall 2023
Persuasive Speech Final Draft

Grass-fed Beef is Not the Future

Carol Hopson, MTSU student, Fall 2023
Persuasive Outline

Speech of Tribute

Bella Wilson-Young, MTSU student, Fall 2022
Commemorative Speech

Visual Aid Example

Finally, your speech may require a visual aid in the form of a slide deck or Prezi. Below is an example of a simple and effective slide deck using PowerPoint, which accompanied a persuasive speech on sex education. Remember that visual aids are *visually* stimulating, and the audience will be drawn to them, and *distracted* by them if not relevant. Once you are finished speaking about a particular image or graph, you should "put it away" or show a blank slide. Notice, too, that the graphs she used were from reputable sources [found via the Statista database] and filled the entire slide space. Be certain to maximize any images to ensure that your entire audience can see your images. Just as you should project your voice, you should *project* your images!

Why We Need Better Sex Education

Alyssa Dunn, MTSU student, Spring 2021
Why We Need Better Sex Education

Speech Examples

Persuasive Speaking, using Monroe's Motivated Sequence – *MTSU student*, *Fall 2020*

Persuasive Speech – Why We Should Use Social Media Less – YouTube

Special Occasion Speaking – *MTSU student*, *Fall 2021*

Daysen's Eulogy – YouTube

Glossary

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Abstract word word that refers to ideas or concepts that are removed from material reality

Academic book book that is primarily written for other academics for informational and research purposes

Accent the degree of prominence in the way syllables are spoken in words

(Speech of) Acceptance a speech given by the recipient of a prize or honor

After-dinner speech a humorous speech that makes a serious point

Analogy a comparison between two things, typically establishing a connection between something that is known and something that is unknown

Appreciative listening when we listen for pleasure or enjoyment, such as when we are tuning our attention to a song we like, or a poetry reading, or actors in a play, or sitcom antics on television

Argument the reason(s) for supporting the specific purpose statement

Articulation how well and correctly vowels and consonants are formed, using the lips, jaw, tongue, and palate to form the sounds that are identified as speech; also known as diction or enunciation

Backing provides foundational support for the claim by offering examples, statistics, testimony, or other information which further substantiates the argument

Biographical organizational speech pattern generally used to describe a person's life; used for informative speaking

Body language Body stance, gestures and facial expressions; also components of voice changes; also known as **nonverbal behaviors**

Brainstorming the process and practice of searching to find ideas

or information, generating ideas to overcome a barrier or confront a problem

Causal organizational speech pattern used to explain cause-and-effect relationships

Causal reasoning examines related events to determine which one caused the other

Channel the means through which the message travels from sender to receiver

Chronological organizational speech pattern placing main ideas in time order

Chunking taking smaller chunks of information and putting them together with like chunks to create more fully developed chunks of information

Claim an assertion that you want the audience to accept

Coercion a process whereby thoughts or behaviors are altered

Cognitive dissonance when we are confronted with conflicting information or viewpoints, we reach a state of dissonance, or tension between ideas and beliefs

Cognitive restructuring changing how you label the physiological responses you will experience prior to delivering a speech

Color palette the group of colors used throughout presentation aid slides

Commemorative speech paying tribute to someone by publicly honoring, remembering, or memorializing

Communicator all of the people in the interaction or speech setting

Competence the degree to which a speaker is perceived to be knowledgeable or expert in a given subject by an audience member

Comprehensive listening focused on gaining information or comprehension, whether from a teacher in a classroom setting or a mentor at work

Concrete word a word that describes a tangible object that can be perceived through the senses

Connotative meaning the idea suggested by or associated with a word

Context the norms that govern communication in different situations and relationships; setting or situation helps to establish context

Conversant the condition of being prepared to discuss an issue intelligently, but not overly concerned with specific wording

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Critical listening attending to key points that influence or confirm our judgments, such as when we are at a political event, attending a debate, or enduring a salesperson touting the benefits of various brands of a product

Critical thinking decision-making based on evaluating and critiquing information

Data the preliminary evidence on which a claim is based

Decoding listening to words, thinking about them, and turning those words into mental images

(Speech of) Dedication designed to highlight the importance of a project and possibly those to whom the project has been dedicated

Deductive reasoning moving from a general principle to a claim regarding a specific instance

Denotative meaning the specific meaning associated with a word, generally determined by dictionary definitions

Dialect a variety of language where one is distinguished from others by grammar and vocabulary

Direct quote any sentence or string of sentences that conveys an author's idea word-for-word

Diversity an appreciation for differences among individuals and groups

Empathetic listening providing support or empathy, such as what

therapists, counselors, and conflict mediators do; also called **relational listening**

Encoding the process of taking an idea or mental image, associating that image with words, and then speaking those words in order to convey a message

Encyclopedias reference materials that provide short, very general information about a topic

Ethical feedback a descriptive and explanatory response to the speaker

Ethical listener one who actively interprets shared material and analyzes the content and speaker's effectiveness, demonstrating attention and consideration of the content and delivery of the message

Ethics making decisions about right and wrong within a dilemma

Ethos appeals to credibility when attempting to persuade, coming from the Greek words closely relate to *ethical* and *ethnic*; composed of the speaker's competence and character

Eulogy a speech given in honor of someone who has passed away

Example a specific instance of something occuring; a situation, problem, or story designed to help illustrate a principle, method or phenomenon

Exploratory research encompasses brainstorming strategies that spark curiosity

Extemporaneous speaking the presentation of a carefully planned and rehearsed speech, spoken in a conversational manner using brief notes

Fallacies errors in reasoning that occur when a speaker fails to use appropriate or applicable evidence for their argument

(Speech of) Farewell allows speakers to say good-bye to one part of their lives as they are moving on to the next part

Feedback the information we gain from observations during communication

Frame of reference the overall framework through which an

individual sees, thinks about, and interprets the world and interacts with it

Global plagiarism when a speaker presents a speech in its entirety that is not his or her own work; the most obvious form of plagiarism

Goodwill the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as caring about the audience member

Hate language isolates a particular person or group in a derogatory manner

Hearing a physiological response to sound waves moving through the air

Imagery the use of language to represent objects, actions, or ideas

Impromptu speaking the presentation of a short message without advance preparation

Incremental plagiarism when most of the speech is the speaker's original work, but quotes or other information have been used without being cited

Inductive reasoning moves from specific examples to a more general claim

Inflections variations, turns and slides in pitch to achieve the meaning

Information overload when a person feels that they are faced with an overwhelming amount of information, with the effect that they are unable to process it all or unable to make decisions

Interlibrary loan a process whereby librarians are able to search other libraries to locate book(s) a researcher is trying to locate

Internal preview a phrase or sentence that gives an audience an idea of what is to come within a section of a speech

Internal summary reminds an audience of what they have just heard within a speech; a review of previous information

Intrinsic motivation appealing to the curiosity of listeners,

challenging them, or providing contextualization; for its own sake or worth

(Speech of) Introduction a mini speech given by the host of a ceremony that introduces another speaker

Keynote address a speech focused on a key theme or idea—generally defined by the event or occasion— with the purpose of unification

Listening a 5-step process requiring you to pay conscious attention to the speaker

Logos appeals to logic and reasoning when attempting to persuade; the logical means of proving an argument

Main points the key ideas presented by a speaker to enable the speech to accomplish its specific purpose

Manuscript speaking the word-for-word iteration of a written message

Mean the arithmetic average from a data set; equal to the sum of the values divided by the number of values

Median described as the numerical value separating the higher half of a sample, a population, or a probability distribution, from the lower half

Memorized speaking reciting a written message that the speaker has committed to memory

Message the verbal and nonverbal behaviors, enacted by communicators, that are interpreted with meaning by others

Metaphors comparisons made by speaking of one thing in terms of another; a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable

Mind map a visual tool that allows you to chart and expand key topic ideas or concepts

Mode the value that appears the most often in a data set

Monotone not using inflection, or use a range of pitch, when speaking

Morality the process of discerning between right and wrong

Noise anything that interferes with message transmission or reception

Nonverbal behavior Body stance, gestures and facial expressions; also components of voice changes; also known as body language

Outlines textual arrangements of all the various elements of a speech; a common way to organize a speech before it is delivered

Paraphrase a sentence or string of sentences that shares learned information in the words of the speaker; not a direct quote

Patchwork plagiarism when one "patches" together bits and pieces from one or more sources and represents the end result as his or her own

Pecha Kucha a method of presenting using a slide deck of 20 slides that display for 20 seconds per slide, advancing automatically, and generally containing no text

Plagiarism passing off another's work as your own or neglecting to cite the source for your information

Pathos appealing to emotions when attempting to persuade; draws on the emotions, sympathies, and prejudices of the audience to appeal to their non-rational side

Personal inventory a process of tracking ideas, insights, or topics that you have experience with or interest in

Persuasion the process of creating, reinforcing, or changing people's beliefs or actions

Pitch the "highness" or "lowness" of the voice

Pixelation enlarging photos to the point that the image becomes blurry, caused by low resolution

Preparation outline a working, practice, or rough outline; used to work through the various components of the speech in an inventive format

(Speech of) Presentation a brief speech given to accompany a prize or honor

Prezi a digital presentation software that breaks away from the standard slide deck presentation model and requires users to plot out themes before adding primarily image-focused content

Problem-Cause-Solution organizational speech pattern which describes a problem, identifies what is causing the problem, and a solution to correct the problem

Projection volume produced by the vocal instrument

Pronunciation how the vowels and consonants are produced as well as which syllable is emphasized in a word

Propaganda biased or misleading information that promotes a particular agenda

Public controversies community disputes that affect a large number of people

Regionalism a type of expression common to a specific area

Research the process of discovering new knowledge and investigating a topic from different points of view

Research log a step-by-step process of identifying, obtaining, and evaluating sources for a specific project, in order to keep track of what you have read thus far

Rhetoric the study of what is persuasive; the study and art of effective speaking

Rhetorical appeals appeals to persuade – ethos, pathos, and logos

Rhetorical questions designed to allow the speaker to get the audience to think about the topic without actually speaking the answer to the question

Rhythm the patterned, recurring variance of elements of sound or speech

Roast a speech designed to both praise and good-naturedly insult a person being honored

Rule of thirds technique to enhance the interest and quality of a photo, by dividing the screen using two imaginary lines horizontally and two vertically; the most visually interesting and pleasing portions of the screen will be at the points where the lines intersect

Selective recall selectively attending to, perceiving, and recalling information that supports our existing viewpoints

Signpost short phrases at the beginning of a piece of information in a speech to guide the audience through the content of a speech

Simile a figure of speech in which two unlike things are explicitly compared, using "like" or "as"

Slide deck slideware composed of individual slides; a de facto standard for presentation visual aids

Spatial organizational pattern arranging main points according to how things fit together in physical space

Speaking outline the outline prepared for use when delivering a speech; more succinct version of the preparation outline, including brief phrases or words that remind the speakers of the points they need to make

Specific purpose statement builds on the general purpose (such as to inform) and makes it more specific; essentially the topic of the speech

Statistics a systematic collection of data on measurements or observations, often related to demographic information such as population counts, incomes, population counts at different ages

Target audience individuals who are willing to listen to the argument despite disagreeing, having limited knowledge, or lacking experience with advocacy position

Testimony a statement or endorsement given by someone who has a logical connection to the topic and who is a credible source; typically used to either clarify or prove a point and is often used by referring to the research of experts

Textbooks books that are written about a segment of content within a field of academic study and are written for undergraduate or graduate student audiences; very specifically focused

Thesis statement a single, declarative statement that outlines the purpose and main ideas of your speech

Toast a speech designed to congratulate, appreciate, or remember

Topical organizational pattern arranging the main points of a speech by sub-topics; the most common pattern for organizing a speech

Transition a phrase or sentence that indicates that a speaker is moving from one main point to another main point in a speech

Trustworthiness the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as honest

Vivid language helps listeners create strong, distinct, clear, and memorable mental images using use of imagery and rhythm

Vocalized pauses pauses that are filled with "uh's, "um's," etc.; also called **fillers**

Warrant an often or typically unstated general connection

Watermark text or logo that is placed on a digital image to prevent people from re-using it

White space leaving empty space on presentation aids, which gives breathing room to the design

Z pattern a pattern for presentation aid images, where audience members start in the upper left of the screen and then read in a "Z", exiting the page in the bottom right corner; creates visual interest