

# Ten Steps for Preparing Effective Speeches

## Step 1: Audience Analysis

### A. Occasion

What is the occasion, reason, or circumstance for giving this speech?

How formally should I speak or dress?

What is expected of me?

### B. Setting

Where and when am I giving this speech?

Will I be using a microphone, podium, slide or overhead projector, etc.?

### C. People / Audience

- Size
  - How large is this group?
  - Does the size of the audience affect the presentation of my speech?
- Gender
  - Will the audience be mostly male, female, or mixed/
  - Does this matter in terms of what I will say or how I will say it?
- Affiliation
  - Does the audience share any elements in common (such as group memberships, professions, ethnicity, education) which may be relevant to address in my speech?
- Age
  - Will I need to adapt my speech to specific needs or concerns of a particular age level?
- Values
  - What common values, attitudes, or beliefs might this audience share?
  - Do I want to appeal to any of these that are relevant in my speech?

## Step 2: Topic Choice

What have I been asked to speak about, or what have I chosen to speak about?

How broad or narrow does my topic have to be to fit any time limits?

## Step 3: Purposes

General Purpose

- Is my speech primarily meant to PERSUADE, INFORM, or ENTERTAIN?

Specific Purpose

- What do I hope the audience will gain from hearing my speech?

## Step 4: Thesis / Central Idea

In one short, concise statement, what is the point of my speech?

## Step 5: Research

- Do I need to research this speech?
- Do I have access to the information necessary to give this speech?
- Am I expected to cite my sources?
- How?

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## Step 6: Supporting Materials

- What types of information will work best with this audience: Statistics, Expert or Peer Testimony, Factual or Hypothetical Illustrations, Definitions, or something else?
- Would Visual Aids add to the presentation of this information?
- Am I able to prepare and work comfortably with visual aids?

## Step 7: Organization

### A. Introduction

- Opening
  - Does my opening contain a relevant attention-getting device (a humorous or startling statement, a series of rhetorical questions, an interesting story, or quotation, etc.)?
- Thesis
  - Is my opening followed by a clear, concise statement of my thesis, so the audience understands the point of my speech from its beginning?
- Preview
  - Have I included a brief preview of the main ideas I will discuss in the body of my speech?

### B. Body

- Main Ideas
  - Have I chosen no more or no less than 2 - 5 main ideas to discuss concerning my topic?
  - Do I directly state these main ideas in my speech?
  - Do I develop each main idea as a separate information unit while showing its relationship to the other main ideas and my thesis?
- Subordinate Ideas / Support
  - Do I have research to support each of my main ideas?
  - Do all of the subordinate ideas and research cited specifically support the main ideas discussed?

### C. Conclusion

- Transition
  - Do I make a smooth transition from the body of my speech into the conclusion by using a signpost word, phrase, or sentence....such as "in conclusion"?
- Restatement of Thesis
  - Do I restate my thesis to re-focus the audience on the point of my speech?
- Review of Main Ideas
  - Have I planned to briefly review my 2 - 5 main ideas to support my thesis and summarize the body of my speech?
- Final Remarks
  - Are my final remarks memorable, leaving the audience with a sense of completeness and closure concerning the topic?

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## Step 8: Language

- Does my speech contain language which is slightly more formal than daily conversation but still natural for me?
- Have I successfully avoided unnecessary jargon, abstractions, or wordiness?
- Do I use transitions to show connections between main or subordinate ideas in my speech?

## Step 9: Delivery

- Volume
  - What volume will be appropriate for the audience and setting?
  - Am I able to vary my volume for effect?
- Rate / Pace
  - Am I able to speak at a normal, conversational pace?
  - Am I able to vary my rate for effect?
- Pitch / Inflection
  - Do I use a moderate pitch in my vocal range?
  - Do I use proper inflections at the ends of sentences?
- Style
  - Can I speak comfortably from notes without reading or memorizing?
- Eye Contact
  - How can I most effectively make eye contact with my audience?
  - Will I be able to look at everyone?
- Gestures
  - Have I planned to use gestures in a way that is natural for me?
  - If using visual aids, am I adept at and comfortable with referring to them?
- Posture / Movement
  - Can I maintain a straight, yet comfortable posture with hands unclapsed and feet still?
  - Am I able to reserve movement for planned position changes, while avoiding pacing or fidgeting?
- Poise
  - Did I remind myself that a speaker tends to look more confident than he / she feels, gains confidence through practice and experience, and generally receives a great deal of support / empathy from the audience?

## Step 10: Practice

Did I practice my speech aloud several times in front of a mirror or others to listen to myself, gain experience, reduce any speech anxiety, and improve the overall quality of my presentation?