SPEAK OUT, CALL IN: PUBLIC SPEAKING AS ADVOCACY

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Speak Out, Call In: Public Speaking as Advocacy (Mapes)

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1: ADVOCACY AND AUDIENCES

1.1: Public Speaking As Advocacy
1.2: Centering Audiences

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1.1: Public Speaking As Advocacy

Learning Objectives

- Define public speaking
- Outline public speaking as a form of advocacy
- Introduction to communication as constitutive, cultural, and contextual
- Define communication apprehension and note strategies to manage anxiety before speaking

Imagine your favorite public speaker. When Meggie (one of your authors) imagines a memorable speaker, she often thinks of her high school English teacher, Mrs. Permeswaran. You may be skeptical of her choice, but Mrs. Permeswaran captured the students' attention daily. How? By providing information through stories and examples that felt relatable, reasonable, and relevant. Even with a room of students, Meggie often felt that the English teacher was *just talking to her*. Students worked hard, too, to listen, using note-taking and subtle nods (or confused eyebrows) to communicate that they cared about what was being said.

Now imagine your favorite public speaker. Who comes to mind? A famous comedian like Jen Kirkman? An activist like Laverne Cox? Perhaps you picture Barack Obama. What makes them memorable for you? Were they funny? Relatable? Dynamic? Confident? Try to think beyond *what* they said to *how they made you feel*. What they said certainly matters, but we are often less inclined to remember the *what* without a powerful *how*— how they delivered their message; how their performance implicated us or called us in; how they made us feel or how they asked us to think or act differently.

Laverne Cox speaking at the Missouri Theatre

In this chapter, we provide an introduction to public speaking by exploring what it is and why it's impactful as a communication process. Specifically, we invite you to consider public speaking as a type of advocacy. When you select information to share with others, you are advocating for the necessity of that information to be heard. You are calling on the audience and calling them in to listen to your perspective. Even the English teacher above was advocating that sentence structure and proper writing were important ideas to integrate. She was a trusted speaker, too, given her credibility.

Before we continue our conversation around advocacy, let's first start with a brief definition of public speaking.

What's Public Speaking?

In the opening section of this chapter, we asked that you imagine your favorite public speaker, but what qualifies? How do we know when public speaking is happening? This section will briefly define public speaking to provide some working terminology and background information.

In **public speaking**, a speaker attempts to move an audience by advocating for a purposeful message—through informing, persuading, or entertaining—in a particular context. In almost all cases, the speaker is the focus of attention for a specific amount of time. There may be some back-and-forth interaction, such as questions and answers with the audience, but the speaker usually holds the responsibility to direct that interaction either during or after the prepared speech has concluded. As the focus, speakers deliver sound arguments in a well-organized manner. Historically, public speaking was a face-to-face process, but public speaking can now be delivered and viewed digitally.

Broken down, public speaking includes these basic components:

- The sharing of a well-organized, well-supported, message from a designated speaker to an audience;
- In a context;
- Generally prepared;
- With purpose ranging from informative to persuasive to entertaining.

A speaker often feels strongly that the audience would benefit from the message presented. After all, public speaking is purposeful, so giving a speech is the process of providing a group of people with information that is useful and relevant. It may sound like a simple process, but it requires keen delivery – including attention to verbal and nonverbal skills – argument creation, research, and rehearsal to create a captivating experience for your audience. Public speaking is more than a message, it's an experience.

Brené Brown is one speaker that creates an experience for her audience. You may be familiar with her TedTalk, "The Power of Vulnerability" from 2014 (she's done some great stuff since then, too). She created a captivating experience with research around vulnerability, told stories that were intriguing, and used humor to draw the audience in —she advocated for ideas that were made meaningful to and for her audience.

We could, conversely, ask you to imagine a less-captivating public speaker. Sadly, we have these in our minds, too. These are often speakers who didn't deliver information that you were compelled to listen to: they didn't advocate that the information was of importance to you, to your community, or to other communities. Perhaps they gave you information that you already knew or had been disproven. Put simply: they didn't create a meaningful experience.

What you advocate for and how you deliver your message are crucial to creating a captivating experience for your audience. Tracing public speaking back to its roots will underscore the historical relevance of public speaking as a form of advocacy.

Public Speaking as Advocacy

Public speaking as a form of advocacy can be traced through the history of oral communication. Public speaking, or "rhetoric" as it was originally called, has long been considered a method in Western culture of building community, facilitating self-governance, sharing important ideas, and creating policies. In fact, these are the reasons the ancient Athenian Greeks emphasized that all citizens should be educated in rhetoric: so that they could take part in civil society. Rhetoric was a means to discuss and advocate civically with other citizens and community members.

Public speaking is still seen as a key form of **civic engagement**. Being a good civil servant means listening to information that's relevant to your community/communities and using public outlets—voting, petitioning, or speaking— to participate in democracy. Public speaking becomes a necessary outlet to advocate for issues within and for your community – it's a way to become civically engaged.

Public speaking can and should remain invested in advocacy, but "advocacy" can sound slightly intimidating.

To clarify, think about **advocacy** as one or more of the following components:

- Advocacy is the promotion of an idea, cause, concept, or information
- Advocacy includes actions toward a specific goal
- Advocacy finds solutions to current problems

To advocate is to say "this idea matters" and "I invite each of us to think more deeply about this information." This could happen by discussing an idea that you believe a community needs to hear or by overtly asking audiences to change their mind about a controversial topic. When you make a selection to provide a perspective, you are actively supporting (or advocating for) that perspective. Of all the arguments, topics, or insights in the world, you have selected one – you've selected an advocacy.

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Exploring Advocacy

You may be wondering, "if advocacy means the promotion of a cause that affects communities, how do I figure out a cause I find worthy to speak about?"

Believe us, you've done this before.

When is the last time you advocated for a certain perspective? You may have shared an article online that suggested boycotting a musical artist. Perhaps you backed your sister up in an argument with your parents about curfews. You may be thinking about arguing with a friend to boycott fast food chains or asking an important question through social media. These are forms of advocacy. You become passionate about these topics and they motivate your engagement around these issues.

Public speaking asks that you expand those moments beyond interpersonal or social media exchanges to include a broader audience where you're the designated speaker.

You might, for example, be asked to represent a student organization on campus. You would be responsible for advocating on behalf of that group – a responsibility that can be exhilarating and meaningful. You care about the organization –its mission, ideas, and people in it—so you want to successfully advocate for the group's ideas.

When we advocate, we are balancing our own individual interests with the interests or goals of a larger community or group. We can sometimes over-rely on the first half: our own interests, and forget about the latter: the interests of the larger community. Oftentimes, what we advocate for or about can impact others – both directly (like your student organization) and indirectly (like language choices that are used).

Therefore, advocating for ideas through public speaking has personal and social functions. Public speaking as advocacy will guide our approach through this book, and we encourage you to begin considering your areas of advocacy. There is a lot at stake when we advocate, so we must strive to be ethical communicators.

Communicating Ethically

Ethics is the practice of what's right, virtuous, or good (Tompkins, 2011, p. 3). You could likely list a few key ethics that you personally hold. You may view violence as unethical, for example. Ethics are also understood and defined in our own communities. Colleges view plagiarism—or representing someone else's work as our own—as unethical and wrong within the university community (we'll discuss this in later chapters). As public speakers, ethics is central because you are attempting to influence others.

When preparing for a public speech, there are two key communication ethics questions to consider:

First, am I advocating for information and others in ethical ways? Anytime we communicate, including public speaking, the content should be crafted with truthful and honest information. Ethical advocacy might include:

- Presenting sound and truthful information while providing credit to external sources
- Avoiding **defamatory speech**, or a false statement of fact to damage a person's character
- Avoiding **hate speech** or language directed against someone or a community's nationality, race, gender, ability, sexuality, religion or citizenship. Avoiding **demagoguery,** or actions that attempt to manipulate by distorting an audience through prejudice and emotion.

Second, am I representing myself in ethical ways? Am I misrepresenting myself? When you ask an individual or a larger audience to listen, you're asking them to trust not just what you say, but trust who you are. You are establishing credibility—or **ethos.** Attempts to establish ethical ethos might include:

- Showing character by, in word and action, demonstrating honesty and integrity.
- Being prepared.
- Avoiding misrepresentations of your experience, expertise, or authority.

If we advocate for ideas with reckless disregard for truth, we are communicating in unethical ways. Instead, we can work to become ethical public speakers that communicate information and present ourselves honestly and transparently.

In addition to ethics, there are three additional principles of communication that are central to a deeper understanding of the communication process and, thus, public speaking. We construct public speeches through communication. Below, we'll outline 3 major considerations about communication that will influence our understanding of ethical public speaking and advocacy: human communication is constitutive, contextual, and cultural.

Communication is Constitutive, Contextual, and Cultural

Communication is the basis of human interaction because we use communication to create shared meaning. We negotiate this meaning through **symbols** – a word, icon, gesture, picture, object, etc.—that stand in for and represent a thing or experience. "Dog" is a symbol that represents adorable pets. When you see the symbol "dog," you might picture your own dog, so that symbol has an additional layer of meaning for you. "Dog" also often represents pets as friends (or "humans' best friend!"), so symbols can refer to literal objects or larger ideals and norms – it's what makes communication both fascinating and, at times, complex.

Consider the following: your friend comes over to vent about a current relationship. "I am so annoyed!" they claim. "Charlie really needs to work on her communication skills. She never calls me back."

At first, it may seem that Charlie's *lacking* in communication by not returning phone calls. However, communication isn't secluded to verbal feedback, and it still occurs in our nonverbal symbols, in silence, or in emojis. So, Charlie's still communicating, just not a meaning that your friend is receiving happily.

As this example begins to demonstrate, communication (and, thus, public speaking) is complex, and below we highlight 3 important components of communication, beginning with communication as constitutive.

Constitutive

When we (your authors) were new public speakers, we often failed to take seriously the opportunity of speaking and communicating with others. We would commonly use words or phrases without investigating their impact on audiences or considering what they represented. That's because we falsely viewed ourselves as vessels that transmitted information rather than active creators in our own and other' worldview.

We now know, however, that communication is **constitutive,** meaning that communication creates meaning and, thus, reality (Nicotera, 2009). Rather than merely transmit pre-determined information, what you say matters and makes up our social world. Think back to the example with your friend and Charlie: Charlie's communication was affecting your friend and their perception of Charlie. It affected your friend's world and relationship with Charlie in *real* ways.

This principle is true of public speaking, too. The message that you create in your speech matters, because it both extends others' information (like research) and constructs its own meaning. As communicators and public speakers, realizing that you are creating shared meaning may feel like added responsibility. And it is. It means that we are all responsible in thinking deeply about what we decide to speak about and how we decide to represent those ideas.

Power is thus a core consideration of communication because when we communicate, we are influencing others and selecting certain ways to represent our ideas. When you speak, you are elevating certain perspectives, and those often lead to the empowerment or disempowerment of people, places, things or ideas. Communicating is never neutral because meaning is always being negotiated. When you were a child, for example, a guardian may have looked at you angrily, and you knew to behave or there would be consequences. You are being nonverbally influenced and creating shared meaning with that guardian.

Key Takeaway

Communication is never neutral because meaning is always being negotiated.

Recent debates around school and sports' mascots help demonstrate the role of power in communication. Maine, for example, unanimously banned Indigenous mascots in public schools after tribal communities expressed discomfort in the images (Hauser, 2019). For Indigenous communities, the verbal and visual images were disrespectful representations of their culture – it was communication that created problematic and stereotypical narratives that represented Indigenous cultures is disempowering ways.

Meaning is being constituted (or created) when you're in the audience, too. Because public speaking is an experience in a particular context, audience members also contribute to the meaning being shared. Consider these

Audience's play a key role in public speaking events

three scenarios (some of which you may have experienced). While someone is giving a formal speech:

- 3 front-row audience members are sleeping;
- 3 front-row audience members are providing positive, nonverbal feedback and taking notes;
- Someone is vacuuming loudly outside the room during the presentation.

These may sound familiar, and you may even experience these in class! Each scenario, however, does not communicate the same thing and all 3 will affect the public speaking experience – for the speaker and other audience members.

As humans, we are constantly communicating to make meaning with others. Viewing communication as constitutive highlights how these acts create our worldviews, not merely reflect them. In public speaking, then, our advocacies are not just recreating information, but our speeches are active contributors to the world we live in. Our worlds, though, are never universal, and communication is also always contextual.

Information Literacy Pro-Tip: In addition to creating meaning, you will also create original scholarship. You are likely familiar, for example, with citing prominent writers, speakers, or scholars when trying to support an idea in an essay. When you begin giving speeches, you are creating citable information, and your original insights are your own.

Contextual

Like we've mentioned, communication is humans trying to make meaning together. As you've experienced, though, that meaning is not received or understood the same all of the time. That's because communication is **contextual**. It happens in a particular time and place.

Pretend, for example, that you want to break up with your partner. Communicating that desire over text message is a different context then a coffee shop or in a private apartment. As this example demonstrates, context refers to a specific time and place – the literal context. You may decide that a private apartment is more fitting because a coffee shop may lend itself to external noise, changing the vibe, and disrupting your serious talk.

For public speaking, the time and place are similarly key considerations because that context will inform what you say, why, and for how long. Ask yourself,

- Where will I be speaking? To whom?
- What is the purpose?
- When is it taking place?
- Am I delivering the message through a live or mediated channel?

The literal context can have substantial implications for what and how you're able to communicate. For a public speaker, the place and space will dictate your movement, your presentation aids, and/or the length of your speech. Chapter 2 will highlight how and why audiences must be considered, too.

In addition to the literal context – the time and place – communication occurs within larger dialogues and contexts – historical and cultural. We'll discuss communication as cultural below and Chapter two will dive deeper into analyzing your speaking context, but let's work to understand the larger context here, too.

A communication act – like a speech or interpersonal exchange – occurs in a particular historical context. Have you ever been to a family function where you didn't know that 2 family members were feuding? Perhaps you loudly commented on their behavior jokingly, making the room silent and awkward. Unfortunately, you weren't aware of the larger context.

In the U.S., major conversations are occurring at state and federal levels to address climate change. These conversations may be occurring in your communities, too. If you were discussing or speaking about climate change, being aware of these conversations would situate you to enter the larger context. Are you up-to-date on the scientific findings? Is your community susceptible to certain climate change impacts? What about other communities?

As a communicator and public speaker, being attuned and informed about the larger context is paramount, because it will direct you toward an advocacy. What's relevant? What's important to consider now? What references or examples are timely?

Communication occurs in a context – the literal time and place and the larger historical conversations. The final component of communication is closely connected with context, and below, we explore communication as cultural.

Cultural

Finally, all communication is cultural.

First, let's define culture. **Culture** refers to the collection of language, values, beliefs, knowledge, rituals, and attitudes shared amongst a group ("Culture and Communication," 2002). Your college campus, for example, may have certain cultural elements (like a school song) that band students together toward similar beliefs and values.

Flags are an important cultural symbol in the United States

The U.S., more broadly, has certain cultural characteristics – the 4th of July, for example, or valuing free speech. You don't, however, just belong to one or even two cultures. We are all influenced by multiple cultural norms and values.

Communication is cultural because cultures rely on symbols – the bedrock of communication – to determine the norms, expectations, and values within the group. This means two things:

- First, culture is created through the communication process. In other words, we use communication to negotiate (and create) our cultural values;
- Second, communication reflects the cultural values and norms of the people communicating. We can often glean what cultural values are present by looking at someone's communication.

When we communicate, we are relying on the cultural norms that we've been taught and, by using those symbols, advocating for those ideals.

When you are advocating for an idea and communicating why that idea matters, it's important not to assume that your cultural perspective or location is *the* best or only perspective (it's contextual, remember?!). Instead, you must be reflexive about what norms you are advocating for and how you may be representing topics or ideas from or about other cultures. **Reflexivity** means to critically consider how our values, assumptions, actions, and communication affect others. From a communication perspective, reflexivity acknowledges that your intentions are secondary to the impact that your verbal and nonverbal behavior has on others and on the cultural realities that you create.

Think back to Maine's legislation that prohibits public schools from using Indigenous mascots. In the U.S., free speech is an important cultural value, so many people argue that free speech should protect these mascots and images. For Indigenous communities, however, these images don't accurately represent their cultural ideas and negatively stereotype. Because communication does more than just reflect reality (but creates it, ahem: is constitutive), there is power in the information that's portrayed to others. In this case, we should reflexively ask: Are the images representing our or other cultures ethically? Are we communicating in a way that disempowers others?

These questions are important because communication affects our perceptions of other cultures and cultural norms. We not only learn our own cultural values through communication, we also learn about other cultures through communication, in positive and negative ways. If you grew up in a household of University of Kansas Jayhawks, you may have heard stories about the Missouri Tigers, because the two schools have a history of feuding. This likely impacted your perception of Missouri as an institution and even students who attend their campus.

This may seem like a silly example, but it demonstrates how communication is the bedrock of cultural meaning – both our own and others.

Communication, as a process of creating shared meaning, is constituted (creating the worlds in which we live), contextual (occurs in a time and place), and cultural (shared rituals, norms, values). These three characteristics are true of all communication – interpersonal, organizational, intercultural, and digital, to name a few.

As public speakers, these components guide our decisions on what information to advocate for and to whom. They ask us to consider, what's at stake in the perspective that I'm introducing? How will it influence my audience and my community? How am I entering a relevant conversation? What world views am I supporting and creating?

Public speaking is a privilege – not everyone, every day is given an audience of people willing to listen to their ideas. So it's important, it matters, and it's meaningful.

So far, we've discussed public speaking as a form of advocacy and identified some core communication principles to keep in mind. There is one additional (albeit unwelcome) component that defines many speakers' experience with public speaking: apprehension. In the final major section of this chapter, we walk through communication apprehension.

Communication Apprehension

Admittedly, thinking about advocacy or advocating for ideas can sound intimidating. Even experienced professors can feel anxiety before teaching. To advocate or present information to an audience – some more willing to listen actively than others – is a big responsibility. Understandably, this can lead speakers to experiencing apprehension while preparing and delivering a presentation. In this section, we explore public speaking apprehension while providing some useful tips to manage anxiety.

Public speaking apprehension is fear associated with giving a public speech. This could occur prior to or during a presentation. It's common to hear that public speaking is a fear, but why are so many people fearful to speak in public?

The first is fear of failure. This fear can result from several sources: real or perceived bad experiences involving public speaking in the past, lack of preparation, lack of knowledge about public speaking, not knowing the context, and uncertainty about one's task as a public speaker (such as being thrown into a situation at the last minute).

The second fear is fear of rejection of one's self or one's ideas. This one is more serious in some respects. You may feel rejection because of fear of failure, or you may feel that the audience will reject your ideas, or worse, you as a person.

Scholars at the University of Wisconsin-Stout ("Public Speaking Anxiety," 2015) explain that fear in public speaking can also result from one of several misperceptions:

- "all or nothing" thinking—a mindset that if your speech falls short of "perfection" (an unrealistic standard), then you are a failure as a public speaker;
- overgeneralization—believing that a single event (such as failing at a task) is a universal or "always" event; and
- fortune telling—the tendency to anticipate that things will turn out badly, no matter how much practice or rehearsal is done.

One common belief that undergirds our fear is that we often hold ourselves to "expert-level" standards. We learn that audience members look for proof of our credibility, and new public speakers may wonder, "why am I credible?" or "why should someone listen to me?" At the beginning of this chapter, we asked that you imagine your favorite public speaker, and they may have years of experience speaking in public. While it's important to view these speakers as informal mentors, it can also incite some anxiety. "Am I supposed to speak like them?" you may be wondering.

Likewise, many new college students operate under the false belief that intelligence and skill are "fixed." In their minds, a person is either smart or skilled in something, or they are not. Some students apply this false belief to math and science subjects, saying things like "I'm just no good at math and I never will be," or even worse, "I guess I am just not smart enough to be in college." As you can tell, these beliefs can sabotage someone's college career. Unfortunately, the same kind of false beliefs are applied to public speaking, and people conclude that because public speaking is hard, they are just not "natural" at it and have no inborn skill. They give up on improving and avoid public speaking at all costs. The classroom is a cool space to begin building some foundational knowledge around public speaking. Remember that you are building a critical thinking portfolio, so have patience with yourself and trust the educational process.

Finally, we often experience students believing the incongruent ideas that public speaking (as a class) should be an "easy A"

and that they'd rather die than give a speech. Instead, remember that good public speaking takes time and energy *because* it is difficult. Public speaking asks you to engage and advocate on behalf of yourselves and others who may not be able to access spaces to advocate for themselves.

Public speaking is also embodied: it requires the activation of and communication through your entire body. Unlike writing an essay or posting a picture online, public speaking requires that your entire body deliver a message, and that can feel odd for many of us. Consequently, learning public speaking means you must train your body to be comfortable and move in predictable and effective ways. This all happens in front of other people: scary! This is difficult work, so of course it's viewed as fear-inducing for some.

Addressing Public Speaking Anxiety

We wish that we had a "Felix can fix it!" (from Wreck-It Ralph) mentality toward public speaking apprehension. If you have experienced some anxiety around speaking, you know that it can be merely aggravating or completely overwhelming. In this section, we provide some guidance and strategies to address public speaking apprehension.

Mental Preparation

Mental preparation is an important part of public speaking. To mentally prepare, you want to put your focus where it belongs, on the audience and the message. Mindfulness and full attention to the task are vital to successful public speaking. If you are concerned about a big exam or something personal going on in your life, your mind will be divided and add to your stress.

The main questions to ask yourself are "Why am I so anxiety-ridden about giving a presentation?" and "What is the worst that can happen?" For example, you probably won't know most of your classmates at the beginning of the course, adding to your anxiety. By midterm, you should be developing relationships with them and be able to find friendly faces in the audience. However, very often we make situations far worse in our minds than they actually are, and we can lose perspective.

Physical Preparation

The first step in physical preparation is adequate sleep and rest. You might be thinking, "Impossible! I'm in college." However, research shows the extreme effects a lifestyle of limited sleep can have, far beyond yawning or dozing off in class (Mitru, Millrood, & Mateika, 2002). As far as public speaking is concerned, your energy level and ability to be alert and aware during the speech will be affected by lack of sleep.

Secondly, eat! Food is fuel, so making sure that you have a nutritious meal is a plus.

A third suggestion is to select what you'll wear before the day you speak. Have your outfit picked out and ready to go, eliminating something to worry your mind the day-of.

A final suggestion for physical preparation is to utilize some stretching or relaxation techniques that will loosen your limbs or throat. Essentially, your emotions want you to run away but the social system says you must stay, so all that energy for running must go somewhere. The energy might go to your legs, hands, stomach, sweat glands, or skin, with undesirable physical consequences. Tightening and stretching your hands, arms, legs, and throat for a few seconds before speaking can help release some of the tension. Your instructor may be able to help you with these exercises, or you can find some online.

Contextual Preparation

The more you can know about the venue where you will be speaking, the better. For this class, of course, it will be your classroom, but for other situations where you might experience "communication apprehension," you should check out the space beforehand or get as much information as possible. For example, if you were required to give a short talk for a job interview, you would want to know what the room will be like, if there is equipment for projection, how large the audience will be, and the seating arrangements. If possible, you will want to practice your presentation in a room that is similar to the actual space where you will deliver it.

The best advice for contextual preparation is to be on time, even early. If you have to rush in at the last minute, as so many students do, you will not be mindful, focused, or calm for the speech.

Speech Preparation

Please, please, please, rehearse. You do not want the first time that you say the words to be when you are in front of your audience. Practicing is the only way that you will feel confident, fluent, and in control of the words you speak. Practicing (and timing yourself) repeatedly is also the only way that you will be assured that your speech meets the requirements of the context (length, for example).

Your practicing should be out loud, standing up, with shoes on, with someone to listen, if possible (other than your dog or cat), and with your visual aids. If you can record yourself and watch it, that is even better. If you do record yourself, make sure you record yourself from the feet up—or at least the hips up—so you can see your body language. The need for oral practice will be emphasized over and over in this book and probably by your instructor. As you progress as a speaker, you will always need to practice but perhaps not to the extent you do as a novice speaker.

As hard as it is to believe, YOU NEVER LOOK AS NERVOUS AS YOU FEEL.

You may feel that your anxiety is at level seventeen on a scale of one to ten, but the audience does not perceive it the same way. They may perceive it at a three or four or even less. That's not to say they won't see any signs of your anxiety and that you don't want to learn to control it, only that what you are feeling inside is not as visible as you might think. This principle relates back to focus. If you know you don't look as nervous as you feel, you can focus and be mindful of the message and audience rather than your own emotions.

Providing Support in the Audience: As an audience member: there are ways to provide supportive feedback to speakers who may be anxious. You can use positive nonverbals to encourage them as they speak, ask thoughtful questions at the conclusion of the presentation, or listen attentively. We'll learn more about listening in Chapter 2.

Conclusion

In summary, public speaking includes a speaker and a message that is delivered to an audience in a particular context. You will practice and participate in all 3 components: you will be the speaker, create a message, and audience the presentation of others. During your preparation, you will consider the context to make appropriate choices when crafting your content.

This may not surprise you, but you will likely be an audience member and listener to a public speech more often than you are the speaker. Being in the audience can be an incredibly rewarding experience, but it requires some work, too, and it begins with listening.

It's a great privilege to be given space as a speaker to communicate to a broader audience, and not everyone is commonly given that space. When you are asked to speak, it's important to take seriously the responsibility of presenting information that will influence others.

What's to Come: A Book Overview

The remainder of part 1 includes chapter 2, and we'll look at audiences from three perspectives: how do we consider the audience we're talking to? How do we consider audiences we might be talking about? How do we act as audience members?

Part 2 is about arguments: how to select them, how to research them, how to craft and organize arguments. In each chapter, we'll work to build on a working vocabulary around well-researched and reasoned arguments.

In Part 3, we discuss delivery – what we'll call the aesthetic experience. In these chapters, we explore the experience of public speaking and ways that speakers can use verbal, nonverbal communication, and presentational aids to enhance and captivate the audience. We conclude part 3 by working through best practices in rehearsal.

Finally, Part 4 introduces the approaches to public speaking – informative, persuasive, online, ceremonial, and group.

When finished, we hope that you'll have critical thinking takeaways to build your public speaking portfolio.

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1.2: Centering Audiences

Learning Objectives

- Describe how to analyze the formal audience
- Consider implied or implicated audiences
- Explain stereotypes and ethnocentrisms
- Explain ways an individual can improve their listening when in an audience

We are fans of standup comedy. A well-developed standup routine can leave us engaged and on the edge of our seat; it can leave us feeling like each joke was crafted for us.

Sadly, many of us have sat through less-engaging routines where awkward silence fills the space after an ill-placed punchline.

"Wow. Wrong audience," the comic often nervously responds.

Similar to standup, audiences are central to public speeches. They are the main focus of our advocacies, and when we know more about our audiences, we can craft messages that effectively inform or move them toward action. We can craft messages to *call them in*.

You'll notice that this book's title includes "call in," and you may wonder, what does that mean? When you speak out, you're not speaking into thin air; instead, you're inviting the audience to listen—you're calling them in. To **call in** means creating a message that both relates to and implicates your audience; it is to summon. Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin, and Don Jackson (1967) write that communication always involves a content dimension and a relationship dimension. Nowhere does that become more important than working to call our audience in. You are not using the speech to dump a large amount of content on the audience; you are making that content important, meaningful, and applicable to them. Additionally, the way the audience perceives you and your connection to them—such as whether there is mutual trust and respect—will largely determine your success with the audience. The speaker must respect the audience as well as the audience trusting the speaker for "calling in" to be a success.

As you can see, calling an audience in is a process, and a complex one at that. In this chapter, we explore audiences in public speaking. To start, we answer the question: what's an audience, anyway?

What's an Audience?

In this chapter, we approach the audience in three ways.

First, by "audience" we mean the **explicit audience** that's present when a speaker directs their message. The people sitting in chairs. Because public speeches require an audience, and because public speakers are asking the audience to listen to an argument, it's important to analyze the group receiving a message – who you are speaking to. This is your explicit audience.

In addition, there are implied or implicated audiences who may or may not be present. Like we discussed in Chapter 1, public speaking is presenting an advocacy that engages for and with your community. When you are representing a group, culture, or an individual, they become an implicit audience. You are responsible for how you communicate about that audience or other groups who may be implicated by the advocacy.

Finally, you will be an audience member. The third dimension of "audience," then, is you! As an audience member, your primary goal is to listen and reflect on what the speaker is presenting. Listening isn't as easy as it sounds. So, we'll also discuss listening, barriers, and best practices.

Who you're speaking to, who you're speaking for or about, and when you're receiving a message are all components of the "audience." Below, we'll begin discussing analyzing the first dimension of audience: the explicit, formal group that listens to your message.

Speaking to an Audience

Public speaking requires an audience. After all, when speaking, your goal is to share a message that's relevant and provide unique insight that will benefit those present. To accomplish that goal, you need to get to know the explicit audience you're speaking to: you need to analyze them.

You may wonder, "Okay, but how do I do that?" Information gathering is the answer.

The more information you have, the more you're able to isolate any overlapping beliefs, values, or goals that the audience shares. Audiences are unique, diverse, and sometimes unpredictable; information gathering will allow you to select an argument that's most relevant to what your audience needs.

By **needs**, we mean identifying important deficiencies that we are motivated to resolve.

You may already be familiar with the well-known diagram, Maslow's Hierarchy of needs—a framework to think about human needs. It is commonly discussed in the fields of management, psychology, and health professions. A version of it is shown in Figure 2.1 (More recent versions show it with 8 levels.) In trying to understand human motivation, Maslow theorized that, as our needs represented at the base of the pyramid are fulfilled, we move up the hierarchy to fulfill other types of need (McLeod, 2014).

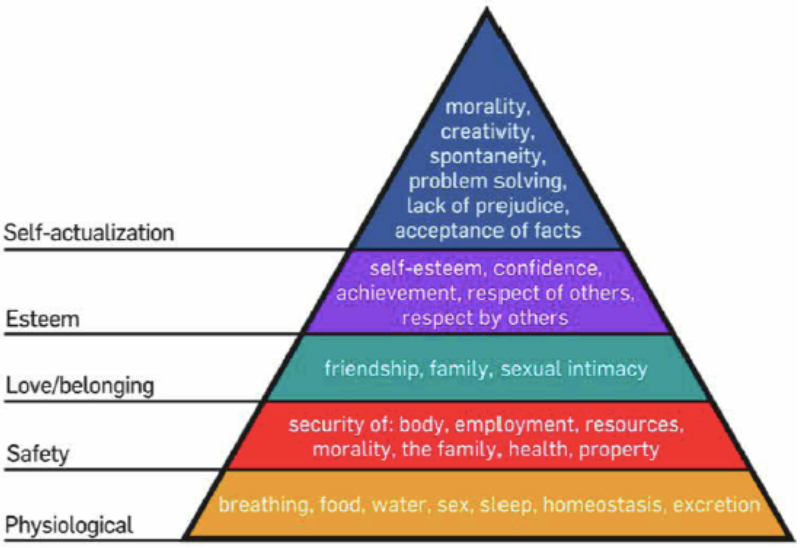

Figure 2.1

According to Maslow's theory, our most basic physiological or survival needs must be met before we move to the second level, which is safety and security. When our needs for safety and security are met, we move up to relationship or connection needs, often called "love and belongingness." The fourth level up is esteem needs, which could be thought of as achievement, accomplishment, or self-confidence. The highest level, self-actualization, is achieved by those who are satisfied and secure enough in the lower four that they can make sacrifices for others. Self-actualized persons are usually thought of as altruistic or charitable.

Unfortunately, humans aren't always aware of what their needs are, so part of your task is learning about the audience and isolating needs that they may or may not be conscious of. For example, you're reading out of an open textbook: this book was free of charge. Until you were assigned the book, you may not have been aware that open textbooks (or open educational resources) were an option. It was a need that you weren't conscious of. A good speaker highlights the presence of a need by relating that issue to their audience.

When addressing an audience, determining what they need and where that need falls on the pyramid can influence how you make content that's relatable – it can help you *call them in*. Diving deeper into the speaking context, audience demographics, and audience values all provide necessary information to identify needs and craft relevant arguments.

Throwback— Ethos: It's important to consider who you're speaking to because you're asking a group of people to trust what you're saying. You're trying to establish good character (ethos). Knowing your audience and demonstrating that you know their needs can add trust and increase your ethos.

Researching the Context

Analyzing your audience needs begins by asking top level questions about the public speaking context: why will your audience be there? What's bringing them together? What's motivating them to attend? Determining why your audience will be in attendance can help uncover more about who they are.

If you aren't familiar with the *why*—why the audience is attending— conduct preliminary research. Use resources that are at your disposal to learn more and dig deep. If you're speaking at a formal convention, for example, what's the convention about? Is there a convention theme? Does the convention provide insight into past convention participants? How many people does the event accept?

Your research can help identify what's bringing the audience together. You might learn, for example, that conference attendees share a common career, participate in a common organization, or have a similar hobby. When you speak in a class, the course content (or university requirement) brings the audience together. If you're at a neighborhood meeting, the audience likely lives in that neighborhood, and you can learn about the key issues being discussed at the meeting.

As you research, try to determine what's motivating your audience to be present. Identifying motivations can help assist in identifying what your audience needs or what needs they're trying to fulfill.

Understanding Audience Demographics

A second information gathering strategy is looking at audience demographics.

Demographics – sociocultural characteristics that identify and characterize populations – are common ways of organizing and gathering data about groups of people. Have you ever taken a survey? Researchers often ask demographic information of participants to determine how answers may change between sub-groups (based on different demographics). In the United States, for example, data might track the average age or the average socioeconomic standing of an incoming college student.

Demographics can be a helpful source of information gathering. If you're aware of common audience demographics, you can gather information that might glean insights into *common* beliefs, attitudes, or responses to a topic. Using data and research, like a survey or experimental finding, can help educate you about particular demographic groups that may be in your audience. Figure 2.2 introduces common audience demographics and their corresponding descriptions.

Figure 2.2Audience Demographics and Descriptions

Education	The kind of information and training a person has been exposed to.
Family Status	The self-identified status of an individual, including married, single, open, d
Gender Identity	The self-identified presentation of a gender, including women, men, (cis or
Occupation	A job, career, or industry that one performs.

Education	The kind of information and training a person has been exposed to.
Race	The self-identification with one or more social groups, such as White, Africa physical characteristics.
Religion	Beliefs and practices about the transcendent, deity, and the meaning of life;
Sexual Orientation	The self-identification of who an individual based no whom they have relati
Socio-Economics	A person or group's economic standing in relation to others.

Other demographics include ethnicity, gender expression, spirituality, family structure, ability/disability, region or nationality, and generation or age.

Rather than stable categories, demographics are dynamic, changing, and contextual.

Religion, for example, is a porous concept that encompasses a wide range of formal and informal practices. If you gather information about your audience, and you determine that your audience is "religious," make sure that you aren't assuming a particular religious affiliation or making assumptions about what the category of religion infers.

While using demographic information can be helpful, it can also lead to stereotyping or relying on totalizing conclusions. **Stereotyping** is generalizing about a group of people and assuming that because a few persons in that group have a characteristic, all of them do. If we were sitting near campus and saw two students drive by hectically and said, "All college students are bad drivers," that would be stereotyping. Sadly, our stereotypical thoughts are often reinforced when a group behavior is observed. Every time we see a student (or who we perceive to be a student) driving hectically, we use that observation to support our stereotypical thought. Stereotypes have strongholds, so we likely don't "count" observations where students are driving safely.

We know what you're thinking: "I never stereotype." But we all do. Rather than pretend that stereotypes aren't part of our cultural narrative, use reflective and reflexive thinking (from Chapter 1) to evaluate when a stereotypical thought or idea arises. This includes being reflexive when using demographic information to inform your speech content.

Similarly, individuals are part of multiple demographic categories, not just one. Think about yourself and your identity. What are key parts? What types of demographics make you, you? You aren't just one category. Isolating one demographic to represent the whole person is totalizing. **Totalizing** is taking one characteristic of a group or person and making that the "totality" or sum total of what that person or group is. Totalizing often happens to persons with disabilities, for example; the disability is seen as the totality of that person, or all that person is about. This can be both harmful to the relationship and ineffective as a means of communicating.

Demographics, then, are part of the information gathering process. But researching your audience's demographics doesn't mean learning one category and stopping there. Instead, think about your audience as a complex matrix, and demographics are one component of the grid. To gain a deeper insight into the matrix, search for insight about your audience's beliefs, attitudes, and values.

Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values

In Chapter 1, we discussed that communication both creates and sustains cultures. All of us are part of different cultures and, through communication, we learn about what those cultures believe and value, often adopting those beliefs for ourselves. For example, why are you in college? It's likely that you are part of a culture that values education and believes that education will lead to your betterment.

In some cases, groups with similar demographics can hold similar beliefs, attitudes, or values, but not always. Rather than map

beliefs onto your demographics, use your research and information gathering to determine what kind of inner beliefs, attitudes, and values your audience may hold.

Beliefs are "statements we hold to be true" (Daryl Bem, 1970). Notice this definition does not say the beliefs are true, only that we hold them to be true and, as such, they determine how we respond to the world around us. Stereotypes are a kind of belief: we believe all the people in a certain group are "like that" or share a trait. Beliefs, according to Bem, come from our experience and from sources we trust. Therefore, beliefs are hard to change—not impossible, just difficult.

Beliefs are hard to change because of:

- **stability**—the longer we hold them, the more stable or entrenched they are;
- **centrality**—they are in the middle of our identity, self-concept, or "who we are";
- **saliency**—we think about them a great deal; and
- **strength**—we have a great deal of intellectual or experiential support for the belief or we engage in activities that strengthen the beliefs.

For example, we (the authors) believe that all genders should be treated equally. This is a belief that we've established based on personal experience and cultural narratives. We believe this to be true. This belief informs how we treat people, the things we care about, and what we advocate for. This is a very strong belief, so it would be difficult for a speaker to persuade us otherwise, but would be important information for a speaker to know.

Values are goals we strive for and what we consider important and desirable. However, values are not just basic wants. A person may want a vintage sports car from the 1960s, and may value it because of the amount of money it costs, but the vintage sports car is not a value; it represents a value of either:

- nostalgia (the person's parents owned one in the 1960s and it reminds them of good times),
- display (the person wants to show it off and get "oohs" and "ahs"),
- materialism (the person believes the adage that the one who dies with the most toys wins),
- aesthetics (the person admires the look of the car and enjoys maintaining the sleek appearance),
- prestige (the person has earned enough money to enjoy and show off this kind of vehicle), or
- physical pleasure (the driver likes the feel of driving a sports car on the open road).

In the United States, for example, you might speak to an audience that values monetary security and success. This value is informed by a belief. It's likely, for example, that values around monetary success and prestige are rooted in beliefs that individual hard work can achieve success in a capitalist society. If you can identify a value, ask: what could be fueling that value? What beliefs?

Finally, **attitude** is defined as a positive or negative response to a person, idea, object, or policy. How do you respond when you hear the name of a certain singer, movie star, political leader, sports team, or law in your state? Your response will be either positive or negative, or maybe neutral if you are not familiar with the object of the attitude. Where did that attitude come from? Does that person, idea, or object differ from you in values and beliefs?

Let's extend our monetary example from above. If you speak to an audience who believes in capitalism and values monetary, individual success, it may be unwise to mention "socialism" as the audience may have a negative attitude to socialism as a concept.

Consider this second example. Pretend that you're speaking to a campus audience and, currently, the university has a very popular campus leader. The audience likely has a positive attitude toward that leader, so it would be beneficial to quote that person in the speech itself.

While discrete categories, beliefs, values, and attitudes are often intertwined, and knowing more about these categories can add to your understand of who the audience is. Knowing who they are means identifying their needs and determining how and why your speech is relevant.

Speaking for an Audience

Gathering information about your explicit audience—the formal audience you're speaking in front of – is certainly important. The second audience to consider is the **implied or implicated audience**. In this section, we discuss *how* we talk about who we're

talking about: how we're talking about the groups that are either represented and/or affected by our message.

Let's use a state congressional hearing as an example. Imagine a group of congress people meeting to advocate for a bill's passage that decreases environmental protections for a city in that state. The bill's author stands and advocates passionately for the bill's passage, noting that reducing the environmental protections would allow more business and jobs in the area. The speaker works to craft an argument that's compelling for the explicit audience – the audience of other congress people who are present.

However, there are other implied audiences – the communities that would be most impacted by environmental pollution; residents who live in the area; business owners themselves. These audiences are important because they are both represented in the advocacy and would be impacted by the results of the speech. They may not, though, be part of the explicit audience.

To determine your implied audience, ask: Who are you speaking about/advocating for? Are you sharing information about a culture, group, or individual? If so, who? Are you sharing information that will impact a culture, group, or individual? If so, who?

It may seem odd to consider audiences that are implied or not present. After all, isn't the explicit audience who you're trying to inform, persuade, or entertain? Yes, your explicit audience is important, but as we discussed in Chapter 1, communication is constitutive. When you communicate or advocate for an idea, you are participating in world-making. The way that you talk or represent groups, cultures, or individuals has lasting impacts, even outside your explicit speech event. It can impact your implied audience. So, the "talk" about an implied audience matters.

Asking ourselves to be accountable to implied audiences also encourages us to use ethical communication, pay attention to power, and reduce stereotypes.

For example, if a speaker advocated to intervene in a country through military means, they might argue that "The United States needs to intervene because, right now, the other country is exhibiting barbaric tendencies."

First, ask: Who is the implied audience in this example? What audiences would be implicated (but are likely not present)? A clear implied audience includes the non-U.S. population or cultural group, i.e. "the other country."

Second, ask, how has this group been represented? What kind of talk is being used to describe these implied audiences? You'll notice that "barbaric" was used to describe individuals in this culture. In this instance, "barbaric" seems to imply that the United States intervention is justified; barbaric seems bad and, alternatively, the United States does not exhibit those "barbaric tendencies" so, the U.S. may be best suited to intervene.

However, this explanation is using **ethnocentrism**—or the belief that one's own culture is superior—as part of their argument. This type of talk should be avoided because it often represents other cultures in unethical, stereotypical, or unjust ways. If the speech's argument requires an ethnocentric perspective, the argument isn't based on good reasons (we'll discuss this more in Chapter 5).

So far, we've discussed your implied and impacted audience as groups that are discussed, represented, or implicated by your speech. A final implied audience includes any groups, cultures, or an individual's *ideas* that you're using.

Have you ever had a friend who re-tells your joke but doesn't give you credit? Not cool! The same is true for speech advocacies. Any time you use or adapt an idea from a group or individual, you must give that implied audience credit. Failing to do so is known as **plagiarism**, or representing someone's ideas as your own (more on this in Chapter 4). Once you've finished writing an advocacy, make sure to double-check that anyone and everyone's information has been properly cited.

Identifying your implied audience can take time, but don't worry. We'll continue building critical thinking skills throughout the book to practice ethical and just public speaking with your explicit and implied audience in mind.

> **Question:** Can't the implied audience be in the explicit audience? Sure! But not everyone who's implicated will likely be present.

Listening in the Audience

The third component of "audience" includes you! You will be an audience member many, many times, and you should take that job seriously. Your job in the audience is to listen and ethically reflect on what the speaker is saying. In this section, we explore listening as a key audience concept.

Listening is not the same thing as hearing. **Hearing** is a physical process in which sound waves hit your ear drums and send a message to your brain. You may hear cars honking or dogs barking when you are walking down the street because your brain is processing the sounds, but that doesn't mean that you are listening to them. **Listening** implies an active process where you are specifically making an effort to understand, process, and retain information.

In an audience, listening can be a difficult process. Unlike reading, which allows you to re-read a passage, you often have one chance to listen to an argument in a speech. Many studies have been conducted to find out how long we remember oral messages, and often the level of memory from oral communication is not very high (Bostrom & Bryant, 1980). The solution? Try to enact different listening techniques and reduce your barriers to listening.

Types of Listening

In this section, we will focus on types of listening. Ideally, we recommend working toward **comprehensiveor activelistening**, which is listening focused on understanding and remembering important information from a public speaking message. There are other "types" of listening, based on the context and purpose.

The first is **empathetic listening**, or understanding the feelings and motivations of another person, usually with a goal of helping. For example, if a friend says that she is thinking about dropping out of college at the end of the semester, you would want to listen for the reasons and feelings behind her choice, recognizing that you might need to ask sensitive questions and not just start telling her what to do or talk about your own feelings.

The second type of listening is **appreciative**, which takes place while listening to music, poetry, or literature, or watching a play or movie. For example, knowing that the melodies of classical musical have a certain A-B pattern informs us how to listen to Mozart. To be good at this kind of listening, it helps to study the art form to learn the patterns and devices.

The third type is **critical listening**. In critical listening the audience member is evaluating the validity of the arguments and information and deciding whether the speaker is persuasive and whether the message should be accepted. This often occurs when listening to persuasive arguments.

What can a speaker do to encourage listening for an audience?

Planned redundancy refers to purposeful ways of repeating and restating parts of the speech to help the audience listen and retain the content. You might not be able to cover or dump a great deal of information in a speech (and you probably shouldn't), but you can make the information meaningful through planned redundancy and repeating or underscoring key components of your argument.

A speaker can also help the audience's listening abilities by using presentation aids (discussed in Chapter 10), stories and examples (discussed in Chapter 5), audience interaction or movement at key points in the speech (discussed in Chapter 9), and specific attention-getting techniques (discussed in Chapter 6).

In short, listening is hard work, but you can meet your audience half way by using certain strategies and material to make listening easier for them. At the same time, an audience member has a responsibility to pay attention and listen well.

In the next section, we will look at how you can improve your listening ability in public speaking situations.

Barriers to Effective Listening

Since hearing is a physiological response to auditory stimuli, you hear things whether you want to or not. Just ask anyone who

has tried to go to sleep with the neighbor's dog barking all night. However, listening–really listening– is intentional and hard work. And there are three common barriers to be conscious of.

Noise – physical and mental – is the first barrier to listening. We have constant mental distractions in our lives, something that you might not even be aware of if you have always lived in the world of Internet, cell phones, iPods, tablets, and 24/7 news channels. We are dependent on and constantly wired to the Internet. Focus is difficult. Not only do electronic distractions hurt our listening, but life concerns can distract us as well. An ill family member, a huge exam next period, your car in the shop, deciding on next semester's classes—the list is endless.

Physical noisiness and distractions also contribute to difficulty listening. Perhaps someone next to you is on their cell phone, and you hear the constant click of their keyboard. Perhaps they are whispering to each other and impeding your ability to hear the speaker clearly. The physical environment can also exert noise. Maybe it's raining outside or someone is vacuuming through the door.

Confirmation bias is a second barrier to listening. This term means "a tendency to search for or interpret information in a way that confirms one's preconceptions" (Nickerson, 1998). Although the concept has been around a long time, we are more aware of confirmation bias today. It leads us to listen to news outlets and Internet sources that confirm what we believe already rather than being challenged to new ways of thinking by reading or listening to other sources of information. It can cause us to discount, reject, or reinterpret information to fit our preconceptions.

Finally, **information processing** is the third barrier. Our minds can usually process much faster than a speaker can speak clearly. We may be able to listen, when really trying, at 200 words per minute, but few speakers can articulate that many words clearly; an average rate for normal speech is around 100-120 (Foulke, 1968). That leaves a great deal of time when the mind needs to pull itself back into focus. During those gaps, we might find it more enjoyable to think of lunch, the new person we are dating, or our vacation at the beach.

These are all the possible obstacles to listening, but there might also be reasons that are particular to you, the listener. We often go into listening situations with no purpose; we are just there physically but have no plans for listening. We go in unprepared. We are tired and mentally and physically unready to listen well. We are hungry or fatigued. We do not sit in a comfortable position to listen. We do not bring proper tools to listen, specifically to take notes. So, what do we do?

Intentional Listening

As audience members, barriers prohibit our ability to absorb information that could benefit us.

Your own barrier might be not coming prepared, being quick to prejudge, or allowing gadgets to distract you. Obviously, recognizing the cause of your poor listening is the first step to becoming a better listener. Here are some steps, in summary:

- **Practice the skill**. Believe that good listening and improving your own listening are important. You would not want to be called upon in a meeting at work when you were daydreaming or being distracted by a cell phone. Consider listening to speeches in a prepared manner and practice listening as a skill.
- **Practice reflexive listening**. Since it is so easy to react to a speaker's ideas with confirmation bias, go into listening knowing that you might disagree and that the automatic "turn off" tendency is a possibility. In other words, tell yourself to keep an open mind.
- **Be prepared to listen**. This means putting away mobile devices, having a pen and paper, and situating yourself physically to listen (not slouching or slumping). Have a purpose in listening. There is actual research to indicate that we listen better and learn/retain more when we take notes with a pen and paper then when we type them on a computer or tablet (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014). Situate yourself by making decisions that will aid in your listening.
- **When taking notes, keep yourself mentally engaged by writing questions that arise**. This behavior will fill in the gaps, create an interactive experience with the speaker, and reduce the likelihood that your mind will wander. However, taking notes does not mean "transcribing" the speech or lecture. Whether in class or in a different listening situation, do not (try to) write everything the speaker says down. Instead, start with looking for the over-all purpose and structure, then for pertinent examples of each main point. Repetition by a speaker usually indicates you should write something down.

Conclusion

Audiences are central to a speaker's success. All 3 audience dimensions are key to consider, whether you're speaking or listening.

Use this chapter throughout the public speaking process to create a relevant argument that's engaging to your audience. Work to call them in: to summon them to actively listen to your advocacy.

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2: ARGUMENTS AND INFORMATION

2.1: Selecting and Formulating Arguments
2.2: Researching Arguments
2.3: Crafting Arguments
2.4: Organizing and Outlining

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2.1: Selecting and Formulating Arguments

Learning Objectives

- Define and explore brainstorming for argument selection
- Write a specific purpose statement
- Write effective thesis statements

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 works to funnel you through brainstorming and searching toward writing 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

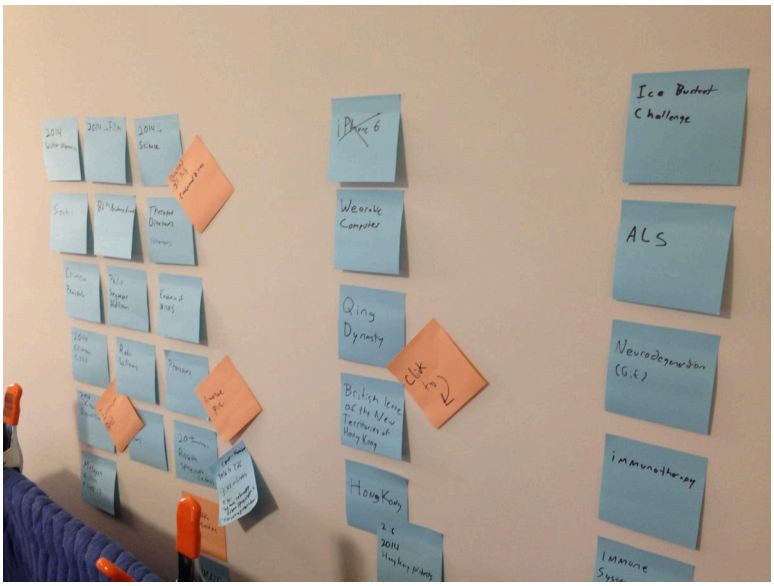
take-away for the audience within that short amount of time. Alternatively, a 20-minute speech provides more flexibility. There may be some ideas or arguments that aren't feasible within certain time constraints.

As you'll remember from Chapter 1, "context" also refers to the broader historical and cultural context. 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.

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,



Brainstorming allows you to identify multiple potential topics and ideas

"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 3.1 for some prompting questions when conducting a persona inventory.

Table 3.1: 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 3.1:

> *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.

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 searching in-depth in Chapter 4), 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 I deas** : 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 3.2 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.

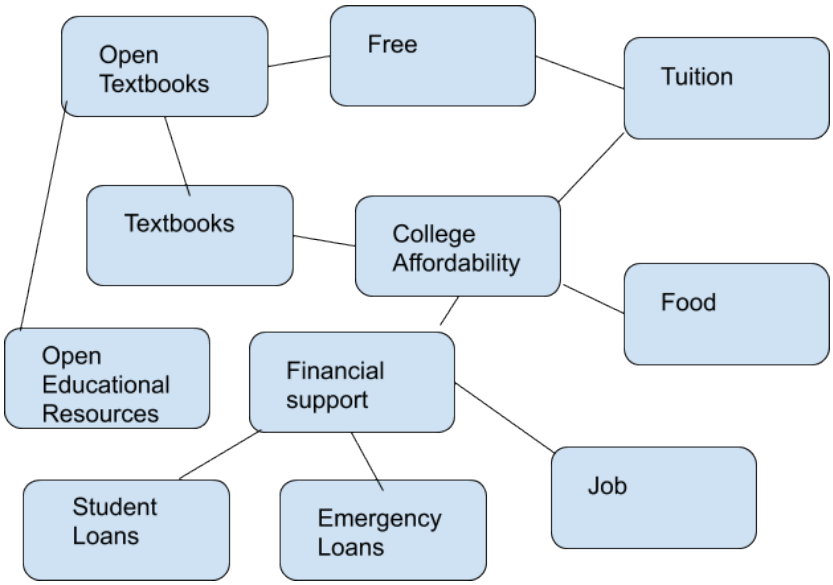


Figure 3.2

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 pencil, 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 3.3.)

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 3.3. *(Stand Up, Speak Out).*

Table 3.3 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' clot h ing.

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) .

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 pol-icy 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.

Case Studies in Specific Purposes and Thesis Statements

Case Study One: Mitchell is taking a Fundamentals of Speech course in his second year of college. As a member of the college's tennis team, he wants to speak on his favorite subject, tennis. He is assigned an informative speech that should be seven minutes long and use four external sources (other than his own experience). He realizes off the bat that he knows a great deal about the subject as far as how to play and be good at it, but not much about the history or origins or the international impact of the sport. He brainstorms a list of topics: 1. Famous tennis players 2. Rules of tennis 3. How to start playing tennis 4. How to buy or choose equipment for tennis 5. Why tennis is a great sport 6. Tennis organizations 7. Where tennis came from 8. Dealing with tennis injuries 9. Tennis and the Olympics 10. Famous tennis tournaments—grand slam events

However, he also wants to be sure that his audience is not bored or confused. His instructor gives him a chance to get in a small group and have four of his classmates give him some ideas about the topics. He finds out no one in his group has ever played tennis but they do have questions. He knows that everyone in his class is 18-24 years old, single, no children, enrolled in college, and all have part-time jobs.

Critique Mitch's brainstorm topics based on what you know. What should he do? Can you come up with a good starting specific purpose?

Case Study Two: Bonita is required to give a 5- to 6-minute presentation as part of a job interview. The interview is for a position as public relations and social media director of a nonprofit organization that focuses on nutrition in a five-county region near her home. There will be five people in her audience: the president of the organization, two board members, the office manager (who is also the Human Resources director), and a volunteer. She has never met these people. Bonita has a college degree in public relations, so she knows her subject. She does as much research on the organization as she can and finds out about their use of social media and the Internet for publicity, marketing, and public relations. It does have a Facebook page but is not utilizing it well. It does not have any other social media accounts.

What would you suggest for Bonita? Here are some questions to consider. Should she be persuasive, informative, or inspiring? (General purpose) What should be her specific content area? How can she answer the two questions of the value of her topic to the audience and why would the audience think she is credible?

Conclusion

In this chapter, we discussed best practices for brainstorming topics that funnel to an argument. Argument selection is exciting, and use these tips alongside your other creative information gathering skills. Next up: research!

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2.2: Researching Arguments

Learning Objectives

- Describe the importance of research
- Explain different information types
- Introduce lateral reading as a research tool and technique
- Describe types of plagiarism and explain best practices in citation

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.

A Research Case Study: Throughout this chapter, we'll use our "college textbook affordability" example from Chapter 3 to walk through the research life-cycle.

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

Because you've done exploratory research (as discussed in Chapter 3), you will likely have basic, foundational information about your argument. With that 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. Remember the college textbook affordability example from Chapter 3? To refresh, the specific purpose is: "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 (2010). 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.

In addition, be cognizant of *who* produces information and who that information is produced for. Table 4.1 simplistically illustrates the producer and audience of our short list of information types.

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
	Table 4.1		

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 4.2 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.

Information Type	**Open Access**	**ClosedAccess**
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
	Table 4.2	

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.

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 (Wineburg, McGrew, 2017). 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 from Chapter 3 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.

Lateral reading is a great tool to verify information and learn more without getting too bogged down. However, your research

doesn't stop there. As you begin compiling information source types around your argument, verify the credibility and make sure you're taking notes.

Throwback: What to Click! Circle back to Chapter 3, where we discussed "what to click." To dig deep, click: Evidence, big ideas, people, and jargon.

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.

Take Notes

Remember: this is a lot of stuff to keep track off. We suggest jotting down notes as you go to keep everything straight. Your notes could be a pad of paper next to your laptop or a digital notepad – 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 below.

Plagiarism

While issues of plagiarism are mostly present in written communication, the practice can also occur in oral communication and in communication studies courses. It can occur when speakers misattribute or fail to cite a source during a speech, or when they are preparing outlines or notecards to deliver their speeches and fail to cite sources.

According to the National Communication Association (NCA), "ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others" and truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, and reason as essential to the integrity of communication ("Credo for Ethical Communication," 2017). This would imply that through oral communication, there is an expectation that you will credit others with their original thoughts and ideas through citation. One important way that we speak ethically is to use material from others correctly. Occasionally we hear in the news media about a politician or leader who uses the words of other speakers without attribution or of scholars who use pages out of another scholar's work without consent or citation.

But, why does it matter if a speaker or writer commits plagiarism? Why and how do we judge a speaker as ethical? Why, for example, do we value originality and correct citation of sources in public life as well as the academic world, especially in the United States? These are not new questions, and some of the answers lie in age-old philosophies of communication.

Although there are many ways that you could undermine your ethical stance before an audience, the one that stands out and is committed most commonly in academic contexts is plagiarism. A dictionary definition of plagiarism would be "the act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person" (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Plagiarism is often thought of as "copying another's work or borrowing someone else's original ideas" ("What is Plagiarism?", 2014). Plagiarism also includes:

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

Plagiarism exists outside of the classroom and is a temptation in business, creative endeavors, and politics. However, in the classroom, your instructor will probably take the most immediate action if he or she discovers your plagiarism either from personal experience or through using plagiarism detection (or what is also called "originality checking") software.

In the business or professional world, plagiarism is never tolerated because using original work without permission (which usually includes paying fees to the author or artist) can end in serious legal action. So, you should always work to correctly provide credit for source information that you're using.

Types of Plagiarism

There are many instances of speakers or authors presenting work they claim to be original and their own when it is not. Plagiarism is often done accidentally due to inexperience. To avoid this mistake, let's work through two types of plagiarism: stealing and sneaking. Sometimes these types of plagiarism are intentional, and sometimes they occur unintentionally (you may not know you are plagiarizing). However, as everyone knows, "Ignorance of the law is not an excuse for breaking it."

Stealing

No one wants to be the victim of theft; if it has ever happened to you, you know how awful it feels. When someone takes an essay, research paper, speech, or outline completely from another source, whether it is a classmate who submitted it for another instructor, from some sort of online essay writing service, or from elsewhere, this is an act of theft. The wrongness of the act is compounded when someone submits that work in its entirely and labels it as their own.

Most colleges and universities have a policy that penalizes or forbids "self-plagiarism." This means that you can't use a paper or outline that you presented in another class a second time. You may think, "How can this be plagiarism if the source is in my works cited page?" The main reason is that by submitting it to your instructor, you are still claiming it is original, first-time work for the assignment in that particular class. Your instructor may not mind if you use some of the same sources from the first time it was submitted, but he or she expects you to follow the instructions for the assignment and prepare an original assignment. In a sense, this situation is also a case of unfairness, since the other students do not have the advantage of having written the paper or outline already.

Sneaking

Instead of taking work as a whole from another source, an individual might copy two out of every three sentences and mix them up so they don't appear in the same order as in the original work. Perhaps the individual will add a fresh introduction, a personal example or two, and an original conclusion. This kind of plagiarism is easy today due to the Internet and the word processing functions of cutting and pasting. It also most often occurs when someone has waited too long to start a project and it seems easier to cut and paste portions of text than it is to read, understand, and synthesize information into their own words.

You might not view this as stealing, thinking, "I did some research. I looked some stuff up and added some of my own work." Unfortunately, this is still plagiarism because no source was credited, and the individual "misappropriated" the expression of the ideas as well as the ideas themselves.

Avoiding Plagiarism

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit to the words, research, or insights of others. When you're integrating supporting research or using a key idea or theory, let the audience know! As you add research into your outline, you can either:

- Use direct quotes: this means that you're including information from a source verbatim.
- Paraphrase: express the source's idea but not verbatim.
- Summarize: explain the main ideas or arguments from the source's findings.

Citing others will bolster your credibility because it demonstrates that you have in-depth knowledge about the topic.

In English classes, you've likely used style guides (like MLA or APA) to ethically cite research in an essay. Continue this practice. Regardless of how you're integrating that research – verbatim or paraphrasing—the source reference should appear both in the writing and through an oral citation.

Key Takeaway

Using Oral Citations: research must be orally cited in a speech to note where you're using ideas, concepts, or findings from someone else's work. Rehearse your oral citations and be clear about why that source is credible for your topic.

Conclusion

Having a strong research foundation will give your speech interest and credibility. This chapter has shown you how to access information but also how to find reliable information and evaluate it.

This process may seem exhausting at first, but you likely already are doing this in your everyday life. We simply are asking you to be a bit more aware of and practice lateral reading. Doing so will help you better understand the context and judge the veracity of an author's argument and their evidence. It will also likely give you plenty of new evidence to inform your own argument.

Attribution:

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2.3: Crafting Arguments

Learning Objectives

- Define what an argument is
- Introduce ethos, pathos, and logos
- Identify the argument structure of claim, evidence, and warrant
- Explore effective language

You may be wondering, "What exactly is an argument? Haven't I already decided on my main argument and topic?"

An **argument** is a series of statements in support of a claim, assertion, or proposition. So far, we've discussed thesis statements as the main argumentative through-line for a speech—it's what you want to inform, persuade, or entertain the audience about.

Your thesis statement, however, is just one component of an argument, i.e. "here's what I want to inform you about / persuade you to consider." It is the *main* claim of your speech. Your task is to prove the reliability of that claim (with evidence) and demonstrate, through the body of the speech, how or why that information should matter to the audience. In this chapter, we will fill in the other structural components of an argument to make sure that your thesis statement has adequate support and proof. We'll also outline the importance of language and tips to guarantee that your language increases the effective presentation of your argument.

An Overview of Arguments

It may be tempting to view arguments as only relevant to persuasion or persuasive speeches. After all, we commonly think of arguments as occurring between different perspectives or viewpoints with the goal of changing someone's mind. Arguments are important when persuading (and we will re-visit persuasive arguments in Chapter 13), but you should have clear evidence and explanations for any type of information sharing.

All speech types require proof to demonstrate the reliability of their claims. Remember, when you speak, you are being an advocate and selecting information that you find relevant to your audience, so arguments are necessary to, at a bare minimum, build in details about the topic's importance.

With speeches that primarily inform, a sound argument demonstrates the relevance and significance of the topic for your audience. In other words, "this is important information because..." or "here's why you should care about this." If you are giving a ceremonial speech, you should provide examples of your insights. In a speech of introduction, for example, you may claim that the speaker has expertise, but you should also provide evidence of their previous accomplishments and demonstrate why those accomplishments are significant.

For each speech type, a well-crafted speech will have multiple arguments throughout. Yes, your thesis statement is central to speech, and your content should be crafted around that idea – you will use your entire speech to prove the reliability of that statement. You will also have internal arguments, i.e. your speech's main points or the "meat" of your speech.

All speech types require arguments, and all arguments use the rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos to elicit a particular feeling or response from your audience.

Ethos, or establishing your credibility as a speaker, is necessary for any speech. If you're informing the audience about a key topic, they need to know that you're a trustworthy and reliable speaker. A key way to prove that credibility is through crafting arguments that are equally credible. Using reliable and well-tested evidence is one way to establish ethos.

Using reason or logic, otherwise known as **logos**, is also a key rhetorical appeal. By using logos, you can select logical evidence that is well-reasoned, particularly when you're informing or persuading. We'll talk more about logic and fallacies (to avoid) in Chapter 13.

Pathos, or emotional appeals, allows you to embed evidence or explanations that pull on your audience's heartstrings or other feelings and values. Pathos is common in ceremonial speeches, particularly speeches that eulogize or celebrate a special occasion.

All three rhetorical appeals are important mechanisms to motivate your audience to listen or act. All three should be done ethically (see Chapter 1) and with the speech context and audience in mind.

Regardless of which rhetorical proof you use, your arguments should be well-researched and well-structured. Below, we explore the structure of an argument in more detail.

The Structure : Claim, Evidence, Warrant

Arguments have the following basic structure (see Figure 5.1):

- 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.

The Toulmin Model

British Philosopher, Stephen Toulmin, created the "Toulmin Model" – a model that describes the structure of an argument or method of reasoning. Claim, evidence, and warrant are, if done well, necessary to create a good argument (O'Connor, 1958).

Figure 5.1

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:

- 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!).

Using "claim, evidence, and warrant" can assist you in verifying that all parts of the argumentative structure are present. Below, we dive deeper into each category.

Claims

A **claim** is a declarative statement or assertion—it is something that you want your audience to accept or know. Like we've mentioned, your thesis statement is a key claim in your speech because it's the main argument that you're asking the audience to consider.

Different claims serve different purposes. Depending on the purpose of the argument, claims can be factual, opinionated, or informative. Some claims, for example, may be overtly persuading the audience to change their mind about a controversial issue, i.e. "you should support this local policy initiative."

Looking Ahead: We will dive deeper into claims that explicitly persuade in Chapter 13.

Alternatively, a claim may develop the significance of a topic (i.e. "this is why you should care about this information") or highlight a key informative component about a person, place, or thing ("Hillary Clinton had an intriguing upbringing"). You might, for example, write a speech that informs the audience about college textbook affordability. Your working thesis might read, "Universities are developing textbook affordability initiatives." Your next step would be to develop main points and locate evidence that supports your claim.

It's important to develop confidence around writing and identifying your claims. Identifying your main ideas will allow you to then identify evidence in support of those declarative statements. If you aren't confident about what claims you're making, it will be difficult to identify the evidence in support of that idea, and your argument won't be structurally complete. Remember that your thesis statement your main claim, but you likely have claims throughout your speech (like your main points).

Evidence

Evidence is the proof or support for your claim. It answers the question, "how do I know this is true?" 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.

With these insights in mind, we will introduce you to five evidence types**:** examples, narratives, facts, statistics, and testimony. Each provides a different type of support, and it's suggested that you integrate a variety of different evidence types. Understanding the different types of evidence will assist as you work to structure arguments and select support that best fits the goal of your speech.

Examples

Examples are specific instances that illuminate a concept. They are designed to give audiences a reference point. An example must be quickly understandable—something the audience can pull out of their memory or experience quickly.

Evidence by example would look like this:

> *Claim:* Textbook affordability initiatives are assisting universities in implementing reputable, affordable textbooks.
>
> *Evidence*: Ohio has implemented a textbook affordability initiative, the Open Ed Collaborative, to alleviate the financial strain for students (Jaggers, Rivera, Akani, 2019).

Ohio's affordability initiative functions as evidence by example. This example assists in demonstrating that such initiatives have been successfully implemented. Without providing an example, your audience may be skeptical about the feasibility of your claim.

Examples can be drawn directly from experience, i.e. this is a real example, or an example can be hypothetical where audiences are asked to consider potential scenarios.

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 first hand." 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.

Facts

Facts are observations, verified by multiple credible sources, that are true or false. The National Center for Science Education (2008) defines fact as:

> *an observation that has been repeatedly confirmed an . . . is accepted as 'true.' Truth in science, however, is never final and what is accepted as a fact today may be modified or even discarded tomorrow.*

"The sun is a star" is an example of a fact. It's been observed and verified based on current scientific understanding and categorization; however, future technology may update or disprove that fact.

In our modern information age, we recommend "fact-checking a fact" because misinformation can be presented as truth. This means verifying all facts through credible research (check back to Chapter 4 on research). Avoid taking factual information for granted and make sure that the evidence comes from reputable sources that are up-to-date.

Statistics

Statistics are the collection, analysis, comparison, and interpretation of numerical 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.

You may be wondering, "What does this actually *mean*?" (excuse our statistical humor). We often know a statistic when we find one, but it can be tricky to understand how a statistic was derived.

Averages and percentages are two common deployments of statistical evidence.

An "**average**" can be statistically misleading, but it often refers to the mean of a data set. 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.

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.

Be aware of three major statistical issues: small samples, unrepresentative samples, and correlation as causation. In a small sample, an argument is being made from too few examples. In 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. Finally, it's common to conflate correlation as causation. In statistics, a correlation refers to the relationship between two variables while causation means that one variable resulted from the other. Be careful not to assume that a correlation means that something has caused the second.

A few other statistical tips:

- 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.
- In regard to sources, depend on the reliable ones. Use Chapter 4 as a guide to criticizing and evaluating credible sources.
- 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.
- 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."

Testimony

Testimony is the words of others. As evidence, testimony can be valuable to gain insight into an expert or a peer's opinion, experience, or expertise about a topic. Testimony can provide an audience with a relevant perspective that the speaker isn't able to provide. We'll discuss two types of testimony: expert and non-expert.

Expert Testimony

What is an expert? An expert is someone with recognized credentials, knowledge, education, and/or experience in a subject. To quote an expert on expertise, "To be an expert, someone needs to have considerable knowledge on a topic or considerable skill in accomplishing something" (Weinstein, 1993).

A campus bookstore manager could provide necessary testimony on the changing affordability of textbooks over time, for example. As someone working with instructors, students, and publishers, the manager would likely have an insight and a perspective that would be difficult to capture otherwise. They would provide unique and credible evidence.

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 . . ."

Expert testimony is one of your strongest supporting materials to prove your arguments. When integrating their testimony as evidence, make sure their testimony clearly supports your claim (rather than an interesting idea on the topic that is tangential to your assertions).

Non-Expert/Peer Testimony

Any quotation from a friend, family member, or classmate about an incident or topic would be peer testimony. It is useful in helping the audience understand a topic from a personal point of view. For example, you may draw on testimony from a campus student who was unable to afford their campus textbooks. While they may lack formalized expertise in textbook affordability, their testimony might demonstrate how the high cost limited their engagement with the class. Their perspective and insight would be valuable for an audience to hear.

Warrants

The third component of any argument is the warrant. **Warrants** connect the evidence and the claim. They often answer the question, "what does this mean?" Warrants are an important component of a complete argument because they:

- Highlight the significance of the evidence;
- Detail how the evidence supports the claims;
- Outline the relevance of the claim and evidence to the audience.

For 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.

We know what you're thinking: "Really? Do I *always* need an explicit warrant?"

It's true that some warrants are **inferred**, meaning that we often recognize the underlying warrant without it being explicitly stated. For example, I might say, "The baking time for my cookies was too hot. The cookies burned." In this statement, I'm claiming that the temperature is too hot and using burnt cookies as the evidence. We could reasonably infer the warrant, i.e. "burnt cookies are a sign that they were in the oven for too long."

Inferred warrants are common in everyday arguments and conversations; however, in a formal speech, having a clear warrant will increase the clarity of your argument. If you decide that no explicit warrant is needed, it's still necessary to ask, "what does this argument mean for my thesis? What does it mean for my audience?" Your goal is to keep as many audience members listening as possible, and warrants allow you to think critically about the information that you're presenting to that audience.

When writing warrants, keep the following insights in mind:

- Avoid exaggerating your evidence, and make sure your warrant honors what the evidence is capable of supporting;
- Center your thesis statement. Remember that your thesis statement, as your main argument, should be the primary focus when you're explaining and warranting your evidence.
- A good warrant should be crafted with your content and context in mind. As you work on warrants, ask, "why is this claim/evidence important here? For this argument? Now? For this audience?"
- Say it with us: ethos, pathos, and logos! Warrants can help clarify the goal of your argument. What appeal are you using? Can the warrant amplify that appeal?

Now that you have a better understanding of each component of an argument, let's conclude this section with a few complete examples.

> *Claim*: The Iowa Wildcats will win the championship.
> *Evidence:* In 2019, the National Sporting Association found that the Wildcats had the most consistent and well-rounded coaching staff. Referees of the game agreed, and also praised the players ability for high scoring.

> *Warrant:* Good coaching and high scoring are probable indicators of past champions and, given this year's findings, the Wildcat's are on mark to win it all.

Here's an example with a more general approach to track the potential avenues for evidence:

> *Claim:* Sally Smith will win the presidential election.
> *Evidence:* [select evidence that highlights their probable win, including: they've won the most primaries; they won the Iowa caucus; they're doing well in swing states; they have raised all the money; they have the most organized campaign."
> *Warrant:* [based on your evidence select, you can warrant why that evidence supports a presidential win].

Using Language Effectively

Claim, evidence, and warrant are useful categories when constructing or identifying a well-reasoned argument. However, a speech is much more than this simple structure over and over (how boring, huh?).

When we craft arguments, it's tempting to view our audience as logic-seekers who rely solely on rationality, but that's not true. Instead, Walter Fisher (1984) argues that humans are storytellers, and we make sense of the world through good stories. A good speech integrates argumentative components while telling a compelling story about your argument to the audience. A key piece of that story is how you craft the language—language aids in telling an effective story.

We'll talk more about language in Chapter 7 (verbal delivery), but there are a few key categories to keep in mind as you construct your argument and story.

Language: What Do We Mean?

Language is any formal system of gestures, signs, sounds, and symbols used or conceived as a means of communicating thought, either through written, enacted, or spoken means. Linguists believe there are far more than 6,900 languages and distinct dialects spoken in the world today (Anderson, 2012). Despite being a formal system, language results in different interpretations and meanings for different audiences.

It is helpful for public speakers to keep this mind, especially regarding denotative and connotative meaning. Wrench, Goding, Johnson, and Attias (2011) use this example to explain the difference:

> *When we hear or use the word "blue," we may be referring to a portion of the visual spectrum dominated by energy with a wave-length 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. (p. 407)*

Denotative meaning is the specific meaning associated with a word. We sometimes refer to denotative meanings as dictionary definitions. The scientific definitions provided above for the word "blue" are examples of definitions that might be found in a dictionary. **Connotative meaning** is the idea suggested by or associated with a word at a cultural or personal level. 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)
- States that lean toward the Democratic Party in their voting
- A slang expression for obscenity (blue comedy)

Given these differences, the language you select may have different interpretations and lead to different perspectives. As a speechwriter (and communicator), being aware of different interpretations can allow you select language that is the most effective for your speaking context and audience.

Using Language to Craft Your Argument

Have you ever called someone a “wordsmith?” If so, you’re likely complimenting their masterful application of language. Language is not just something we use; it is part of who we are and how we think. As such, language can assist in clarifying your content and creating an effective message.

Achieve Clarity

Clear language is powerful language. If you are not clear, specific, precise, detailed, and sensory with your language, you won’t have to worry about being emotional or persuasive, because you won’t be understood. The goal of clarity is to reduce abstraction; clarity will allow your audience to more effectively track your argument and insight, especially because they only have one chance to listen.

Concreteness aids clarity. We usually think of concreteness as the opposite of abstraction. Language that evokes many different visual images in the minds of your audience is abstract language. Unfortunately, when abstract language is used, the images evoked might not be the ones you really want to evoke. Instead, work to be concrete, detailed, and specific. “Pity,” for example, is a bit abstract. How might you describe pity by using more concrete words?

Pro Tip: Use concrete, specific language that’s reasonable. It’s tempting to show off vocabulary, but if the vocabulary is *too* specific, it won’t translate to your audience.

Clear descriptions or definitions can aid in concreteness and clarity.

To **define** means to set limits on something; defining a word is setting limits on what it means, how the audience should think about the word, and/or how you will use it. We know there are denotative and connotative definitions or meanings for words, which we usually think of as objective and subjective responses to words. You only need to define words that would be unfamiliar to the audience or words that you want to use in a specialized way.

Describing is also helpful in clarifying abstraction. The key to description is to think in terms of the five senses: sight (visual: how does the thing look in terms of color, size, shape); hearing (auditory: volume, musical qualities); taste (gustatory: sweet, bitter, salty, sour, gritty, smooth, chewy); smell (olfactory: sweet, rancid, fragrant, aromatic, musky); and feel (tactile: rough, silky, nubby, scratchy).

If you were, for example, talking about your dog, concrete and detailed language could assist in “bring your dog to life,” so to speak, in the moment.

Image 5.2

- *Boring and abstract:* My dog is pretty great. He is well behaved, cute, and is friendly to all of our neighbors. I get a lot of

compliments about him, and I really enjoy hanging out with him outside in the summer.
- *Concrete and descriptive:* Buckley, my golden-brown Sharpei mix, is a one-of-a-kind hound. Through positive treat reinforcement, he learned to sit, shake, and lay down within one month. He will also give kisses with his large and wrinkly snout. He greats passing neighbors with a smile and enjoys Midwest sunbathing on our back deck in the 70-degree heat.

Doesn't the second description do Image 5.2 more justice? Being concrete and descriptive paints a picture for the audience and can increase your warrant's efficacy. Being descriptive, however, doesn't mean adding more words. In fact, you should aim to "reduce language clutter." Your descriptions should still be purposeful and important.

Be Effective

Language achieves effectiveness by communicating the right message to the audience. Clarity contributes to effectiveness, but effectiveness also includes using familiar and interesting language.

Familiar language is language that your audience is accustomed to hearing and experiencing. Different communities and audience use language differently. If you are part of an organization, team, or volunteer group, there may be language that is specific and commonly used in those circles. We call that language **jargon,** or specific, technical language that is used in a given community. If you were speaking to that community, drawing on those references would be appropriate because they would be familiar to that audience. For other audiences, drawing on jargon would be ineffective and either fail to communicate an idea to the audience or implicitly community that you haven't translated your message well (reducing your ethos).

In addition to using familiar language, draw on language that's accurate and interesting. This is difficult, we'll admit it! But in a speech, your words are a key component of keeping the audience motivated to listen, so interesting language can peak and maintain audience interest.

Active language is interesting language. **Active voice**, when the subject in a sentence performs the action, can assist in having active and engaging word choices. An active sentence would read, "humans caused climate change" as opposed to a passive approach of, "climate change was caused by humans." Place subjects at the forefront. A helpful resource on active voice can be found here.

You must, however, be reflexive in the language process.

Practicing Reflexivity

Language reflects our beliefs, attitudes, and values – words are the mechanism we use to communicate our ideas or insights. As we learned in Chapter 1, communication both creates and is created by culture. When we select language, we are also representing and creating ideas and cultures – language has a lot of power.

To that end, language should be a means of inclusion and identification, rather than exclusion.

You might be thinking, "Well I am *always* inclusive in my language," or "I'd never *intentionally* use language that's not inclusive." We understand, but intention is less important than effect.

Consider the term "millennial"— a categorization that refers to a particular age group. It can be useful to categorize different generations, particularly from a historical and contemporary perspective. However, people often argue that "millennials are the laziest generation" or "millennials don't know hard work!" In these examples, the *intention* may be descriptive, but they are selecting language that perpetuates unfair and biased assumptions about millions of people. The language is disempowering (and the evidence, when present, is weak).

Throwback: Think back to our Chapter 2 discussion on stereotypes. As you know, stereotypes are generalizations based on the false assumption that certain characterizations are shared by entire groups. Reflect on your warrants, in particular, to make sure you're not using language that generalizes and supports disempowering stereotypes.

Language assists us in categorizing or understanding different cultures, ideas, or people; we rely on language to sort information and differentiate ourselves. In turn, language influences our perceptions, even in unconscious and biased ways.

The key is to practice reflexivity about language choices. Language isn't perfect, so thinking reflexively about language will take time and practice.

For example, if you were crafting a hypothetical example about an experience in health care, you might open with a hypothetical example: “Imagine sitting for hours in the waiting room with no relief. Fidgeting and in pain, you feel hopeless and forgotten within the system. Finally, you’re greeted by the doctor and he escorts you to a procedure room.” It’s a great story and there is vivid and clear language. But are there any changes that you’d make to the language used?

Remember that this is a hypothetical example. Using reflexive thinking, we might question the use of “he” to describe the doctor. Are there doctors that are a “he”? Certainly. Are all doctors a “he”? Certainly not. It’s important to question how “he” gets generalized to stand-in for doctors or how we may assume that all credible doctors are men.

Practicing reflexivity means questioning the assumptions present in our language choices (like police*men* rather than police officers). Continue to be conscious of what language you draw on to describe certain people, places, or ideas. If you aren’t sure what language choices are best to describe a group, ask; listen; and don’t assume.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we discussed crafting complete, well-reasoned arguments. Claim, evidence, and warrant are helpful structural components when crafting arguments. Use Chapter 4 to aid in research that will enable you to locate the best evidence for each claim within your speech.

Remember, too, that language plays a central role in telling a compelling story. Up next: organizing and outlining.

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2.4: Organizing and Outlining

Learning Objectives

- Explain the process of grouping information
- Introduce organizational patterns
- Describe outlining best practices
- Identify strategies for effective introduction and conclusions

Selecting and constructing an advocacy can be tough. But as we've discussed, a well-reasoned, researched, and constructed argument is key to effectively crafting and conveying information. The process, however, doesn't stop there. The next step is determining how to organize and outline that information so that the audience can follow along.

Organizing information and reflecting on the best way to communicate an idea isn't unique to a public speech; we do it all the time in private. Consider the following scenario:

Two friends – Anne and Stevie – have been dealing with interpersonal conflict. They can't get along. Stevie decides that it's time to sit down and tellAnnehow they're feeling, but first, she jotssome notes. "Where to start?" shethinks, and triesto consider how she wantsto breach the topic. "From the first time I was upset?" "Should I talk generally about the main 2 issues that keep botheringme?" "How do I start?"

Stevie is trying to process how to organize the information that she'll present to Anne – the main audience member. She's also processing the best way to start – or to introduce – that information to her friend, and outlining key ideas that she wants to remember.

The same is true for preparing arguments in a speech. Having your information in a well-organized manner can make or break audience understanding of your content. In this chapter, we discuss ways to effectively categorize your information that will a) support your thesis statement, and b) increase audience comprehension of that information. To accomplish these tasks, we will introduce different organizational patterns, tips for outlining, and strategies for crafting your introduction and conclusion. Before you can select an organizational pattern, you should first work to group your information.

Grouping

Have you ever organized a garage sale? The first step, before putting up signs or pricing items, is to go through your closets and garage and create "piles" of items that you want to sell: children's items, tools, kitchen items, furniture, trash, etc. Researchers have found that "chunking" information, that is, the way it is grouped, is vital to audience understanding, learning, and retention of information (Beighly, 1954; Bodeia, Powers, & Fitch-Hauser, 2006; Daniels & Whitman, 1981).

As we listen, we have limits as to how many categories of information we can keep in mind. In public speaking, use approximately 3 categories to group your information. 2-3 main points – or groups – is safe territory, and you should avoiding having more than 5 main points for an audience to track.

"How does this work in practice?" you may be asking. "How do I group information to find my categories?"

Use your research and your brainstorming tactics! As you research, look at the articles and websites you read and say, "That information relates to what I read over here" and, "That statistic fits under the idea of . . ." You are looking for similarities and patterns. Think back to the yard sle example – you would group according to customer interest and the purpose of each item. As you learn more about your topic and expand your expertise, the patterns and groups will become clearer.

Once you locate a pattern, that information can likely be grouped into your speech's main points. Return to your thesis statement and determine what groups are more suitable to support your specific purpose. If you continue to find more groups, you may want to limit and narrow your topic down further.

Finally, because your audience will understand you better and perceive you as organized, you will gain more credibility as a speaker if you are organized, assuming you also have credible information and acceptable delivery (Slagell, 2013; Sharp & McClung, 1966).

Pro-Tip: Groups Help Your Writing! Yun, Costantini, and Billingsley (2012) found a side benefit to learning to be an organized public speaker: your writing skills will improve, specifically your organization and sentence structure. Working on your organization will increase your critical thinking skills all around.

After you group, the next step is determining what type of organizational pattern works best.

Patterns of Organization

At this point, you should see how much your audience needs organized ideas. You also know that as you do research, you will group together similar pieces of information from different sources. As you group your research information, you will want to make sure that your grouped content is adhering to your specific purpose statement.

Interestingly, there are some standard ways of organizing these categories, which are called "**patterns of organization.**" Our list isn't exhaustive, but we provide insight on 5 organizational patterns with a few embedded examples. In each example, only the three to five main sections or "points" (Roman numerals) are given, without the other essential parts of the outline. But don't worry—we'll cover outlines later in this chapter.

Chronological

A **chronological organizational pattern** groups information based on time order or in a set chronology—first this occurred, then this, then this, then that. The use of a chronological pattern is appropriate when the argument needs to be traced linearly or for speeches that instructor or demonstrate. For a speech about creating a meaningful and memorable protest poster, providing the instructions in order will allow audience members to actively deploy that information after the speech.

One of the problems with chronological speeches is the tendency to create a long list of activities rather than categorizing the content. It is important to chunk the information into three to five groups so that the audience has a framework. For example, in a speech about the history of the Civil Rights Movement, your "grouping" or "chunking" might be:

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

It would be easy in the case of the Civil Rights Movement to list the many events that happened over decades, but that could be overwhelming for the audience. In this grouping of events, the audience is focused on the three events that pushed it forward.

Spatial

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

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

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

In this example, the content is moving from northern to southern Italy, as the word "regional" would indicate. If you were to actually study Italian cooking in depth, sources will say there are twenty regions, but "covering" twenty regions in a speech is not practical, so research can help you limit and determine which regions would be more appropriate.

For a more localized application, consider this example:

Specific Purpose: To explain to my classmates the geographic layout of the Midwest Science March.

- The main vein of the protest took place on the Kansas City Plaza.
- Vendor booths promoting educational opportunities about science were grouped at Washington Square.
- Counter-protesting was predominantly south of the river.

A spatial organizational pattern can assist audiences in visualizing your main points by grouping based on a spatial or geographic layout.

Topical/Categorical

The **topical organizational pattern** groups information into key categories. Many subjects will have main points that naturally divide into "types of," "kinds of," "sorts of," or "categories of." Other subjects naturally divide into "parts of the whole." For example:

Specific purpose: To support the proposition that capital punishment should be abolished in the United States.

I.Capital punishment does not save money for the justice system.

II.Capital punishment does not deter crime in the United States historically.

III.Capital punishment has resulted in many unjust executions.

Another principle of organization to think about when using topical organization is "climax" organization. That means putting your strongest argument or most important point last when applicable. In the example above, "unjust executions" is a bigger reason to end a practice than the cost, since an unjust execution means the loss of an innocent life and a violation of our principles. If you believe Main Point III is the strongest argument of the three, putting it last builds up to a climax.

When using a topical pattern, you want to keep your categories simple, clear, and distinct by reducing repetition or blurriness between the groupings.

Cause/Effect Pattern

In a **cause/effect pattern,** the main points of a topic start with the cause, followed by the effect. If the specific purpose mentions words such as "causes," "origins," "roots of," "foundations," "basis," "grounds," or "source," it is a causal order; if it mentions words such as "effects," "results," "outcomes," "consequences," or "products," it is an effect order. If it mentions both, it would be cause/effect order. This example shows a cause/effect pattern:

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

I.Schizophrenia has genetic, social, and environmental causes.

II.Schizophrenia has educational, relational, and medical effects.

This pattern can be helpful for an audience to understand how and/or why something has occurred. If your topic looks at a key problem, tracing how that problem originated may be worthwhile, even necessary, for an audience to track the outcomes.

Problem-Solution Pattern

The **problem-solution pattern** is closely related to cause/effect, but it also includes advocating for a key solution. This is a common organizational strategy used to persuade because a speaker is often asking the audience to address a problem with a concrete course of action. When you want to persuade someone to act, the first reason is usually that something is wrong!

We use a problem-solution pattern in everyday exchanges. If you and your friends were hungry (a problem), you'd invite them to dinner (the solution). However, if they'd recently eaten you might identify a secondary problem—you miss their company, for example.

Alternatively, let's say that you want school board members to provide more funds for music at the three local high schools in

your county. Ask yourself: What is missing because music or the arts are not funded? What is the problem? How is that a problem something that the school board should intervene to resolve? How does funding those programs resolve the problems that you've identified? For example:

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

- There is a problem with eliminating extracurricular music programs in high schools.
- Students who do not have extracurricular music in their lives have lower SAT scores.
- Schools that do not have extracurricular music programs have more instances of community violence.
- The solution is to provide $200,000 in the budget to sustain extra-curricular music in our high schools.
- $120,000 would go to bands. This would be enough money to hire additional instructors and reserve after-school spaces.
- $80,000 would go to choral programs.

Of course, this is a simple outline and you would need to provide evidence to support the arguments, but it shows how problem-solution works. Psychologically, it makes more sense to use problem-solution rather than solution-problem. The audience will be more motivated to listen if you address needs, deficiencies, or problems in their lives rather than giving them solutions first.

Outlining

After identifying an organizational pattern, an outline will assist you to compile information into that pattern. An **outline** provides a visual structure where you can compile information into a well-organized document. There are two primary types of outlines that we will discuss: preparation outlines and speaking outlines.

Preparation Outlines

Preparation outlines are comprehensive outlines that include all of the information in your speech. These are often full-sentences and include in-text citations and a reference page (if necessary). If someone were to read your outline, there should be enough depth to provide a skeleton of what will be accomplished.

Generally, we recommend starting from this outline format:

Sample Outline Template
I. Introduction a. Attention Getter b. Credibility Statement c. Relevance Statement d. Thesis Statement e. Preview
II. Main body 1. First Main Point a. Evidence b. Warrant 2. Second Main Point a. Evidence b. Warrant 3. Third main Point a. Evidence b. Warrant

III. Conclusion

a. Review of Main Points
b. Restate Thesis
c. Clincher

This is just a start, and each main point may have more than one piece of evidence, for example.

Like we mentioned, an outline is a visual structure, and it can aid you in determining where you need more or less information. For example, if you work on a problem/solution speech, your outline may visually demonstrate that most of your research is located under the "problem" main point, signaling to you that more "solution" research is required. Outlines also assist in reminding speakers to warrant all of their claims.

You should think of the outline as the blueprint for your speech. It is not the speech—that is what comes out of your mouth in front of the audience. The outline helps you prepare and, as such, they are a living document that you can adjust, add, and delete. We recommend beginning to add information to an outline right away. You don't, however, often speak from that outline. Instead, you'll use a speaking outline.

Tips for Effective Outlining
• Use consistent numbering; • Full sentences are your friend! • Use in-text citations for references to your research. • Generally, numbers should be in 2's (if there's a 1 , there should be a 2). • Make sure indentations are consistent and clear. • Follow your organizational pattern. • Revise. Revise. Revise.

Figure 6.1

Speaking Outlines

A speaking outline is a keyword outline used to deliver a speech – often extemporaneous. As we'll discuss in our chapters on delivering an aesthetic experience, the notes that you use to speak can aid or hinder in an effective delivery. A keyword outline – which you'll use to rehearse and deliver – will allow greater embodiment and engagement with the audience. As you practice, you will be able to summarize the full preparation outline down to more usable notes. In those notes, create a set of abbreviated notes for the actual delivery. The more materials you take up with you to speak, the more you will be tempted to look at them rather than have eye contact with the audience, reducing your overall engagement.

Your speaking notes should be in far fewer words than the preparation, arranged in key phrases, and readable for you. Your speaking outline should provide cues to yourself to "slow down," "pause," or "change slide." Our biggest suggestion is to make the notes workable for you.

Finally, always double check that your speaking outline includes your oral citations. An authors name and publication date are difficult to remember, so add all references directly into your notes.

Connective Statements and Internal Organization

At this point, you may be realizing that preparing for public speaking does not always follow a completely linear process. In writing your speech, you might begin outlining with one organizational pattern in mind, only to re-craft the main points into a new pattern after more research has been conducted. These are all OK options.

Wherever your process takes you, however, you will need to make sure that each section of your speech outline is connected –

what we call connective statements. **Connective statements** are broad terms that encompass several types of statements or phrases. They are generally designed to help "connect" parts of your speech to make it easier for audience members to follow. Connectives are tools for helping the audience listen, retain information, and follow your structure.

Connectives perform a number of functions:

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

Connectives can include internal summaries, signposting or internal previews. Each of these terms all help connect the main ideas of your speech for the audience, but they have different emphases and are useful for different types of speeches.

Types of connectives and examples

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

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

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

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

Transitions serve as bridges between seemingly disconnected (but related) material, most commonly between your main points. At a bare minimum your transition is saying, "Now that we have looked at (talked about, etc.) X, let's look at Y."

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

Connectives are an important way to assist the audience in understanding a) where you're going, b) where you are, and c) where you've been. We recommend labeling them directly in your outline to make sure that they're integrated and clear.

Introductions and Conclusions

Now that you have a deeper understanding of organizational patterns and placing your information into an outline, let's discuss introductions and conclusions. We recommend writing these sections after you have a substantial amount of the main body constructed in your outline.

Introductions and conclusions serve to frame the speech and give it a clearly defined beginning and end. They help the audience to see what is to come in the speech, and then let them mentally prepare for the end. In doing this, introductions and conclusions provide a "preview/review" of your speech as a means to reiterate to your audience what you are talking about. Because speeches are auditory and live, you need to make sure that audiences remember what you are saying.

The general rule is that the introduction and conclusion should each be about 10% of your total speech, leaving 80% for the body section. It can be tempting to have longer introductions, but that often leaves less time to introduce key research and warrant your ideas through the main points.

Structuring the Introduction

Many speakers struggle with how to start their speech because they're often worried that their words won't be memorable, attention-capturing, and clever enough to get their audience interested. This is a problem for many of us because the first words you say, in many ways, set the tone for the rest of your speech. There may not be any one "best" way to start a speech, but we can provide some helpful guidelines that will make starting a speech much easier.

Common Errors to Avoid in Introductions
• rambling and meandering; not getting to the point; • starting with a vocalized pause; • saying the specific purpose statement first; • beginning to talk as you approach the platform;. • reading your introduction directly from your notes; • Talking too fast.

With that in mind, there are five basic elements that you will want to incorporate into your introduction and speech outline.
Element 1: Get the Audience's Attention

The first major purpose of an introduction is to gain your audience's attention and make them interested in what you have to say. The first words of a speech should be something that will perk up the audience's ears. Starting a speech with "Hey everybody. I'm going to talk to you today about soccer" has not tried to engage the individuals in the audience who don't care about soccer.

To create interest, the key is selecting an option that's appropriate and relevant to your specific audience. You will also want to choose an attention-getting device appropriate for your speech topic. Ideally, your attention-getting device should have a relevant connection to your speech. Below are a number of possibilities for crafting an attention getter.

Anecdotes and Narratives

An anecdote is a *brief* account or story of an interesting or humorous event. Notice the emphasis here is on the word "brief." An example of an anecdote used in a speech about the pervasiveness of technology might look something like this:

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

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

A personal story is another option here. You may consider starting your speech with a story about yourself that is relevant to your topic. Some of the best speeches are ones that come from personal knowledge and experience. If you are an expert or have firsthand experience related to your topic, sharing this information with the audience is a great way to show that you are credible during your attention getter.

Startling Statement/Statistic/Fact

Another way to start your speech is to surprise your audience with startling information about your topic. Often, startling statements come in the form of statistics and strange facts. The goal of a good startling statistic is that it surprises the audience and gets them engaged in your topic. For example, if you're giving a speech about oil conservation, you could start by saying, "A Boeing 747 airliner holds 57,285 gallons of fuel." You could start a speech on the psychology of dreams by noting, "The average person has over 1,460 dreams a year."

A strange fact, on the other hand, is a statement that does not involve numbers but is equally surprising to most audiences. For example, you could start a speech on the gambling industry by saying, "There are no clocks in any Las Vegas casino."

Although startling statements are fun, it is important to use them ethically. First, make sure that your startling statement is factual. Second, make sure that your startling statement is relevant to your speech and not just thrown in for shock value.

A Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question to which no actual reply is expected. For example, a speaker talking about the history of Mother's Day could start by asking the audience, "Do you remember the last time you told your mom you loved her?" In this case, the speaker does not expect the audience to shout out an answer, but rather to think about the questions as the speech goes on.

Quotation

Another way to capture your listeners' attention is to use the words of another person that relate directly to your topic. Maybe you've found a really great quotation in one of the articles or books you read while researching your speech. If not, you can also use a number of Internet or library sources that compile useful quotations from noted individuals. Quotations are a great way to start a speech, so let's look at an example that could be used during the opening of a commencement address:

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

Element 2: Establish or Enhance Your Credibility

Whether you are informing, persuading, or entertaining an audience, they will expect you to know what you're talking about. The second element of an introduction is to let your audience know that you are a knowledgeable and credible source for this information. To do this, you will need to explain how you know what you know about your topic.

For some people, this will be simple. If you are informing your audience about a topic that you've researched or experienced for years, that makes you a fairly credible source. You probably know what you are talking about. Let the audience know! For example, "I've been serving with Big Brothers Big Sisters for the last two years."

However, you may be speaking on a subject with which you have no history of credibility. If you are just curious about when streetlights were installed at intersections and why they are red, yellow, and green, you can do that. But you will still need to give your audience some sort of reason to trust your knowledge. Since you were required to do research, you are at least more knowledgeable on the subject that anyone else in the class.

Element 3: Establish Relevance through Rapport

The next element of your introduction will be to establish rapport with your audience. Rapport is basically a relationship or connection you make with your audience. In everyday life, we say that two people have a rapport when they get along really well and are good friends. In your introduction, you will want to explain to your audience why you are giving them this information and why it is important or relevant to them. You will be making a connection through this shared information and explaining to them how it will benefit them.

Element 4: State your Thesis

The fourth major function of an introduction after getting the audience's attention 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 should make the topic, purpose, and central idea clear.

When stating your topic in the introduction, be explicit with regard to exactly what your topic is. Spell it out for them if you have to. If an audience is unable to remember all your information, they should at least be able to walk away knowing that the purpose of your presentation was.

Element 5: Preview Your Main Points

Just like previewing your topic, previewing your main points helps your audience know what to expect throughout the course of your speech and prepares them for what you are going to speak on. Your preview of main points should be clear and easy to follow

so that there is no question in your audience's minds what they are. Long, complicated, or verbose main points can get confusing. Be succinct and simple: "Today, in our discussion of Abraham Lincoln's life, we will look at his birth, his role a president, and his assassination." From that there is little question as to what specific aspects of Lincoln's life the speech will cover. However, if you want to be extra sure they get it, you can always enumerate them by using signposts: "In discussing how to make chocolate chip cookies, first we will cover what ingredients you need, second we will talk about how to mix them, and third we will look at baking them."

What these five elements do is prepare your audience for the bulk of the speech (i.e. the body section) by letting them know what they can expect, why they should listen, and why they can trust you as a speaker. Having all five elements starts your speech off on much more solid ground that you would get without having them.

Application: Check out Sheryl Sandberg's speech, "Why we have few too women leaders," and listen to the first few messages. Can you identify and label the parts of her introduction? How did it help you in understanding her message? Was it clear? Did it grab your attention?

Structuring the Conclusion

Similar to the introduction, the conclusion has three specific elements that you will want to incorporate in order to make it as strong as possible.

Common Errors to Avoid in Conclusions
• signal the end multiple times. In other words, no "multiple conclusions" or saying "As I close" more than once; • ramble; if you signal the end, end; • talk as you leave the platform or lectern; • indicate with facial expression or body language that you were not happy with the speech. • conclude with an abrupt "thank you.

Given the nature of these elements and what they do, these should generally be incorporated into your conclusion in the order they are presented below.

Element 1: Get the Audience's Attention

Introductions preview your main points; the conclusion provides a review. One of the biggest differences between written and oral communication is the necessity of repetition in oral communication. Your audience only has one opportunity to catch and remember the points you are trying to get across in your speech, so the review assists in repeating key ideas that support your thesis statement.

Because you are trying to remind the audience of your main points, you want to be sure not to bring up any new material or ideas. For example, if you said, "There are several other issues related to this topic, such as...but I don't have time for them," that would make the audience confused and perhaps wonder why you did not address those in the body section. The hardcore facts and content are in the body.

Element 2: Restate the Thesis

Make sure to re-state your thesis because this is the main argument that you're leaving the audience with. While this may come before or after the review of your main points, it's important because it often directs the audience and reminds them why they're present. Concluding without reiterating your thesis statement requires the audience to remember an idea from the introduction – which can feel like a long time ago.

Element 3: Clincher

The third element of your conclusion is the clincher, or something memorable with which to conclude your speech. The clincher is sometimes referred to as a concluding thought. These are the very last words you will say in your speech, so you need to make

them count.

In many ways the clincher is the inverse of the attention-getter. You want to start the speech off with something strong, and you want to end the speech with something strong. To that end, similar to what we discussed above with attention getters, there are a number of ways you can make your clincher strong and memorable.

Strategies for Effective Concluding Thoughts	
Conclude with a Challenge	A challenge is a call to engage in some kind of activity that requires
Conclude with a Quotation	Select a quotation that's related to your topic
Visualize the Future	Help your audience imagine the future you believe can occur.
Conclude by Inspiration	Use inspiration to stir someone's emotions in a specific manner.
Conclude with a Question	Ask a rhetorical question that forces the audience to ponder an idea.
Refer to the Introduction	Come full circle by referencing an idea, statistic, or insight from the attention getter
Conclude with a Story	Select a brief story aimed at a strong emotional appeal

For the conclusion, make sure your purpose – informative, persuasive, entertaining – is honored.

Conclusion

The organization and outlining of your speech may not be the most interesting part to think about, but without it, great ideas will seem jumbled and confusing to your audience. Even more, good connectives will ensure your audience can follow you and understand the logical connections you are making with your main ideas, introduction, and conclusion.

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3: AESTHETICS AND DELIVERY

3.1: Creating an Aesthetic Experience
3.2: Verbal Delivery
3.3: Nonverbal Delivery
3.4: Presentation Aids
3.5: Rehearsing Your Presentation

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3.1: Creating an Aesthetic Experience

Learning Objectives

- Describe public speaking as an art form
- Define aesthetics
- Introduce strategies to create an aesthetic experience
- Preview chapters in Part 3

In Chapter 1, we asked that you picture your favorite public speaker. Who is it? A favorite teacher? A well-known politician? An artist? Close your eyes and bring that image back to the surface. What's happening? How do you feel? What is captivating about the speaker? What language choices did they make? How did they sustain your attention for so long?

If you're having trouble thinking of one speaker, imagine your ideal public speaking experience. You sit through a presentation feeling interested and intrigued by a unique argument. You hadn't thought about that topic before, and you now feel called in by the speaker to consider their ideas in more detail.

"How did they do that?" you might ask yourself. "How did they make me feel that way?"

Maybe you were persuaded by their evidence. Maybe they were clear and effective in their organization. But what else?

Like we mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, we are inundated with information, including well-researched ideas about our world. These, though, don't always spark our attention or draw us in. Good speakers can, in addition to crafting a well-reasoned argument, create a captivating, aesthetic experience for the audience through their delivery, language, and style. Public speaking is embodied, and audiences make sense of the speaker's ideas through the embodiment of their argument.

It may be difficult to quantify or describe, but good speakers create a felt sense with their audience. Something happens where the audience is captivated by the speaker's delivery of their argument—we call this an **aesthetic experience**. As an audience, you aren't just empty cups getting filled with the speaker's ideas— you are experiencing their argument live, through their embodiment, in a context, and with others. It is an experience, and good speakers make aesthetic choices that leave you with a *felt sense* of their advocacy. They leave you captivated by the argument and energy of their ideas.

In this chapter, we consider how a speaker can enhance arguments by creating a captivating experience for the audience through aesthetic choices. While the remaining chapters in Part 4 will look at specific components of aesthetics, this chapter aims to provide an overview of public speaking as an aesthetic experience.

Let's get started with a description of aesthetics.

Introducing Aesthetics

You may be wondering, "what does *aesthetics* mean?" It may be a word that you've heard to describe something physically beautifully—a piece of art, an outdoor landscape.

A simple Google search defines aesthetics as "artistically valid or beautiful" (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language) or "pleasing in appearance" (Merriam-Webster). We often think of a sunset as being aesthetically beautiful or providing us with an aesthetically pleasing experience. With a vast spectacle of blues, violets, yellows, reds are warmly cast across the skyline, sunsets are a sensory experience with immense beauty. We often like to experience a pleasant sunset.

Philosopher Alexander Baumgarten extended aesthetics to also mean the study of good art or good taste (Caygill, 1982). In other words, what makes something aesthetically pleasing? How can we study those things to re-create those sensations?

Okay, so what does this all mean for public speaking?

It means that aesthetics is not just an experience of beauty, it's the study and enactment of art that leads to sensation, or a felt sense. When you audience a speech and are left with a felt sense, you might ask, "What created that experience?" "What decisions were made that led to that sensation?" Aesthetics allows us to think through the sensations created through art.

You may not view public speaking as an art, but public speaking's history is grounded in viewing speaking— what we say and how we say it—as an art form.

Public Speaking as an Art: The Rhetorical Tradition

In classical rhetoric, **elocution** was the art of delivering speeches, where pronunciation, vocal delivery, and gestures were key to effective public speaking. Elocutionists viewed vocal delivery as important because

Image 7.1

those qualities are what allowed passions and emotions to be communicated (Goldsbury and Russell, 1844). In elocution, *how* you said what you said became just as important as *what* you said. The how was key to artful delivery.

However, elocution was highly formalized (see Figure 7.1) – there were pamphlets of preferred gestures, for example, and strict grammatical expectations. Elocutionists were *too* focused on how something was delivered from a universal, mechanical perspective. The *what* was often lost.

So, "elocution" doesn't fully represent public speaking because, as Chapter 1 discussed, public speaking involves the delivery of a memorable and important message that you're advocated for. Good public speaking involves a balance between the *how* and the *what*.

While the historical practices of elocution have changed, the current practices remind speakers to concentrate on nonverbal communication, the body, and visual rhetoric (Munsell, 2011, p. 17). It reminds us that public speaking is an art – it's aesthetic.

Criticizing Elocution

There have been important criticisms of elocution. As a stylized and formalized method of delivery, best practices were often based on educated and "high class" standards of speaking (Conquergood, 2005). When there is a preferred way of pronunciation, for example, it's important to ask: "What does this standard rely on? Who's being empowered and disempowered in this perspective?"

The classical rhetorical canons of style and delivery also viewed rhetoric as an art. Public speaking is rooted in rhetoric (as Chapter 1 detailed), and rhetorical scholars have argued for public speakers to attend to ***style*** – how you effectively craft and execute your ideas, like word choice— and ***delivery*** – how information is delivered.

Think about your own style and delivery. How do you dress? What are the quarks in your personality? How do you like to represent

your ideas? We all embody our own style, and we often make stylistic (or aesthetic) choices based on who we're speaking to and where we're speaking. We use our style to deliver information that informs and influences others.

In rhetoric, style and delivery are similar—style asks that you consider how to present your information to the specific audience that you're speaking. This includes: being clear with your language so that everyone understands, establishing your ethos as an educated and credible speaker, and using figures of speech to elevate the language. Delivery is the mechanics used to convey a message rather than the words itself. In classical rhetoric, an eloquent speaker was a credible speaker, so delivery was an important part of the public speaking process.

However, similar to elocution, delivery doesn't fully describe the embodiment of a speech or the experience that's created. Think about a pizza delivery person. What's their job? Their job is to deliver the pizza to you, the audience; they are the vessel that provides the pre-packaged deliciousness. For public speaking, delivery can assume a pre-packaged speech (the argument) that you are merely transmitting to the audience. We know from Chapter 1, though, that public speaking is a constitutive process that makes meaning, and your embodiment is part of that meaning, not merely a vessel of delivery.

So, aesthetics extends classical rhetorical insight about public speaking as an art and provides a broader picture by asking, "what sensations do you want the audience to experience?" "How do we get there?"

Applying Aesthetics in Public Speaking

In our current view of public speaking, **aesthetics** combines rhetorical traditions – elocution, style, and delivery—to captivate and evoke a felt experience for and with a live audience.

Aesthetics is interested in the overall experience for the audience, by looking at:

- Verbal delivery: how language paints a picture through vivid language or storytelling, the use of emotions, and the embodied delivery of content through projection, rate, enunciation, and more. (Discussed more in Chapter 8)
- Nonverbal delivery: how body language and nonverbal communication, including facial expressions, gestures, and movement in the space, influences the audience's understanding and perception of your message. (Discussed more in Chapter 9)
- Presentation aids: how presentation aids can enhance the experience by emphasizing, clarifying, or enhancing an idea for the audience. (Discussed more in Chapter 10)
- Space: how the speaking context and space might add or detract from the aesthetic delivery of your content. (Discussed more in Chapter 11)

Aesthetics asks the speaker to consider the entire context, including the space, set-up, audience location – all elements that influence how the audience experiences the speech overall. We'll dive more into this below. Like we mentioned, public speaking is highly embodied, and experiencing information through a person and through their body is highly sensational and artistic.

As a speaker, you will make aesthetic choices—based on verbal delivery, for example— that create an overall experience for the audience.

Creating an Aesthetic Experience

Creating an aesthetic experience means setting the scene and stage for your audience to feel good or bad; to move your audience toward something by motivating them to act or think. Cupchik and Winston (1996) describe an aesthetic experience as a process where an audience's attention is focused while everyday concerns are temporarily forgotten. The goal is to hold your audience's attention; to invite them to focus in. After all, public speaking happens with and for an audience.

Think about a wedding ceremony, for example. Weddings are often aesthetically pleasing – they are beautiful and artistic. If you're part of the wedding, you make decisions that will provide your audience with an aesthetic experience: there are flowers, lights, rehearsed movement, and speaking– all of these components add to how the wedding is received. To guarantee a successful experience that meets your audience's expectations, you focus on the elements that you can control, like where the chairs are, what stories are told in the ceremony, and how long the cocktail hour is.

As a speaker, you also make aesthetic choices around controllable components, like verbal deliver, to captivate and evoke a felt experience for and with your audience.

Pro-Tip: By focusing on what you can control, you can also reduce public speaking anxiety; by being prepared, you will minimize

the probability of nervousness as you speak.

“How do I decide what choices to make?” you might be wondering.

Be appraised of the public speaking context. Different public speaking contexts include norms and expectations that will influence the type of aesthetic experience you can create.

Image 7.2 Commencement Addresses have expected aesthetic norms

If you’re giving a commencement speech, there are speaking norms and contextual constraints – this information will help you determine what’s aesthetically possible and what’s expected (see Image 7.2). Those expectations differ from a policy-focused persuasive speech at a political campaign rally.

Once you’re comfortable with the context, you can ask, “What am I trying to motivate the audience to do?” Sounds, verbal cadence, embodiment of gestures, and presentation aids are all aesthetic choices that can assist you in accomplishing that goal.

The following chapters will help you tease out those different components in more detail. The more conscious you are of your delivery, including verbal and nonverbal components, the more confident you can become about creating your ideal aesthetic experience.

Aesthetics as the Audience

Because aesthetic experiences are created with audiences, you play a role in that experience when you’re in the audience. Yes, a public speech includes a designated speaker. Yes, they are the primary focus and speaker, but an aesthetic experience is not created alone—it is always collective because it requires others and it is contextual. The communication context is being created together.

As an audience member, you are participating in the experience. Remember to be conscious of your nonverbal feedback: how are you participating nonverbally (or verbally, if requested)? How are you influencing the aesthetic experience for other audience members?

One of our authors attended a speech and, despite their best attempts, couldn’t stay focused on the speaker because an audience member had bought a tablet and was playing a game nearby. The game became part of the aesthetic experience and left a negative sensation. Similarly, an an audience, we are used to clapping at modern concerts, but when you’re in the audience to a symphony, clapping between movements is considered rude. As an audience, you can contribute in aesthetically meaningful ways.

Conclusion and What’s Next?

So far, you should have a working vocabulary around aesthetics and creating an aesthetic experience for your audience.

The following chapters in Part 3 are deeper investigations around categories of aesthetics in public speaking. In the following chapters, we will walk through best practices in delivery, beginning with your verbal delivery. While we will discuss best practices (and your instructor will likely set clear delivery standards in their grading rubrics), it's important that you rehearse; rehearse more; watch yourself give a speech – these allow you to adapt and develop your own aesthetic style when giving a public speech.

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3.2: Verbal Delivery

Learning Objectives

- Define verbal delivery
- Understand the benefits of effective vocal delivery
- Explore techniques for evoking senses through language
- Utilize specific techniques to enhance vocal delivery

Humans are communicators. We rely on processes of communication to make sense of our world and we rely on others' communicating with us to create shared meaning. Through symbols, we use and adapt language with one another and our communities.

The same is true for speeches, but what symbols you select and how you portray them—what we'll call **verbal delivery**— are central to your audience and how they experience or comprehend what you say.

For example, consider your favorite podcaster or podcast series. We love crime podcasts! Despite being reliant on vocal delivery only, the presenters' voices paint an aesthetic picture as they walk us through stories around crime, murder, and betrayal. So, how do they do it? What keeps millions of people listening to podcasts and returning to their favorite verbal-only speakers? Is it how they say it? Is it the language they choose? All of these are important parts of effective vocal delivery.

Below, we begin discussing vocal delivery—language choices, projection, vocal enunciation, and more.

Language and Aesthetics

It was 5 p.m. As she looked out the smudged window over the Kansas pasture, the wind quickly died down and the rolling clouds turned a slight gray-green. Without warning, a siren blared through the quiet plains as she pulled her hands up to cover her ears. Gasping for breath, she turned toward the basement and flew down the stairs as the swirling clouds charged quickly toward the farm house.

What's happening in this story? What are you picturing? A treacherous tornado? A devastating storm rumbling onto a small Kansas farm? If so, the language in the story was successful.

Like this example demonstrates, the language that you use can assist audiences in creating a mental picture or image – creating a visualization is a powerful tool as a speaker.

Aesthetics is, certainly, based on how you deliver or embody your speech. But aesthetics also incorporates language choices and storytelling – techniques that craft a meaningful picture and encompass *how* you deliver the information or idea to your audience. In this section, we will extend our conversation from Chapter 5 about language to explore vivid language, implementing rhetorical techniques, and storytelling as an aesthetic tool to create resonance with your audience.

Vivid Language

Vivid language evokes the senses and is language that arouses the sensations of smelling, tasting, seeing, hearing, and feeling. Think of the word "ripe." What is "ripe?" Do ripe fruits feel a certain way? Smell a certain way? Taste a certain way? Ripe is a sensory word. Most words just appeal to one sense, like vision. Think of color. How can you make the word "blue" more sensory? How can you make the word "loud" more sensory? How would you describe the current state of your bedroom or dorm room to leave a sensory impression? How would you describe your favorite meal to leave a sensory impression?

In the opening Kansas storm example above, the author may want the audience to sense danger or a certain intensity around the approaching tornado. To create that audience experience, you must craft language that emphasizes these elements.

When using vivid language, you're trying to bring those sensations to life in a way that can create a vivid experience for your audience. "How can I best represent this idea?" you might ask or "how can I best create a scenario where the audience feels like they're a part of the scene?"

Viivd language can take time to craft. As you work through your speech, determine where you'd like the audience to experience a particular sensation, and focus on integrating vivid language.

Remember that pathos is a persuasive appeal that is at your disposal, and using vivid language can assist in creating an emotional experience and sensation for the audience.

Rhetorical Techniques

There are several traditional techniques that have been used to engage audiences and make ideas more attention-getting and memorable. These are called rhetorical techniques. Although "rhetorical" is associated with persuasive speech, these techniques are also effective with other types of speeches. We suggest using alliteration, parallelism, and rhetorical tropes.

Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in a sentence or passage. In his "I Have a Dream Speech," Dr. Martin Luther King said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Do you notice how the consonant of "C" resounds throughout?

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

"Give me liberty or I'd rather die."

"Give me liberty or give me death."

The second one uses parallelism. Quoting again from JFK's inaugural address: "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty." The repetition of the three-word phrases in this sentence (including the word "any" in each) is an example of parallelism.

Tropes are a turning of the text where the literal meaning is changed or altered to provide new insight (Brummett, 2019). This is often referred to as figurative language, or using comparisons with objects, animals, activities, roles, or historical or literary figures. A literal statement would say, "The truck is fast." Figurative says, "The truck is as fast as..." or "The truck runs like..."

You are likely most familiar with the metaphor – one type of trope. **Metaphors** are direct comparisons, such as "When he gets behind the wheel of that truck, he is Kyle Busch at Daytona." Here are some more examples of metaphors:

> *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 is born.*

Similes are closely related to metaphors, and use "like" or "as" when crafting a comparison. "The truck runs like," is the beginning of a simile.

Tropes are useful because they assist the audience in seeing an idea in a new way or a new light. This can be particularly helpful if you're struggling to create a vivid experience but have been unsuccessful at evoking the senses. A metaphor can assist by comparing your argument with an idea that the audience is familiar with. If you're trying to evoke a particular felt sense, make sure the compared idea can conjure up that particular feeling.

Whatever trope you use, the goal is to craft an interesting comparison or turn the text in a unique way that leads to great comprehension for the audience.

Research Spotlight: Researchers found that listeners (or, in this case, audience members) had greater aesthetic appreciation when figurative language (like a metaphor) was used compared to conventional, familiar rhetoric (Wimmer et al, 2016).

Storytelling

Stories and storytelling, in the form of anecdotes and narrative illustrations, are a powerful tool as a public speaker. For better or worse, audiences are likely to remember anecdotes and narratives long after a speech's statistics are forgotten. Human beings love stories and will often will walk away from a speech moved by or remembering a powerful story or example.

So, what makes a good story?

As an art form, storytelling may include:

- Attention to sequence, or the order of the story;
- Embedding a dramatic quality (or using pathos);
- The use of imagery (or figurative language).

While there is no "one-model-fits-all" view of storytelling, we often know a good story when we hear one, and they are a helpful way to expand your argument and place it in a context.

If you have personal experience with an argument or advocacy that you select, it may be helpful to provide a short story for the audience that provides insight into what you know. Remember that anecdotes are a form of evidence, and we can feel more connected with an idea if the story is related to something a speaker has been through. For example, if you selected police brutality as a speech advocacy, embedding a story about police violence may support your thesis statement and allow your audience to visualize what that might be like. It may draw them in to see a perspective that they hadn't considered.

Similarly, consider the placement of your story. While your speech may rely on a longer narrative form as an organizational pattern, it's more likely that you'll integrate a short story within your speech. We most commonly recommend stories as:

- The attention getter
- Evidence within a main point
- A way to wrap up the speech and leave the audience with something meaningful to consider.

Stories, rhetorical techniques, and vivid language are important mechanisms to evoke language with aesthetics. In addition to what you say, verbal delivery also includes *how* you say it, including: vocal projection, verbal enunciation and punctuation, and vocal rate.

Projection

"Louder!"

You may have experienced a situation where an audience notified a speaker that they couldn't be heard. "Louder!" Here, the audience is letting the speaker know to increase their **volume**, or the relative softness or loudness of one's voice. In this example, the speaker needed to more fully project their vocals to fit the speaking-event space by increasing their volume. In a more formal setting, however, an audience may be skeptical to give such candid feedback, so it is your job to prepare.

Projection is a strategy to vocally *fill the space*; thus, the space dictates which vocal elements need to be adapted because every person in the room should comfortably experience your vocal range. If you speak too softly (too little volume or not projecting), your audience will struggle to hear and understand and may give up trying to listen. If you speak with too much volume, your audience may feel that you are yelling at them, or at least feel uncomfortable with you shouting. The volume you use should fit the size of the audience and the room.

Vocal Enunciation and Punctuation

Vocal enunciation is often reduced to pronouncing words correctly, but enunciation also describes the expression of words and language.

Have you ever spoken to a friend who replied, "Stop that! You're mumbling." If so, they're signaling to you that they aren't able to understand your message. You may have pronounced the words correctly but had indistinct enunciation of the words, leading to reduced comprehension.

One technique to increase enunciation occurs during speech rehearsal, and it's known as the "dash" strategy: *e-nun-ci-ate e-ve–rysyll–a–balin your pre-sen-ta-tion*.

The dashes signify distinct vocal enunciation to create emphasis and expression. However, don't go overboard! The dash strategy is an exaggerated exercise, but it can lead to a choppy vocal delivery.

Instead, use the dash strategy to find areas where difficult and longer words need more punctuated emphasis and, through rehearsal, organically integrate those areas of emphasis into your presentational persona.

Verbal punctuation is the process of imagining the words as they're written to insert purposeful, punctuated pauses to conclude key thoughts. Your speech is not a run-on sentence. Verbal punctuation allows decisiveness and avoids audiences wondering, "is this still the same sentence?"

Verbal punctuation is a strategy to minimize **vocalized fillers**, including common fillers of "like, and, so, uh." Rather than use a filler to fill a vocal void in the speech, punctuate the end of the sentence through a decisive pause (like a period in writing!).

We know what you're thinking: "there's no way that reducing fillers is this easy." You're partially right. We all use vocalized fillers, particularly in informal conversation, but the more you rehearse purposeful punctuation and decisive endings to your well-crafted thoughts and arguments, the fewer filler words you will use.

It is also helpful to ask for input and feedback from friends, colleagues, or teachers. "What are my filler words?" We have listed common fillers, but you may unconsciously rely on different words. One author, for example, was never aware that they used "kind of" until a colleague pointed the filler out. Once you're aware of your filler words, work to carefully, consciously, and meticulously try to catch yourself when you say it. "Consciously" is key here, because you need to bring an awareness about your fillers to the forefront of your brain.

Pace and Rate

How quickly or slowly you say the words of your speech is the **rate**. A slower rate may communicate to the audience that you do not fully know the speech. "Where is this going?" they may wonder. It might also be slightly boring if the audience is processing information faster than it's being presented.

By contrast, speaking too fast can be overly taxing on an audience's ability to keep up with and digest what you are saying. It sometimes helps to imagine that your speech is a jog that you and your friends (the audience) are taking together. You (as the speaker) are setting the pace based on how quickly you speak. If you start sprinting, it may be too difficult for your audience to keep up and they may give up halfway through. Most people who speak very quickly know they speak quickly, and if that applies to you, just be sure to practice slowing down and writing yourself delivery cues in your notes to maintain a more comfortable rate.

You will want to maintain a good, deliberate rate at the beginning of your speech because your audience will be getting used to your voice. We have all called a business where the person answering the phone mumbles the name of the business in a rushed way. We aren't sure if we called the right number. Since the introduction is designed to get the audience's attention and interest in your speech, you will want to focus on clear vocal rate here.

You might also consider varying the rate depending on the type of information being communicated. While you'll want to be careful going too slow consistently, slowing your rate for a difficult piece of supporting material may be helpful. Similarly, quickening your rate in certainly segments can communicate an urgency.

And although awkward, watching yourself give a speech via recording (or web cam) is a great way to gauge your natural rate and pace.

Vocal Pauses

The common misconception for public speaking students is that pausing during your speech is bad, but pausing (similar to and closely aligned with punctuation) can increase both the tone and comprehension of your argument. This is especially true if you are making a particularly important point or wanting a statement to have powerful impact: you will want to give the audience a moment to digest what you have said. You may also be providing new or technical information to an audience that needs additional time to absorb what you're saying.

For example, consider the following statement: "Because of issues like pollution and overpopulation, in 50 years the earth's

natural resources will be so depleted that it will become difficult for most people to obtain enough food to survive." Following a statement like this, you want to give your audience a brief moment to fully consider what you are saying. Remember that your speech is often *ephemeral*: meaning the audience only experiences the speech once and in real time (unlike reading where an audience can go back).

Use audience nonverbal cues and feedback (and provide them as an audience member) to determine if additional pauses may be necessary for audience comprehension. Audiences are generally reactive and will use facial expressions and body language to communicate if they are listening, if they are confused, angry, or supportive.

Of course, there is such a thing as pausing too much, both in terms of frequency and length. Someone who pauses too often may appear unprepared. Someone who pauses too long (more than a few seconds) runs the risk of the audience feeling uncomfortable or, even worse, becoming distracted or letting their attention wander.

Pauses should be controlled to maintain attention of the audience and to create additional areas of emphasis.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we introduced verbal delivery as a core component of your speech aesthetics. Verbal delivery includes language – including vivid language, tropes, and storytelling. In addition, projection, rate, punctuation, enunciation, and pausing all work to deliver an effective presentation. The "rehearsal" chapter will assist as you consider the verbal dynamics of your speech and begin to strategize best practices for deliver as you prepare to present.

In Chapter 9, we'll continue discussing aesthetics by integrating nonverbal delivery.

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3.3: Nonverbal Delivery

Learning Objectives

Describe the importance of nonverbal delivery in public speaking

Highlight common non-verbal pitfalls
Utilize specific techniques to enhance non-verbal delivery

Have you played charades? Many of you have likely "acted out" a person, place, or a thing for an audience, using only your body and no words. Charades, like many games, demonstrates the heightened or exaggerated use of nonverbals – through acting out, the game highlights how powerful nonverbal communication can be for communicating with an audience.

When speaking, similar to charades, your job is to create a captivating experience for your audience that leads them to new information or to consider a new argument. Nonverbals provide an important facet of that experience by accentuating your content and contributing to the aesthetic experience.

The nonverbal part of your speech is a presentation of yourself as well as your message. Like we discussed in Chapter 7, public speaking is embodied, and your nonverbals are a key part of living and communicating in and through your body. Through the use of eye contact, vocals, body posture, gestures, and facial expression, you enhance your message and invite your audience to give their serious attention to it—and to you. Your credibility, your sincerity, and your knowledge of your speech become apparent through your nonverbal behaviors.

In this chapter, we explore various nonverbal components that influence your message to create an aesthetic experience for your audience. Rather than a check-list of skillsets, we invite you to read these as a series of inter-related behaviors and practices, beginning with eye contact.

Eye Contact

Imagine bringing in 2 qualified applicants for a job opening that you were responsible to fill. The interview is intimate, and each applicant sits directly across from you and 3 other colleagues who are assisting.

While answering questions, applicant 1 never breaks eye contact with you. It's likely that, as the interview progresses, you begin to feel uncomfortable, even threatened, and begin shifting your own eyes around the room awkwardly. When the applicant leaves, you finally take a deep breath but realize that you can't remember anything the applicant said.

The second applicant enters and, unlike the first, looks down at their notes, and they never make direct eye contact. As you try to focus on their answers, they seem so uncomfortable that you aren't able to concentrate on the exchange.

Both approaches are common mistakes when integrating eye contact into a speech. We have likely all seen speakers who read their presentation from notes and never look up. It's also common for a speaker to zoom in on one audience member (like the teacher!) and never break their gaze.

Eye contact creates an intimate and interpersonal experience for individual audience members and it assists in maintaining rapport. Part of creating a meaningful aesthetic experience is through eye contact, and the general rule of thumb is that 80% of your total speech time should be spent making eye contact with your audience (Lucas, 2015, p. 250). When you're able to connect by using eye contact, you create a more intimate, trusting, and transparent experience.

Looking Forward: We'll discuss rehearsal techniques to assist in amplifying your eye contact in Chapter 11.

It's important to note that you want to establish genuine eye contact with your audience, and not "fake" eye contact. There have been a lot of techniques generated for "faking" eye contact, and none of them look natural. For example, these aren't great:

- ***Three points on the back wall*** – You may have heard that instead of making eye contact, you can just pick three points on the back wall and look at each point. What ends up happening, though, is you look like you are staring off into space and your audience will spend the majority of your speech trying to figure out what you are looking at. This technique may work better

for a larger audience, but in a more intimate space (like the classroom), the audience is close enough to be suspicious. Put simply: we can tell you aren't looking at us.
- ***The swimming method*** – This happens when someone is reading their speech and looks up quickly and briefly, not unlike a swimmer who pops their head out of the water for a breath before going back under. Eye contact is more than just physically moving your head; it is about looking at your audience and establishing a connection.

Instead, work to maintain approximately 3 seconds of eye contact with audience members throughout the room. You are, after all, speaking to them, so use your eyes to make contact. This may also reduce some anxiety because you can envision yourself speaking directly to one person at a time, rather than a room full of strangers.

Remember: you have done the work. You are prepared. You have something to say. People want to listen.

Movement

When you (and your body) move, you communicate. You may, for example, have a friend who, when telling exciting stories, frantically gestures and paces the room—their movement is part of how they communicate their story. They likely do this unconsciously, and that's often how much of our informal movement occurs.

Many of us, like your friend, have certain elements of movement that we comfortably integrate into our daily interactions. It's important to know your go-to movements to ask: how can I utilize these (or put them in check) to enhance the audience's experience? In this section, we will introduce how and why movement should be *purposefully* integrated into your public speech. We'll focus on your hands, your feet, and how to move around the space.

Survey a Friend: Not sure what nonverbals you commonly use when communicating? Ask a friend! Your friends are observant, and they can likely tell you if you over-gesture, look down, stay poised, etc. Use this inventory to determine areas of focus for your speeches.

Gestures and Hands

Everyone who gives a speech in public gets scared or nervous. Even professionals who do this for a living feel that way, but they have learned how to combat those nerves through experience and practice. When we get scared or nervous, our bodies emit adrenaline into our systems so we can deal with whatever problem is causing us to feel that way. In a speech, you are asked to speak for a specific duration of time, so that burst of adrenaline is going to try to work its way out of your body and manifest itself somehow. One of the main ways is through your hands.

3 common reactions to this adrenaline rush are:

- ***Jazz hands!*** It may sound funny, but nervous speakers can unknowingly incorporate "jazz hands"—shaking your hands at your sides with fingers opened wide— at various points in their speech. While certainly an extreme example, this and behaviors like it can easily becoming distracting.
- ***Stiff as a board***. At the other end of the scale, people who don't know what to do with their hands or use them "too little" sometimes hold their arms stiffly at their sides, behind their backs, or in their pockets, all of which can also look unnatural and distracting.
- ***Hold on for dear life!*** Finally, some speakers might grip their notes or a podium tightly with their hands. This might also result in tapping on a podium, table, or another object nearby.

It's important to remember that *just because you aren't sure what your hands are doing does not mean they aren't doing something*. Fidgeting, jazz hands, gripping the podium, or hands in pockets are all common and result in speakers asking, "did I really do that? I don't even remember!"

Like we mentioned in this section's introduction, the key for knowing what to do with your hands is to know your own embodied movement and to trust or adjust your natural style as needed.

Al Gore gestures during a campaign appearance.

Are you someone who uses gestures when speaking? If so, great! Use your natural gestures to create purposeful aesthetic emphasis for your audience. If you were standing around talking to your friends and wanted to list three reasons why you should all take a road trip this weekend, you would probably hold up your fingers as you counted off the reasons ("First, we hardly ever get this opportunity. Second, we can…"). Try to pay attention to what you do with your hands in regular conversations and incorporate that into your delivery. Be conscious, though, of being over the top and gesturing at every other word. Remember that gestures highlight and punctuate information for the audience, so too many gestures (like jazz hands) can be distracting.

Similarly, are you someone who generally rests your arms at your sides? That's OK, too! Work to keep a natural (and not stiff) look, but challenge yourself to integrate a few additional gestures throughout the speech.

Feet and Posture

Just like your hands, nervous energy might try to work its way out of your body through your feet. Common difficulties include:

- ***The side-to-side.*** You may feel awkward standing without a podium and try to shift your weight back and forth. On the "too much" end, this is most common when people start "dancing" or stepping side to side.
- ***The twisty-leg.*** Another variation is twisting feet around each other or the lower leg.
- ***Stiff-as-a-board.*** On the other end are speakers who put their feet together, lock their knees, and never move from that position. Locked knees can restrict oxygen to your brain, so there are many reasons to avoid this difficulty.

These options look unnatural, and therefore will prove to be distracting to your audience.

The default position for your feet, then, is to have them shoulder-width apart, with your knees slightly bent. Since public speaking often results in some degree of physical exertion, you need to treat speaking as a physical activity. Public speaking is too often viewed as merely the transmission of information or a message rather than a fully body experience. Being in-tune and attuned to your body will allow you to speak in a way that's both comfortable for you and the audience.

In addition to keeping your feet shoulder-width apart, you'll also want to focus on your posture. As an audience member, you may have witnessed speakers with slumped shoulders or leaning into the podium (if there is one) with their entire body.

Difficulty with good posture is not just a public speaking problem. Think about how often you sit down in a coffee shop, pull out your laptop and, after some time, you realize that you are leaning over and your lower back is wincing in pain. You likely pull your shoulders back and straighten your spine in response. If you don't focus on this posture (and practice reminding yourself to "sit up straight"), your body may slump back into old habits. So, you guessed it: focusing on good posture is just that – something that you must focus on, over time, so that it becomes habitual.

Focusing on good posture and solid grounding will, in addition to increasing your confidence, assist you in maintaining your eye contact and focusing on projecting your voice throughout the space.

Research Spotlight: The "Power Pose." Relaxed yet sturdy posture will aid in your aesthetic delivery, but it might also increase your confidence. Some research (Cuddy, 2012) seems to indicate that standing in a *power pose* with your feet wide and hands on the hips (picture a super hero) may trick your mind into experiencing higher levels of confidence.

Moving in the Space

We know that likely you're wondering, "Should I do any other movement around the room?"

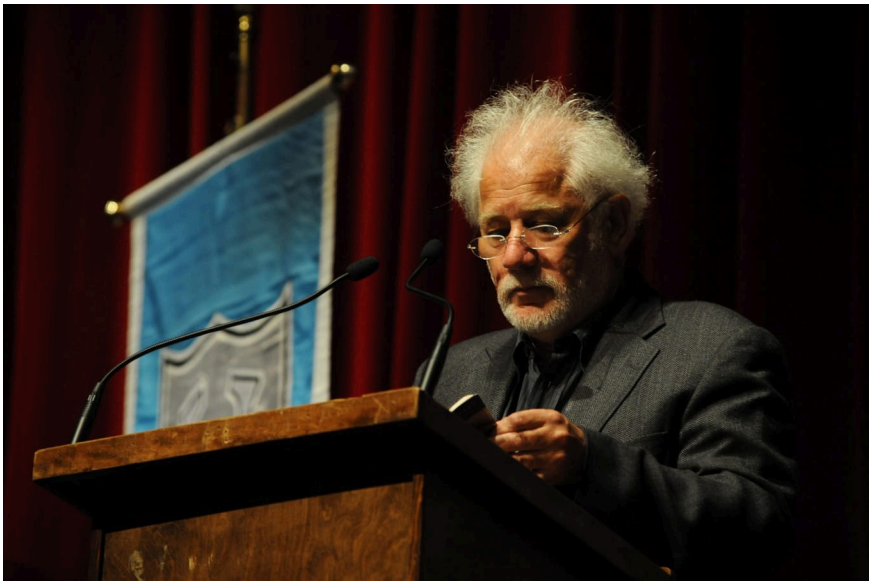
Unfortunately, there isn't an easy answer. Movement depends on two overarching considerations: 1) What's the space? And, 2) What's the message?

First, movement is always informed by the space in which you'll speak. We'll cover this more in tips on rehearsal (see Chapter 11), but we'll highlight a few important details here. Consider the two following examples:

- You'll be a giving a presentation at a university where a podium is set up with a stable microphone.
- You're speaking at a local TedTalk event with an open stage.

Both scenarios provide constraints and opportunities for movement.

In the university space, the microphone may constrain your movement if you determine that vocal projection is insufficient to guarantee a level of speaking that can be heard throughout the space.



Using a lectern provides nonverbal opportunities and constraints

In other words, you need to stay planted behind the microphone to guarantee sound. Partially constraining, this does allow a stable location to place your notes, a microphone to assist in projecting, and allows you to focus on other verbal and nonverbal techniques.

In the TedTalk example, you are not constrained by a stable microphone and you have a stage for bodily movement. The open stage means that the entire space becomes part of the aesthetic experience for the audience. However, if you are less comfortable with movement, the open space may feel intimidating because audiences may assume that you'll use the entire space.

In addition to the space, your message and content assist in deciding how or why you might move around the space. It's necessary to ask, "how does movement support, enhance or detract from the message?" and "how might movement support, enhance, or detract from the aesthetic experience for the audience?"

Remember that most public speeches are ephemeral, where the audience is attempting to comprehend your message in one shot or run through. Given these circumstances, it can be tricky for an audience to track the argument progression, especially since you may be dealing with an audience of varying levels of experience with your topic. Similar to the space, thinking through where your movement can assist in translating your information is paramount.

Once you have knowledge of the speaking space and completed speech content, you can start using movement to add dimension to the aesthetic experience for your audience.

One benefit of movement is that it allows you to engage with different sections of the audience. If you are not constrained to one spot (in the case of a podium or a seat, for example), then you are able to use movement to engage with the audience by adjusting your spatial dynamic. You can literally move your body to different sides of the stage and audience. This allows for each side of a room to be pulled in to the content because you close the physical distance and create clear pathways for eye contact.

Some speech stages allow, even expect, movement

Without these changes, sections of the audience may feel lost or forgotten. Consider your role as a student. Have you experienced a professor or teacher who stays solitary and does not move to different sides of the room? It can be difficult to stay motivated to listen or take notes if a speaker is dominating one area of the space.

Changing the spatial dynamics goes beyond moving from side-to-side. You can also move forward and backward (or what theater practitioners might call down or up stage). This allows you to move closer to the audience or back away—depending on what experience you're trying to create.

In addition to engaging with the audience, movement often signals a transition between ideas or an attempt to visually enunciate an important component of your information. You may want to signal a change in time or mark progression. If you're walking your audience through information chronologically, movement can mark that temporal progression where your body becomes the visual marker of time passing.

You may also want to signal a transition between main ideas, and movement can assist with that, too! Moving as main point transitions embodies the connections between your ideas while letting the audience know that "we are going to progress in the argument." If integrating movement as a transition feels odd, choppy, or awkward, those feelings help signal that the organization of your main points may need some re-working.

Thus, using purposeful movement can enhanced your aesthetics, but *purposeful* is the key word here. While movement can enhance, it can also distract and constrain. Keep these common pitfalls in mind:

- ***The pace-master.*** We all know this distracting pitfall where (likely due to nervousness), a speaker paces back and forth without any clear reason for the movement. "What in the world are they doing?" you might wonder as an audience member. Unfortunately, if you're internally asking that question, you're likely not focusing on the speaker's content. While it's OK to "walk and talk" so to speak, avoid constant walking-and-talking. As a speaker, maintain a solid footing when you aren't moving.
- ***Obstructing the view:*** It's likely that, at some point, you'll use objects or other presentation enhancements like a PowerPoint or a video during your speech. Make sure you aren't moving directly in front of the audience's line of sight. Even if you aren't referencing something, it can be awkward to walk in front of a projection light.
- ***The robot***: As a dance, the robot can be great, but in public speaking, it's usually not as effective. We commonly experience

students who use “the triangle” method, where each main point in the speech is mapped onto an invisible triangle. This can be done well, but it can also lead to movement looking unnatural. Work to strike a balance between pre-planned and robotic.

When you speak, moving in the space can be beneficial. As you plan your purposeful movement, be aware of the message you’re providing and the space in which you’re speaking.

Facial Expressions

Picture being out to dinner with a friend and, as you finish telling a story about a joke you played on your partner, you look up to a grimacing face.

“What?” you ask. But their face says it all.

“Oh, nothing,” they reply. Realizing that their face has “spilled the beans” so to speak, they might correct their expression by shrugging and biting their lip – a move that may insinuate nervousness or anxiety. You perceive that they didn’t find your story as humorous as you’d hoped.

Facial expressions communicate to others (and audiences) in ways that are congruent or incongruent with your message. In the example above, your friend’s feedback of “oh, nothing” was inconcruent with their facial exressions. Their verbal words didn’t trump their facial expressions, however, and their nonverbal feedback was part of the communication.

Facial expressions are generally categorized as one of the following: happy, sad, angry, fearful, surprised and disgusted. Your facial expressions matter; your audience will be looking at your face to guide them through the speech, so they’re an integral part of communicating meaning and demonstrating to your audience a felt sense.

In fact, if your facial expressions seem incongruent or contradictory from the tone of the argument, an audience may go so far as to feel distrust toward you as a speaker. Children might, for example, say, “I’m fine” or “It doesn’t hurt” after falling and scraping their knee, but their face often communicates a level of discomfort. In this case, their facial expression is incongruent with their verbal message. If you’re frowning while presenting information that the audience perceives to be positive, they may feel uneasy or unsure how to process that information. So, congruency can increase your ethos.

Instead, work to create congruence between your message and expressions. In class discussions on pathos, we often joke about the ASPCA commercials with the Sarah McLachlan song “In the Arms of an Angel” playing in the background. The music is meant to, of course, communicate feelings of sadness around animal cruelty, and rightfully so. In a speech, similar to using music, your facial expressions can assist in setting the aesthetic tone; they are part of developing pathos.

Given the amount of information that we all encounter daily, including information about global injustices, it’s often insufficient to merely state the problem and how to solve it. Audience members need buy in from you as the speaker. Using facial expressions to communicate emotions, for example, can demonstrate your commitment and overall feelings around an issue.

To be clear: facial expressions, like other forms of nonverbal communication, can greatly impact an audience member’s perception of the speaker, but not all audiences may interpret your expressions the same. Re-visit Chapter 2 on audiences.

Attire

What you wear, similar to other aesthetic components, can either enhance or detract from the audience’s experience. Like facial expressions, you want your attire to be congruent with the message that you’re delivering. In Chapter 7, we noted that aesthetics are often dicated by certain contextual norms. Context is relevant here, too, as the purpose and audience will inform appropriate attire.

We recommend considering two questions when selecting your attire:

First, “what attire matches the occasion?” Is this a casual occasion? Does it warrant a more professional or business-casual approach? If you’re speaking at an organization’s rally, for example, you may decide to wear attire with the organization’s logo and jeans. Other occasions, like a classroom or city council meeting, may require a higher level of professional attire.

Second, “have I selected any attire that could be distracting while I’m speaking?” Certain kinds of jewelry, for example, might make additional noise or move around your arm, and audiences can focus too much on the jewelry. In addition to noise-makers,

some attire can have prints that might distract, including letters, wording, or pictures.

Your attire can influence how the audience perceives you as a speaker (ahem: your credibility) which, as we've discussed, is key to influencing listeners. Before we conclude this chapter, we return to credibility and reflexivity.

Aesthetics and Credibility

So far in Part 3 on aesthetics, we've discussed how to deliver an aesthetic experience for your audience. As a speaker, it's important to remember that the audience remains a central component of public speaking and is central to consider when making aesthetic choices.

Yes, this means that you should think about your audience (as Chapter 2 discussed at length) when you are a speaker. These aesthetic choices will influence your audience and assist them in determining if you are credible and, frankly, if they want to listen to your message.

For example, an audience may view vocalized pauses as evidence that a speaker lacks confidence around their topic or does not know the material as well. Similarly, you may consider your attire before presenting, assuming that your audience will respect and view you professionally if you select business casual clothing.

Aesthetic choices are also important when you are in the audience, and it is imperative to be critical and reflect (or practice reflexivity) on how you are filtering a speaker's information through their aesthetics. The filter that informs our willingness to view a speaker as credible is often based on a **mythical norm**, or what Audre Lorde (1984) defines generally as young, white, thin, middle-class men. This classification certainly does not fit all speakers, and if you are part of this classification, that's OK! The mythical norm warns us to be conscious of holding these categories as "the best" or preferred, especially around what counts as credibility. In other words, are these categories unconsciously facilitating a more positive aesthetic experience?

For example, you may decide to wear business casual clothing to increase the likelihood that your audience views you as credible, but as an audience member, be careful assuming that someone is not credible because of their attire. Business attire can be a privilege that everyone cannot afford.

Eye contact can also be investigated. We've alluded that eye contact increases trust amongst your audience, and it often does; however, the connection between eye contact and higher levels of credibility is specific to a U.S. American cultural context. Culture thus defines how we interpret and understand certain aesthetic choices, including eye contact. Remember that culture is always a core component of communication. As an audience member, be careful of presumptively judging a speaker based on your own cultural expectations, identities, or positions.

Conclusion

Your nonverbal delivery assists in setting an aesthetic tone for the audience by providing embodied insight into how the audience should think, act, or feel. The space – or literal context in which you'll speak – also contributes nonverbally to the message. We'll discuss space in more detail during Chapter 11 on rehearsal.

Up next: presentation aids.

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3.4: Presentation Aids

Learning Objectives

- Explain reasons why presentation aids are important in public speeches;
- Detail how presentation aids function;
- Discuss strategies for implementing and integrating presentation aids.

When you give a speech, you are presenting much more than just a collection of words and ideas. Because you are speaking live, your audience members will aesthetically experience your speech through all five of their senses: hearing, vision, smell, taste, and touch. In addition to your verbal and nonverbal embodiment, presentation aids assist in amplifying your content for the audience's overall experience.

Presentation aids are the resources beyond the speech itself that a speaker uses to enhance the message conveyed to the audience. The type of presentation aids that speakers most typically make use of are **visual aids:** pictures, diagrams, charts and graphs, maps, and the like. **Audible aids** include musical excerpts, audio speech excerpts, and sound effects. A speaker may also use fragrance samples or food samples as olfactory (sense of smell) or gustatory (sense of taste) aids. Finally, presentation aids can be three-dimensional objects or they can change over a period of time, as in the case of a how-to demonstration. As you can see, you have a range of presentation aids at your disposal.

Effective presentation aids are guided by two questions:

1. How can I best represent an idea in my speech through a presentation aid?
2. When is best to introduce it to the audience?

If you're able to answer these two main questions, the audience is more likely to understand your idea more fully. Each presentation aid a speaker uses must be a direct, uncluttered example of a specific element of the speech. It is understandable that someone presenting a speech about Abraham Lincoln might want to include a photograph of him, but if there's a high probability that the audience knows what Lincoln looked like, the picture would not contribute much to the message unless, perhaps, the message was specifically about the changes in Lincoln's appearance during his time in office.

In this example, other visual artifacts may be more likely to deliver relevant information—a diagram of the interior of Ford's Theater where Lincoln was assassinated, a facsimile of the messy and much-edited Gettysburg Address, or a photograph of the Lincoln family, for example. The key is that each presentation aid must directly express an idea in your speech.

Moreover, presentation aids must be used at the time when you are presenting the specific ideas related to the aid. For example, if you are speaking about coral reefs and one of your supporting points is about the location of the world's major reefs, it would make sense to display a map of these reefs while you're talking about location. If you display it while you are explaining what coral actually is, or describing the kinds of fish that feed on a reef, the map will not serve as a useful aid—in fact, it's likely to be a distraction.

In this chapter, we will discuss some principles and strategies to help you incorporate effective presentation aids into your speech. We will begin by discussing the functions that good presentation aids fulfill. Next, we will explore some of the many types of presentation aids and how best to design and utilize them. We will also describe various media that can be used for presentation aids.

Functions of Presentation Aids

Why should you use presentation aids? If you have prepared and rehearsed your speech adequately, shouldn't a good speech with a good delivery be enough to stand on its own? While it is true that impressive presentation aids will not rescue a poor speech, it is also important to recognize that a good speech can often be made even better by the strategic use of presentation aids. Remember that your speech is an experience rather than the isolated transmission of information, so presentation aids can

enhance or detract from the aesthetics.

Presentation aids can fulfill several functions:

- improve your audience's understanding of the information you are conveying;
- enhance audience memory and retention of the message;
- add variety and interest to your speech;
- enhance your credibility as a speaker.

Let's examine each of these functions.

Improving Audience Understanding

Human communication is a complex process that often leads to misunderstandings. If you are like most people, you can easily remember incidents when you misunderstood a message or when someone else misunderstood what you said to them. Misunderstandings happen in public speaking just as they do in everyday conversations.

One reason for misunderstandings is that perception and interpretation are highly complex, individual processes (remember that communication is always cultural and contextual rather than a universal set of symbols). Most of us have seen the image in which, depending on your perception, you see either the outline of a vase or the facial profiles of two people facing each other, known as the Rubin's vase (Hasson et al, 2001). Or you may have listened to a song for years only to have a friend say, "uh, those aren't the lyrics!" These examples demonstrate how interpretation can differ, and it means that your presentations must be based on careful thought and preparation to maximize the likelihood that your listeners will understand your presentation as you intend them to.

As a speaker, one of your basic goals is to help your audience understand your message. To reduce misunderstanding, presentation aids can be used to clarify or to emphasize. Use table 10.1 to identify questions that underly clarifying or emphasizing ideas.

Improving Audience Understanding		
To clarify : Simplifying complex information	Am I describing a complex process that could represented differently? Am I referencing ideas that are visual or sensory in nature?	If your speech is about the impact of the Coriolis Effect on tropical storms, for instance, you will have great difficulty clarifying it without a diagram because the process is a complex one.
To emphasize : Impress your listeners with the importance of an idea	Is there an idea or aspect of the speech that needs to be underscored?	Let's say that you're describing the increased prevalence of super tornadoes across the state of Kansas over the last 30 years. You may decide that a map will visually underscore the sudden increase in storms.
		Table 10.1

Aiding Retention and Recall

The second function that presentation aids can serve is to increase the audience's chances of remembering your speech. An article by the U.S. Department of Labor (1996) summarized research on how people learn and remember. The authors found that "83% of human learning occurs visually, and the remaining 17% through the other senses—11% through hearing, 3.5% through

smell, 1% through taste, and 1.5% through touch."

For this reason, exposure to an image can serve as a memory aid to your listeners. When your graphic images deliver information effectively and when your listeners understand them clearly, audience members are likely to remember your message long after your speech is over.

An added plus of using presentation aids is that they can boost *your* retention and memory while you are speaking. Using your presentation aids while you rehearse your speech will familiarize you with the association between a given place in your speech and the presentation aid that accompanies that material.

Adding Variety and Interest

A third function of presentation aids is simply to make your speech more interesting. For example, wouldn't a speech on community gardens have a greater impact if you accompanied your remarks with pictures of such gardens? You can imagine that your audience would be even more enthralled if you had the ability to display produce for your audience live. Similarly, if you were speaking to a group of gourmet cooks about spices, you might want to provide tiny samples of spices that they could smell and taste during your speech.

Enhancing a Speaker's Credibility

The final function of a presentation aid is to increase your ethos, or credibility. A high-quality presentation will contribute to your professional image. This means that in addition to containing important information, your presentation aids must be clear, clean, uncluttered, organized, and large enough for the audience to see and interpret correctly. Misspellings and poorly designed presentation aids can damage your credibility as a speaker. Even if you give a good speech, you run the risk of appearing unprofessional if your presentation aids are poorly executed.

In addition, make sure that you give proper credit to the source of any presentation aids that you take from other sources. Using a statistical chart or a map without proper credit will detract from your credibility, just as using a quotation in your speech without credit would. This situation will usually take place with digital aids such as PowerPoint slides. The source of a chart or the data shown in a chart form should be cited at the bottom of the slide and orally in your speech.

If you focus your efforts on producing presentation aids that contribute effectively to your meaning, that look professional, and that are handled well, your audience will most likely appreciate your efforts and pay close attention to your message. That attention will help them learn or understand your topic in a new way and will thus help the audience see you as a knowledgeable, competent, and credible speaker. With the prevalence of digital communication, the audience expectation of quality visual aids has increased.

Avoiding COMMON PRESENTATION AID PITFALLS

Using presentation aids can come with some risks. However, with a little forethought and adequate practice, you can choose presentation aids that enhance your message and boost your professional appearance in front of an audience.

One principle to keep in mind is to use only as many presentation aids as necessary to present your message or clarify a component of your idea. Too often, speakers fall into a "must have long and detailed presentational aids for the entire speech" – in these cases, the aid can overshadow or distract from the content, rather than to clarify or add emphasis. Instead, simplify as much as possible, emphasizing the information you want your audience to understand rather than overwhelming them with too much text and too many images.

Another important consideration is context. Remember to survey the literal context of your speech to decide what aid is possible – is there technology? Is there a poster stand or a white board? Are there speakers? Is there WiFi? Keep your presentation aids within the limits of the working technology available to you. Whether or not your technology works on the day of your speech, you will still have to present. As the speaker, you are responsible for arranging the things you need to make your presentation aids work as intended. Carry a roll of duct tape so you can display your poster even if the easel is gone. Find an extra chair if your table has disappeared. Test the computer setup. Have your slides on a flash drive AND send it to yourself as an attachment or post to a cloud service. Have an alternative plan prepared in case there is some glitch that prevents your computer-based presentation aids from being usable. And of course, you must know how to use the technology.

Finally, presentation aids do not “speak for themselves.” When you display a visual aid, you should explain what it shows, pointing out and naming the most important features. If you use an audio aid such as a musical excerpt, you need to tell your audience what to listen for. Similarly, if you use a video clip, it is up to you as the speaker to point out the characteristics in the video that support the point you are making—but probably beforehand, so you are not speaking over the video. At the same time, a visual aid should be quickly accessible to the audience. This is where simplicity comes in. Just as in organization of a speech you would use 3-5 main points, not 20 main points, you should limit categories of information on a visual aid.

Types of Presentation Aids

Now that we’ve explored some basic hints for preparing presentation aids, the next step is determining what type of presentation aid is best. We’ll discuss types of aids that fall into two categories: representations of data and/or representations that display a real process, idea, person, place, or thing. In other words, ask yourself: “what type of information do I think needs to be accentuated? A statistic? An image of an idea?” Once you answer, the categories below can help you determine which aid would be the best to display that type of information.

Representations of Data

If you are looking to clarify a complex piece of data or piece of evidence from your speech, you may decide that a chart, graph, or diagram is best. Charts, graphs, and diagrams help represent statistics, processes, figures, or other numeric evidence that may be otherwise difficult to comprehend if just spoken.

Chart: A **chart** is commonly defined as a graphical representation of data or a sketch representing an ordered process. Whether you create your charts or do research to find charts that already exist, it is important for them to exactly match the specific purpose in your speech. Figure 10.1 (“Acupuncture Chart”) shows a chart related to acupuncture and may be useful in a speech about the history and development of acupuncture. However, if your goal is to show the locations of meridians (the lines along which energy is thought to flow) and the acupuncture points, you may need to select an alternative image.

Figure 10.1

There are two common types of charts: statistical charts and sequence-of-steps chart.

- *Statistical Charts*: For most audiences, statistical presentations must be kept as simple as possible, and they must be explained. When visually displaying information from a quantitative study, you need to make sure that you understand the material and can successfully and simply explain how one should interpret the data. This is surely an example of a visual aid that, although it delivers a limited kind of information, does not speak for itself. As with all other principles of public speaking, KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.
- *Sequence-of-Steps Charts*: Charts are also useful when you are trying to explain a process that involves several steps. If you are working with a scientific or medical argument, you may need to visually map the sequence because the process is

otherwise difficult to follow.

Graph: A **graph** is a pictorial representation of the relationships of quantitative data using dots, lines, bars, pie slices, and the like. Graphs show how one factor (such as size, weight, number of items) varies in comparison to other items. Whereas a statistical chart may report the mean (or average) ages of individuals entering college, a graph would show how the mean age changes over time. A statistical chart may report the number of computers sold in the United States, while a graph will use bars or lines to show the breakdown of those computers by operating systems such as Windows, Macintosh, and Linux.

Public speakers can show graphs using a range of different formats. Some of those formats are specialized for various professional fields. Very complex graphs often contain too much information that is not related to the purpose of a speech. If the graph is cluttered, it becomes difficult to comprehend. If you find a graph that has useful information, ask: "do I need to represent this graph as-is or can I represent a key portion of the graph that's most relevant to my data?"

There are 3 types of graphs that we'll introduce: line graphs, bar graphs, and pie graphs.

- *Line Graph*: A line graph is designed to show trends over time. You could, for example, use a line graph to chart Enron's stock prices over time.
- *Bar Graph:* Bar graphs are useful for showing the differences between quantities. They can be used for population demographics, fuel costs, math ability in different grades, and many other kinds of data. The graph in Figure 10.2 ("Suicide vs. Homicide") is well designed. It is relatively simple and is carefully labeled, making it easy for you to guide your audience through the recorded numbers of each type of death. The bar graph is designed to show the difference between rates of suicides and homicides across various age groups. When you look at the data, the first grouping clearly shows that eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds are more likely to die because of a homicide than any of the other age groups.
- *Pie Graph:* Pie graphs are usually depicted as circles and are designed to show proportional relationships within sets of data; in other words, they show parts of or percentages of a whole. They should be simplified as much as possible without eliminating important information.

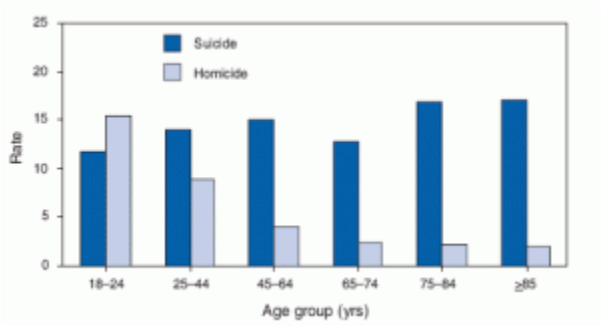

Figure 10.2

Diagrams: **Diagrams** are visual representations that simplify a complex process. They may be drawings or sketches that outline and explain the parts of an object, process, or phenomenon that cannot be readily seen. When you introduce a diagram, you are working to label parts of a process for your audience. For example, you may decide to diagram how human communication occurs because simply describing that process would be too complex.

Charts, graphs, and diagrams can present challenges in being effective but also in being ethical. To be both ethical and effective, you need a good understanding of what statistics mean, and you need to create or use graphs that show amounts clearly. Remember that clarifying is a key goal of presentational aids, so ask: is my graph or chart making my information more or less difficult to comprehend?

Representations of Real Processes or Things

In contrast, a second set of presentational aids represents real processes, things, persons, places, or ideas. While charts and graphs simplify more complex or abstract ideas, data, or evidence, this set of presentational aids attempts to add emphasis to real, literal stuff. This includes: maps, photos, videos, audio recordings, and objects (diagrams can also fall into this category, depending on what you're mapping).

Maps: Maps are extremely useful if the information is clear and limited. There are all kinds of maps, including population, weather, ocean current, political, and economic maps, so you should find the right kind for the purpose of your speech. Choose a map that

emphasizes the information you need to deliver and are trying to represent. For example, you might decide that a map outlining the Hawaiian Islands would be helpful to clarify the spatial dimensions of the state. Although the map may not list the names of the islands, it is helpful in orienting the audience to the direction and distance of the islands to other geographic features, such as the Pacific Ocean.

Photographs and Drawings: Sometimes a photograph or a drawing is the best way to show an unfamiliar but important detail. For example, if you gave a speech about the impact of plastics on ocean life, you may decide to include a photo of a beached whale who had suffered from plastic inhalation. The photo may emphasize the impact of plastic that speaking otherwise doesn't capture.

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

There is one major warning to using audio and video clips during a speech: do not forget that they are supposed to be aids to your speech, not the speech itself! In addition, be sure to avoid these four mistakes that speakers often make when using audio and video clips:

- Avoid choosing clips that are too long for the overall length of the speech.
- Practice with the audio or video equipment prior to speaking. If you are unfamiliar with the equipment, you'll look foolish trying to figure out how it works. Be sure that the speakers on the computer are on and at the right volume level.
- Cue the clip to the appropriate place prior to beginning your speech, and try to avoid any advertisement interruptions (which can make the aid look unprofessional).
- The audience must be given context before the video or audio clip is played, specifically what the clip is and why it relates to the speech. At the same time, the video should not repeat what you have already said, but add to it.

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

Ways to Display Your Presentation Aid

Above, we've discussed why you might use a presentation aid and what aid might work best. "How do I display these?" you might be wondering. For example, if you decide that a graph would be helpful in clarifying a complex idea, you have options on how to present that graph to the audience, including presentation software or more low-tech means. We'll talk through each below.

Using Presentation Software

Presentation software and slides are a common mechanism to display information for your audience. You are likely familiar with PowerPoint, but there are several others:

- Prezi, available at www.prezi.com
- Slide Rocket, available at www.sliderocket.com
- Google Slides, available in Google Drive and useful for collaborative assignments
- Keynote, the Apple presentation slide software on Macs
- Impress, an Open Office product (http://www.openoffice.org/prod-uct/impress.html)
- PrezentIt
- AdobeAcrobat Presenter
- ThinkFree
- E-Maze

Each software allows you to present professional-looking slides. For example, you can use the full range of fonts, although many of them are not appropriate for presentations because they are hard to read. Use Table 10.3 to track advantages and disadvantages of using slides.

Advantages to Using Slides	**Disadvantages to Using Slides**

• They allow visualization of concepts; • They are easily portable and uniform; • They can be embedded with videos and audio; • They are projectable and more easily visible throughout a room	• They're too linear and audiences aren't encouraged to see the relationship between ideas (Frommer, 2012); • PowerPoint is too rigid in the slide-by-slide format (Tufte, 2005). • They become overcrowded; • The presentational slides become the speech.
	Table 10.3

Remember that presentation software aids are a way to display what you want your audience to know—a graph, an idea, an image. Presentation software is not the only way to display these, so slides should be a purposeful choice. *What* you display is the top priority.

Before we continue, we have one note: You'll notice that "text from the speech" is not included in our list of types of presentation aids in the section above. You may decide that adding emphasis to a key word or concept from your speech is needed – and that's OK! You may even decide that providing that concept, visually, for the audience is worthwhile by writing or displaying the words, and that's OK, too. However, remember that presentation aids are included for a reason, and it's often unnecessary to provide an entire outline of your speech's text through a presentation software like PowerPoint slides. Speakers, too often, copy and paste parts of their speech onto a PowerPoint slide and think, 'There! A presentation aid!" Ask: *what purpose does this text serve for my audience?* If your answer doesn't result in clarifying, emphasizing, or retaining, it's likely not needed.

Creating Quality Slide Shows

Slides should show the principles of good design, which include unity, emphasis or focal point, scale and proportion, balance, and rhythm (Lauer & Pentak, 2000). Presenters should also pay attention to tone and usability. With those principles in mind, here are some tips for creating and then using presentation software.

- *Unity and Consistency:* use a single (readable) sans serif font, single background, and unified animations for your visuals so that they look like a unified set. Each slide should have one message, photo, or graphic.
- *Emphasis, Focal Point, and Visibility:* all information should be large enough—at least 24-point font— for audiences. To guarantee visibility, follow the 7X7 rule: no more than seven horizontal lines of text (including the heading) and the longest line should not exceed seven words. Finally, provide higher contrast between text and slides.
- *Tone*: Fonts, color, clip art, photographs, and templates all contribute to tone, which is the attitude being conveyed in the slides. Make sure the tone of the presentation software matches the overall aesthetic tone of the speech.
- *Scale and Proportion*: Use numbers to communicate a sequence. If bullet points are used, the text should be short. Adjust graphs or visuals on the slide, avoiding small or multiple visuals on the same image.
- *Balance and rhythm*: Work to create symmetry and balance between each slide. When presenting, think about what's being displayed on the slide to the audience and when. If you aren't using it, insert a black screen between images.
- *Usability*: With any image or graphic, make sure to include "alt text" – or a description of what the image is. Proving alt text is helpful for users with screen readers.

We recommend that you survey your university's resources for assistance with creating quality and accessible presentation slides.

Low-Tech Presentation Aids

In addition to presentation slides, there are other "low-tech" ways to display. Instead of providing a diagram on PowerPoint, you may decide that drawing it live is more beneficial. Below, we talk through a few additional means to display your information to the audience.

Dry-Erase Board

If you use a chalkboard or dry-erase board, what you display should still be thought-out, rehearsed, and clearly professional. You run the risk of appearing less prepared, but numerous speakers do utilize chalk and dry-erase boards effectively. Typically, these speakers use the chalk or dry-erase board for interactive components of a speech. For example, maybe you're giving a speech in front of a group of executives. Chalk or dry-erase boards are very useful when you want to visually show information that you are

receiving from your audience. If you ever use a chalk or dry-erase board, follow these five simple rules:

- Write large enough so that everyone in the room can see (which is harder than it sounds; it is also hard to write and talk at the same time!).
- Print legibly; don't write in cursive script.
- Write short phrases; don't take time to write complete sentences.
- Never turn your back to the audience while you're talking.
- Be sure you have markers that will not go dry, and clean the board afterward.

Flipchart

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

Posters

Posters often represent a key graph, idea, or visualization. For a poster, you likely want to display one key piece of information at one key part of your presentation. Otherwise, posters are probably not the best way to approach presentation aids in a speech. There are problems with visibility as well as portability. Avoid producing a presentation aid that looks like you simply cut pictures out of magazines and pasted them on.

Handouts

Handouts are appropriate for delivering information that audience members can take away with them. As we will see, handouts require a great deal of management if they are to contribute to your credibility as a speaker.

First, make sure the handout is worth the trouble of making, copying, and distributing it. Does the audience really need the handout? Second, make sure to bring enough copies of the handout for each audience member to get one. Having to share or look on with one's neighbor does not contribute to a professional image. Third, consider timing. We recommend providing the handout at the conclusion of your speech.

Reminders for Integrating Presentation Aids

Regardless of what presentation aid you choose—a photo, chart, map— and the medium that you'll display it—a handout, slide deck, audio device— all presentation aids require rehearsal. While we've included tips on integrating presentation aids in your speech throughout this chapter, use the following list of strategies to integrate your aid into the speech.

- Gather all citation information and provide it both visually and orally to your audience.
- In your speaking notes, mark where you will integrate the presentation aid so that you don't forget about it due to nervousness.
- Determine where the presentation aid will be when it's not being displayed.
- For a PowerPoint presentation, include blank/black slides that are used when your visual aid isn't in use.
- Store other objects in non-distracting locations.
- Rehearse your transitions into and out of the presentation aid.

The Mythical Norm and Presentation Aids

In Chapter 8 on nonverbal delivery, we introduced the idea of the mythical norm. As you remember, when you're an audience member, it's important to reflect on the assumptions that we hold about the speaker. Are we judging a speaker based on our own assumptions of what's normal?

Similarly, when you're making decisions about presentation aids as a speaker, it's important to be reflexive about who is in the audience. Are you making decisions about presentation aids based on our own assumptions about what's normal and who's normal? Are you assuming, for example, that all audience members are able-bodied and able to visually and audibly experience

your presentation aid?

Creating an accessible experience for audience members must be a priority. For example, you may want to avoid red and green colors on your visual aids as they're not perceivable to all audience members. While constructing presentation software of slides, make sure you include alt-text for images, especially if you provide the slides to the presentation. These are for audience members who may be sight-impaired. Check out guidelines for the presentation software you're using on how to embed alt-text. Additionally, be weary of smells that may be intense or irritate audience members. Overall, be careful not to assume that audience members also fit the mythical norm as you construct your presentation aid.

Conclusion

To finish this chapter, we will recap a few key pieces of information. Whether your aid is a slide show, object, or dry erase board, these standards are essential:

- Presentation aids must be easily experienced by your audience.
- Presentation aids must be portable, easily handled, and efficient. They should disappear when not in use.
- Presentation aids should be aesthetically pleasing, which includes in good taste. Additionally, electronic media today allows you to create very "busy" slides with varieties of fonts, colors, collages of photos, etc. Keep in mind the principles of unity and focal point.
- Color is another aesthetic aspect. Some colors are just more soothing, readable, and appropriate than others. Also, the color on your slides may be different when projected from what is on your computer.
- Provide credit when using images that aren't your own.
- Finally, presentation aids must support your speech and have high relevance to your content.

This chapter has covered a wide range of information about all kinds of audio and visual aids, but audiences today expect and appreciate professionally designed and handled presentation aids. The stakes are higher now, but the tools are many.

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3.5: Rehearsing Your Presentation

Learning Objectives

- Identify and distinguish methods of delivery
- Discuss the rehearsal process
- Strategize best practices for rehearsal

Having a clear understanding and appreciation for aesthetic choices—including verbal, nonverbal delivery, and the use of presentation aids— will enhance your understanding of public speaking. In reading the previous chapters, you likely thought of speakers who have either exemplified certain qualities or "broken the rules" by, for example, using many vocalized fillers. While understanding these ideas is important, the best path to integrating them in your own presentations is through rehearsal. You will create an exceptional aesthetic experience for your audience, but that starts before you step in front of the audience.

"I already know how to rehearse a speech," you may be thinking. But like any ability, sport, or game, people proficient in those areas have insight to add. Yes, you could learn to masterfully cook on your own, but having an experienced chef at your side will lead to unexpected insights and increase your proficiency. So, trust us. We are experts.

When you begin the rehearsal process, the first step is figuring out which type of delivery you'll be executing. There are four main types of delivery that we'll outline below.

Types of Delivery

The content, purpose, and situation for your presentation will partially dictate how you rehearse because they will inform what type of delivery style you select. There are 4 general types of delivery: impromptu, extemporaneous, the use of a manuscript, and memorized.

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 pre-fab 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.

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.

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.

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.

Rehearsal

Rehearsal sounds like homework, we know. Rehearsing your speech, however, doesn't just assist in increasing one's speech grade. Rehearsing is your commitment to bettering your foundational communication skills for the long haul.

When you rehearse, you are asking: what kind of aesthetic choices do I want to implement? Aesthetic choices can be enhanced or limited based on the situation and context in which you're speaking, both physically and culturally. For example, if you are speaking outside without a microphone, your embodiment of the speech and aesthetic scene would differ from a speech with a lectern in a small classroom.

This might be a good place to dispel a few myths about public speaking that can influence perceptions of rehearsal:

Myth #1: You are either born a good public speaker or not. While someone may have certain characteristics that are attractive in our cultural understanding of public speaking, good rehearsal will create conditions for everyone to become better speakers.

Myth #2: Practice makes perfect. It is possible to practice incorrectly, so in that case, practice will make permanent, not perfect. There is a right way and a wrong way to practice a speech, musical instrument, or sport.

Myth #3: Public speaking is just reading what you wrote or reading and talking at the same time**.** For example: I (one of your authors) often hear envy over my public speaking abilities, but I certainly was not blessed with a universal speaking gene. Instead, I spent years doing debate, speech, and performance to practice writing arguments, responding to ideas, and crafting a public speaking persona. When I do presentations, I spend lots of time workshopping the speech "on my feet" to determine the best type of delivery, where to emphasize, when to move, while considering the entire scene that's being created. Because I have practiced a lot, though, I am more confident about these decisions during the rehearsal process so I perform more consistently.

Have you found yourself using one of these myths? Sadly, we often rely on these myths to talk ourselves into believing that public speaking isn't for us – never was and never will be.

You might also, for example, have attempted rehearsal in the past and thought, "How am I supposed to remember all these words and all these bodily movements at the same time?! It's impossible!" It's true: there's a lot going on when you give a public speech, and focusing on your aesthetic delivery requires a conscious effort. Think about the classic party trick of rubbing your belly and patting your head at the same time. In the first attempt, you may have struggled (like some of us!). With practice, though, you can find strategies that allow you to accomplish this task that, at first glance, was too much.

One major misconception about rehearsal is that it begins when your speech is completely written. Start rehearsing as soon as you can. Too often, speakers wait until the entire speech is complete – it's been created, written, and is on paper. We recommend, however, embedding rehearsal workshops throughout your speech preparation. Why?

Rehearsal and workshopping will assist you in translating the written argument into verbal form. "How does this sound?" or "I think I know another example that would work well here." Using rehearsal to workshop content allows you to listen to the sound of your argument out loud rather than reading on paper only.

Rehearsal, thus, is an ongoing process and part of your entire public speaking preparation. So, now what? What does a good rehearsal consist of?

Check the Space

We've been a broken record, we know, but we'll say it again: think about the context – including the space that you're speaking in. The space—and resources available within it—will influence your rehearsal because you'll know the spatial opportunities and constraints. Let's talk through some key questions that you should ask of the space.

Is there a lectern or podium? If so, should I use it? Many speaking spaces include a lectern or a podium (see Image 11.1)**. A lectern** is a small raised surface, usually with a slanted top, where a speaker can place notes during a speech. **A podium** is a raised platform or stage. Both the lectern and podium allow speakers stability while they present, and there's the added bonus of having some place to rest your speaking notes.

However, even for experienced speakers, it is all too tempting to grip the edges of the lectern with both

Image 11.1

hands for security (like we discussed in Chapter 9). You might even wish you could hide behind it. Remember, too, that opting to keep your hands at your sides will not be visible to your audience. Be aware of these temptations so you can manage them effectively and present yourself to your audience in a manner they will perceive as confident.

If you opt to use a lectern, your rehearsal should integrate a similar structure. As you rehearse, try stepping to the side or front of the lectern when speaking with free hands, only occasionally standing at the lectern to consult your notes. This will enhance your eye contact as well as free up your hands for gesturing.

What size is the space? If you are accustomed to being in a classroom of a certain size, you will need to make adjustments when speaking in a smaller or larger space.

A large auditorium can be intimidating. Most of us are used to sitting in the seats, not standing on the stage! Because it may be difficult to find a space that large while you rehearse, keep a few things in mind:

- Be aware that your voice is likely to echo, especially if far fewer people are in the space than it can hold, so you will want to speak more slowly than usual and make use of pauses to mark the ends of phrases and sentences. When you rehearse, slow down to account for the echo – listen to find ways to speak slowly while avoiding a robotic tone.
- Your facial expressions and gestures should be larger so that they are visible from farther away. If you are using presentation aids, they need to be large enough to be visible from the back of the auditorium. Of course, if you can get the audience to move to the front, that is the best situation, but it tends not to happen.

Limited space is not as disconcerting for most speakers as enormous space, and it has the advantage of minimizing the tendency to pace back and forth while you speak. A small space does call for more careful management of note cards and presentation aids, as your audience will be able to see up close what you are doing with your hands.

What about acoustics? The acoustics of your speaking space can often dictate an audience's ability to hear and comprehend what you're saying. If you are speaking outside, your voice is likely to carry and be less insulated than a theatre or small classroom. Remember, if your audience can't hear you, they can't experience your speech.

Check for a microphone: using a microphone will amplify your voice, so it is a good choice to increase your

Image 11.2 A microphone can drastically affect projection and acoustics

volume in an open or large acoustic space. Remember that a microphone may require that you slow down for the sound to carry. Check to see if it is handheld or can be clipped on. This may seem like a small difference, but it will affect your ability to move and gesture, so this small detail can make a larger impact on your aesthetic choices.

If you have never spoken with a microphone, ask to do a sound check and use that time to perform the first few lines of your speech to get an understanding of how your language will sound through a microphone in that space.

Workshop Strategies

Rehearsal means workshopping the embodiment of your speech. This is key because, as we've discussed, a speech is experienced differently by the audience than if they were reading it on a page. The sooner you begin and the sooner you become comfortable with rehearsal, the better your content will translate to the audience. To assist, let's talk through some rehearsal strategies and best practices. Rather than a linear process, view these processes and strategies as circular or recursive – continue returning to each throughout rehearsal.

Conduct a self-assessment: We often hear, "oh no; I hate to listen to myself talk." And we get it. It can feel strange to self-assess. While difficult and sometimes frustrating, it's important to know what kind of speaker you are and what you'd like to improve. For example, are you often quiet and asked to speak up? Or, conversely, are you a loud talker whose booming voice fills up the room with ease?

These general questions about your communication style can begin giving insight into your strengths as a speaker, and the answers will be your focus areas during rehearsal. If you know that you're a quick-talker, you'll want to pay attention to pace and consciously integrate additional pauses. If you struggle with eye contact, asking a friend to rehearse with you can increase your comfort with engaging through eye contact.

However, you can only gain so much about your speaking strengths by investigating your general communication style. The best way to get a baseline understanding of your speaking style is to—you guessed it – watch yourself give a speech. Yes, this may feel awkward. But it's worth it. When watching, we recommend that you identify any aesthetic choices that emerge more than once. After all, you're looking for key areas to improve, so you want to hone in on things that seem to trip you up over and over.

With that in mind, we recommend two ways to approach conducting a self-assessment: start with general questions and move toward specific examples. Figure 11.1 guides you through this process.

Conducting a Self-Assessment

As you watch yourself speak, take general notes about your aesthetic experience as though you are an audience member.

- What kind of overall aesthetic experience is being portrayed? What "felt sense" am I leaving the audience with? Does this match the overall tone of the content?
  - What were successful moments where, as I watched, I felt particularly called in?
    - What aesthetic choices were present? What did I do that successfully delivered the content?
    - How was that idea organized or supported? Did I use language that I want to remember?
  - What were moments that felt jarring or disconnected?
    - How did I deliver the content? What didn't work?
    - Was the content confusing? What sounded off? Did I provide enough support or evidence?
  - What would I change to more successful?

Figure 11.1

In conducting a self-assessment, your main goal is identifying opportunities for improvement and understanding your current strengths. The more comfortable you become with self-assessing, the less likely you'll finish a speech and say, "I have no idea what I just did."

Rehearse with all speaking materials: Rehearse with everything that you'll speak with. Too often, speakers use their full outline (or even a full manuscript) when rehearsing and make a speaking outline right before standing up to speak. This makes effectiveness difficult, and understandably so. If you're used to looking down at a full-length paper, using a notecard and a few keywords will feel radically strange and different in the moment.

Instead, rehearse with everything that you'll speak with, including your speaking notes (check out Chapter 6 for assistance on creating a speaking outline). Speaking notes are your friend, and workshopping with your notes will create consistency and familiarity when you formally speak.

Pro Tip: Make sure that your speaking notes include proper oral citations: give credit where credit is due!

There are benefits beyond familiarity. You can, for example, create cues on your notes that communicate with your future speaking self. Do you have trouble with projection? Use a green highlighter on your speaking notes to remind yourself to "speak up!" The more you rehearse with that green mark, the more confidently and consciously you can work on projecting.

In addition to speaking notes, you should rehearse with any other materials that will be present – a presentational aid, a table, a chair, etc. If you're using PowerPoint, you'll want to rehearse with a clicker since you'll likely have an additional device to hold. As you rehearse, ask: "do I need to hold this the entire time? Can I seamlessly place it on a table nearby? How long does the audience need to experience each slide?"

The more you integrate these materials into your rehearsal, the more seamless they'll appear the day that you speak. Rather than be burdensome or awkward, they will be part of the speaking experience.

Start over and over and over: That's right. Rehearsal is an over-and-over-and-over again process not a one-time-through ordeal. While a self-assessment is a key part of rehearsal, you may be unable to video yourself prior to a speech or presentation. In that case, starting over and workshopping repeatedly will be key.

As you begin workshopping, listen to the argumentative flow of your content: does this make sense? Can an idea be clarified? Does the transition connect the main points fully? How does the concluding thought leave the audience? Listening to the arguments will allow you to make aesthetic and delivery choices that will enhance that information.

Try it different ways. Listen. Try it another way. Listen. Do it again.

Successful rehearsal is a process of self-reflection and being comfortable critiquing your own presentational style. You can always (and we recommend) ask others for help – feedback will provide you with different perspectives. These techniques, however,

should always happen before the day of your speech. We provide some day-of recommendations below.

The Day of Your Speech

Rehearsal continues until the moment you speak, including the day-of preparation. There are a few day-of rehearsal techniques that we recommend.

Warm up your voice. Have you ever begun talking and instead of a clear, articulate sentence, your voice sounded scratchy and awkward? Perhaps you had to clear your throat for your voice to return. That's because your muscles weren't warmed up. When you begin your speech, you want your voice and vocal cords to be warmed up to allow higher blood flow to reduce hoarseness. Consider the following warm-up exercises:

- Avoid holding tenseness by dropping the shoulders and taking a few deep breaths.
- Open your mouth as wide as possible, close it, and open it again.
- Warm up the tongue by rolling the tongue a few times (you know the sound!)
- Select a few words and work to over-enunciate them by placing extra emphasis as you speak out loud.

These are just a few suggestions to get your vocals warmed up. We know these sound a bit weird, and we don't often see people standing in the hallway stretching out their mouth or vocal cords. But that's OK! Find a private spot and try to be comfortable in warming up your vocals.

Warm up your body. Your speech is a full-body experience, so warming up your body is key. Because public speaking is embodied, you want to feel connected with all parts of your body so that you can comfortably and confidently engage. There is no "right way" to warm up, so use warm-up techniques that work best for you. We enjoy deep breathing, stretching, and shaking out the limbs.

Warming up your body can also help reduce the jittery feelings of communication anxiety. If you're feeling anxious, try implementing strategies to reduce communication apprehension. We recommend looking back over the last section of Chapter 1 – the section provides suggestions on how to reduce and/or manage communication apprehension.

Finally, trust yourself. You have worked hard. You know your stuff. Help the audience experience that time and labor.

Conclusion

This chapter has concluded Part 3 on creating an aesthetic experience. We worked to identify key delivery techniques – impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript, and memorized.

You now have helpful starting places when workshopping a speech. Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse.

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4: APPROACHES

4.1: Informative Speaking
4.2: Persuasive Speaking
4.3: Online Public Speaking
4.4: Ceremonial Speaking

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4.1: Informative Speaking

Learning Objectives

- Define Informative Speaking
- Identify Types of Informative Speeches
- Explain guidelines for Developing an Informative Speech

Has someone provided you information and afterward you thought, “what were they talking about?” or “why does this matter to me?” We, too, have found ourselves dazed and confused after an informational presentation or an exchange in a meeting.

“What?” we ask ourselves, often in response to information that: a) we already knew, b) is confusingly presented, or c) doesn’t seem applicable to us. In these instances, the information was ineffectively presented. Perhaps it wasn’t clear. Perhaps it was disorganized. Perhaps it was not adapted to meet you as the recipient.

Gathering and understanding new information is a part of becoming critical thinkers, so effective information sharing through informative speaking can be a powerful and important tool. In this chapter, we chart informative speaking and provide guidelines for approaching and preparing an informative speech. Let’s start with the purpose and goal.

What is an Informative Speech?

The purpose of an informative speech is to share information that: a) increases audience understanding around a topic, b) provides an alternative, and/or c) raises awareness. You might, for example, give an informative speech that raises awareness about the increase in Kansas tornadoes over the past 15 years. Alternatively, you may increase your audience’s understanding about your city’s housing code changes. In each of these examples, you are selecting a topic and relevant content that would be useful for the audience to know.

Basically, an informative speech conveys knowledge— a task that every person engages in every day in some form or another. Whether giving someone who is lost directions, explaining the specials of the day as a server, or describing the plot of a movie to friends, people engage in daily forms of information sharing. When done well, information can provide a new perspective or increase our knowledge around a topic.

Despite the everyday nature of information sharing, approaching an informative speech can be slightly daunting. As the speaker, you are responsible for identifying an argument that is worthwhile—and in the age of globalization and access to digital information, there’s a lot of stuff to sort through and choose from.

The key to an effective informative speech is identifying what information your audience needs. Why, for example, would it be important for your audience to know about major climate changes in Kansas? Does the audience already know? Would it benefit them? Remember that all information may not be relevant to all audiences. You may decide that sharing the city’s changes to housing codes isn’t particularly useful for an audience that doesn’t reside in the affected neighborhoods. In other words: information is not equal in all contexts, so your job as a speaker is to advocate for meaningful, teachable content. When you select that content to share with an audience – an action that can provide alternatives and expand viewpoints—you are advocating for the relevance and timeliness of that informative topic.

Through information sharing, however, you are not taking a particular side or providing the audience with a call to action. While informative speeches advocate for novel ideas, they do not explicitly attempt to convince the audience that one thing is better than another—it doesn’t attempt to persuade (which we’ll cover in the next chapter). This can be a tricky distinction and one that you should attend to. Even if you are informing the audience about differences in views on controversial topics, you should simply and clearly explain each side of the issue.

Understanding the types of informative speeches may help as you work on selecting information that doesn’t persuade.

"Can't We Find all the Information We Need on the Internet?

We often hear, "If we can find anything on the Internet now, why bother to give an informative speech?" The answer lies in the unique relationship between audience and speaker found in the public speaking context. The speaker can choose to present information that is of most value to the audience.

Secondly, the speaker is not just overloading the audience with data. As we have mentioned before, that's not really a good idea because audiences cannot remember great amounts of data and facts after listening. The focus of the content is what matters. This is where the specific purpose and central idea come into play.

Third, although we have stressed that the informative speech is fact-based and does not have the purpose of persuasion, information still has an indirect effect on someone. If a classmate gives a speech on correctly using the Heimlich Maneuver to help a choking victim, the side effect (and probably desired result) is that the audience would use it when confronted with the situation.

TYPES OF INFORMATIVE SPEECHES

Understanding types of informative speech that you will give can help you to figure out the best way to organize, research, and prepare. While the topics to choose for informative speeches are nearly limitless, they can generally be pared down into four broad types: description, definition, explanation, or demonstration.

Speeches that Describe

Speeches of description provide a clear, vivid, and memorable picture of a person, place, thing, idea, or alternative. In this category, your goal is to effectively describe your topic in ways that allow the audience to visualize that idea. Put differently: you place the audience *in the scene* of the topic.

Suppose you are an archaeologist (some of you likely are). This approach would be appropriate if you wanted to highlight a recent discovery in your field – you might describe a key finding from a dig site that advances the scientific perspective on evolution. The speech would attempt to place the audience at the dig site by describing how the finding was uncovered, the artifact itself, etc. Describing information can help simplify content for an audience that is unfamiliar with an archaeological perspective.

If you opt to provide information to an audience about alternatives, describing the differences in each alternative can be an effective application of descriptive speeches. June, for example, is celebrated as LGBTQ Pride month throughout the United States. After doing research and brainstorming, you may realize that there are a plethora of Pride events and gatherings throughout your city, and you want to provide your audience with that information. Describing the different venues and events might allow audiences to understand what each alternative event experience might provide.

For any topic that you approach descriptively, ask yourself:

- Have I effectively described this idea for an audience that may be unfamiliar with the information?
- Can I revisit the language and be more vivid?
- Am I describing information that's related to my thesis statement?
- How can I use descriptive language that intrigues the audiences and relates this information to their lives?

Speeches that Define

Definitional speeches provide the meaning of an idea to the audience. Definitional speeches are helpful to clarify or simplify concepts, theories, or ideas that an audience may be otherwise unfamiliar.

For example, one of our authors has the tattoo "advocate feminism."

"What does that mean?" she's often asked. If we take a definitional approach, she would work to define and outline feminism, perhaps by providing the origin of the word or defining different feminist movements. While "advocate feminism" may appear persuasive, definitional informative speeches allow speakers to identify components of an idea that are based in information-sharing rather than asking the audience to change their perspective.

A common approach to selecting a definitional speech topic is to trace the history or origin of an idea (like feminism), an object,

person, or theory.

If you're a mathematician, for example, you might opt for a definitional speech that focuses on a contemporary mathematical theory. Because the perspective may seem abstract, a definitional approach can simply that abstraction by defining what it is for the audience.

For any topic that takes a definitional approach, ask:

- Have I provided definitional support in a way that's clear to my audience?
- Have I defined all key parts of my topic? Have I over-defined? (In other words, is my speech just a list of definitions?)
- Is my speech too abstract? Have I provided examples and placed these definitions in contexts that my audience can connect with?

Speeches that Explain

Speeches of explanation detail processes or how something works, often explaining an otherwise complex, abstract, or unfamiliar idea to the audience. This approach is common in industry-settings or professional contexts where a speaker needs to explain the process, data, or results of a study or program.

Explanatory speeches provide audiences with a behind-the-scenes look at information. Interested in philosophy? An explanatory speech may be appropriate to help audiences wade through a current philosophical perspective that you find fascinating. Interested in the United States criminal justice system? You could report on current body camera policies.

Teaching is a great example of explanatory speeches because teachers regularly explain assignments, protocols, policies, rubrics, etc. A teacher's main goal is to clarify expectations by using language that's appropriate to the audience—their students!

Think back to our opening topic example about changes in city codes around housing. An explanatory approach would work to explain how those changes occurred, detail the code changes to the audience, and/or explain how the changes would affect their neighborhoods.

For explanatory speech topics, ask yourself:

- Have I effectively explained all components of the topic?
- Are my explanations effectively translated to the audience and context?
- Do my explanations detail how and why this information is relevant to the audience?

Speeches that Demonstrate

Speeches of demonstration are, well, you guessed it: speeches that demonstrate how something is done for the audience. These can be fun because they allow you to teach the audience something cool and interesting.

Demonstration speeches are commonly called "how to" speeches because they show the audience how to do something. These speeches require you to provide steps that will help your audience understand how to accomplish a specific task or process—bake cookies, for example. After a speech on how to verify information that's found on memes, for example, the audience members could probably do it on their own.

However, these speeches can be tricky because a) the audience may be familiar with your demonstration, or b) the limited time can constrain what you're able to demonstrate. If you want to demonstrate how to bake cookies, for example, your audience may be familiar with that process. The demonstration may lack uniqueness or novelty, especially if audiences are more confident turning on YouTube. It may also be difficult to provide all the necessary steps in the space or context that you're speaking. If you're an experienced baker, you may know that determining when the cookies are done can be a difficult part of the process, but your classroom space likely doesn't facilitate the inclusion of that step.

Ask yourself:

- Does this information require a demonstration (i.e. is a demonstrative speech the best approach)?
- Am I able to outline all the steps in the time provided?
- Have I adequately outlined all the steps?

- What materials do I need to bring to guarantee the success of the demonstration in the space that I've been given to speak?

Section Summary

While we have provided categories to assist in understanding types of informative speeches, your topic may require adopting tactics from more than one approach.

Consider "recidivism" in the criminal justice system – the likelihood for a person to re-offend after being convicted of a crime. If you were interested in informing your audience about recidivism, you would likely need to define recidivism – a term that may be unfamiliar to some – and explain how recidivism occurs in the context of the prison system. Alternatively, you could take a descriptive approach – after defining recidivism – and describe one person's experience going through the system.

Different Informative Speech Routes to 3D Printing	
Definitional Speech	Define 3D printing, the history, key events, or figures.
Descriptive Speech	Describe a 3D printer and describe how new material is created.
Explanatory Speech	Explain the science behind 3D printing and how it affects different industries.
Demonstrative Speech	Bring in a 3D printer and show the audience how it works.
	Table 12.1

As you begin to develop your topic, these 4 types of informative speeches can help direct your preparation and identify your specific purpose statement. Your goal, in general, is to inform, but your specific purpose will be to define, demonstrate, explain, and/or describe.

Guidelines for Selecting and Developing Your Informative Speech

Now that you have a better understanding of the informative speech types, let's talk specifically about developing your own informative speech: from topic selection through a completed outline.

We know what you're thinking: "We've already covered how to select, write, and organize arguments." While, yes, we did discuss general approaches to these processes in Part 2 on arguments, a refresher always helps. Below, we focus on guidelines for developing your informative speeches, specifically.

Pick a Focused and Unique Topic

First, pick an informative topic that is narrow and novel. Your speech emanates and builds from your topic, and your goal should be picking a thesis statement that is focused and unique to your audience.

A large misconception about informative speeches is that bigger and broader is better. Oftentimes, topics that are super broad happen for two reasons:

- As the speaker, you believe that a broader topic will require less research. You might believe that you can brainstorm and research 5 minutes of information on a topic quickly, but if you investigate the topic, that research is often overwhelming because of the breadth of information. For example, suppose that you selected "to describe the Civil War for my audience" as your specific purpose. The Civil War was, conservatively speaking, four years long, resulted in over 750,000 casualties, and arguably changed the course of human history. A typical college library has hundreds of books dealing with the Civil War.

It's a myth, then, that broader topics mean less research. (Also: research is cool, so try to hone your research skills, not avoid them.)
- The speaker uses their first topic idea or concept that seems interesting. When you find a topic that sparks your interest, it's tempting to keep that idea as-is. You may want to select the Civil War because you're interested in learning more about a key moment in U.S. history. Great! We encourage you to research, learn, and explore – but it's unlikely that you have time to cover all facets of the topic with any depth. It's OK to use the first topic that sparks your interest, but it's likely that the topic will be too broad.

Instead, limit and narrow your topic. "How do we do that?" you might be wondering.

Like we mentioned in Chapter 3, brainstorming will allow you to map what information you already know about an argument or topic.

Brainstorming Run-Down: The Funnel Approach
What are the most interesting components of this topic, for me?
What do I already know?
What areas of this topic do I have expertise?
How does research characterize or categorize this topic?
Are there new or current insights?
Is this information unique and useful to my audience?
Table 12.2

The questions in Figure 12.2 can aid you in narrowing your topic and identifying an insight that's unique to your audience. We often refer to this as the "**funnel approach**" – or starting broad and moving downward to a more specific idea. The Civil War is a broad, umbrella topic, and you could use research and the lateral approach (as introduced in Chapter 4) to funnel toward, for example, focusing on a key person that's often left out of history.

While all the questions in Figure 12.2 are important, the last question – "is this information unique to my audience?" – is key. Think about "unique" topics in two ways:

- A topic is unique if the audience is unfamiliar with the idea. You may, for example, inform your audience about a new Climate Change technology that a local non-profit was launching. In this case, the entire topic is unique and the audience will learn something new. They're unfamiliar with the tech.
- Second, a topic is unique if it provides novelty. There are times when your audience will know about the topic generally, but that doesn't automatically eliminate that idea; instead, ask: can I provide or approach this topic in a new or unfamiliar way? For example, "organ donation" is a common informative speech topic, but it often lacks novelty because speakers include general information that is already known by the audience. That doesn't prohibit "organ donation" as a topic, but it means speakers should approach the topic by finding information that is novel and fresh.

Let's talk through an extended example. Malcolm Gladwell (2019) in his podcast, "Revisionist History," provides an interesting informative perspective about the Boston Tea Party. At first glance, "Boston Tea Party" seems pretty broad for a topic, and it's likely that many of Gladwell's audience is already familiar with the Boston Tea Party, so the idea appears too big and lacking

novelty. Gladwell, however, narrows the topic by focusing on smuggling practices that facilitated the event. We won't spoil the episode, but he masterfully narrows down a broad idea to provide listeners with a fresh and unfamiliar perspective.

Pro Tip: Look back at Chapter 3 for help on crafting thesis statements.

Pick a Clear Structure

After selecting a topic, you'll begin expanding your informative argument, identifying an organizational pattern, and writing the outline. As you begin a working outline, the structure will play an important role in writing a successful speech. By structure, we mean 3 things: the outline structure, the argument structure, and the citation structure. Pay attention to all 3 during the speech development stage.

Organizational Structure

First, ask yourself, "what organizational pattern fits my specific purpose and/or working thesis statement?"

For topics that are broad, the information may be applicable to any of the organizational patterns that we outlined in Chapter 6. If your information is easily manipulated into multiple organizational patterns, we'd suggest asking, "can I make this more focused?" or, "how do I want to present this information?"

If you're confident in your working thesis statement, begin to gather information and research. As you do, think about how that information might fit into organizational patterns and how those patterns provide opportunities or constraints for your topic.

Consider our opening example about housing code changes in a city. You could approach this chronologically and map the linear progression of changes to the city code. Alternatively, you could use a categorical pattern and compare how the housing codes will affect different neighborhoods. These are both possibilities – it just depends on the kind of story you want to tell the audience.

Argument Structure

Working on a clear structure doesn't stop with the organizational pattern, however. Be attuned to the argument structure within your main points.

Even with informative speeches, claims, evidence, and warrants should still be integrated. For example, one main point on a demonstrative baking speech might read:

- *Claim:* Bake cookies for approximately 10 minutes for chewy yet crunchy cookies.
- *Evidence*: In 2019, Stacy Smith of *Bakers Forever* tested different times for baking cookies, finding that 10 minutes was the sweet spot.
- *Warrant*: A reputable baker, Stacy's research does the work for us! Rather than open the oven every few seconds, we can be confident that a 10-minute cookie will result in the perfect consistency.

Warrants can play a particularly important role in an informative speech. A warrant – or connection between the claim and evidence – isn't always persuasive. Instead, utilize warrants to detail why that information should matter for the audience. If it's helpful, you can think of the warrant as the link between the claim, evidence, *and audience*.

Being clear in your argument structure can also aid in narrowing your topic. It's common for informative speakers to realize, "Woah! I have way too many claims here. I need to add more supporting materials and explanations, but I won't have time. I need to narrow this topic down."

As you work on your outline, it's imperative that your claims are accompanied by their appropriate argumentative companions: evidence and warrants.

Citation Structure

Finally, citations – both written and spoken – are part of a clear informative speech structure.

As you strengthen your ability to write arguments, continue to integrate proper references. Ask yourself: "Have I given credit to

this evidence in the outline and reference page?" "Have I rehearsed my oral citations?"

Part of answering these questions is being appraised of the proper citation structure that's required – APA, or MLA, for example. If you aren't properly integrating that structure, you aren't properly citing the research that supports your topic.

Provide Accurate, Clear, and Interesting Information

A good informative speech conveys accurate information to the audience in a way that is clear and that keeps the listener interested in the topic. Achieving all three of these goals—accuracy, clarity, and interest—is the key to being an effective speaker. If information is inaccurate, unclear, or uninteresting, it will be of limited usefulness to the audience.

Part of being accurate is making sure that your information is current. Even if you know a great deal about your topic, you will need to verify the accuracy and completeness of what you know, especially if it is medical or scientific information. Most people understand that technology changes rapidly, so you need to update your information almost constantly. The same is true for topics that, on the surface, may seem to require less updating. For example, the Civil War occurred over 150 years ago, but contemporary research still offers new and emerging theories about the causes of the war and key individuals who may have been left out of common history books. Even with a topic that seems to be unchanging, carefully check the information to be sure it's accurate and up to date.

Second, be clear. Like we've discussed, make sure you're avoiding jargon or complicated information that the audience may not understand. Remember that informative speeches are meant to increase the audience's understanding, and if the language, evidence, or examples are too complex, it's unlikely to achieve that goal.

Third, be interesting! What defines "interesting?" In approaching the informative speech, you should keep in mind the overall principle that the audience is asking, "what's in it for me?" The audience is either consciously or unconsciously wondering "What's in this topic for me? How can I use this information? Of what value is this speech content to me? Why should I listen to it?" A good way to answer this question for others is to answer it for yourself. Why do you find your topic interesting? Work outward from there. You might consider it one of the jobs of the introduction to directly or indirectly answer this question. If you can't, then you need to think about your topic and why you are addressing it. If it's only because the topic is interesting to you, you are missing the point.

Accuracy, clarity, and interest are incredibly important. It can be tempting to approach informative speaking with the attitude that "I'm just reporting facts that other people have stated," but we want to minimize that approach. You are gathering information and crafting an interesting narrative around the importance of that idea – that's a difficult but worthwhile skill.

Remember the 3 C's: Constitutive, Contextual, Cultural

Finally, when developing your informative speech, ask yourself, am I representing information in ways that acknowledge that communication is constitutive, contextual, and cultural?

It's common to believe that reporting knowledge or "facts" could never result in unethical communication or representations. After all, it's not persuasive! But information sharing is not neutral, even in informative speaking, so we must consider how our communication represents others.

You may decide, for example, to provide your audience with information on a cultural practice that differs from their own, and that can be great! However, if you aren't part of that culture, be careful in how you represent those practices to others and work to avoid appropriating or reducing complex cultural beliefs or practices.

In sum, your speeches are part of world-making. The language that you use to describe, define, explain, or demonstrate an idea is impactful to your audience.

Conclusion

Learning how to give informative speeches will serve you well in your college career and your future work. Keep in mind the principles in this chapter but also those of the previous chapters: relating to the informational needs of the audience, using clear structure, and incorporating interesting and attention-getting supporting evidence.

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4.2: Persuasive Speaking

Learning Objectives

- Define persuasive speaking
- Explore organizational patterns for persuasive speeches
- Explain the barriers to persuading an audience
- Identify common logical fallacies

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 that 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.

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.

Pro-Tip: Use Chapter 3 as a guide to brainstorming and conducting exploratory research around controversies.

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. Like we outlined in Chapter 1, 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.

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. 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.*
- *Mascots that involve Native American names, characters, and symbols are demeaning.*
- *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.

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.

Pro Tip: For topic development, remember insights from Chapter 12 — topics should be focused and unique.

Organizing Persuasive Propositions

Organization plays a key role in comprehending an argument. Chapter 6 on organizing provides you a nice starting place to decide which organizational pattern is best suited for different speech types. 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. Monroe's Motivated Sequence involves five steps, which should not be confused with the main points of the outline. Some steps in Monroe's Motivated Sequence may take two points. Each step is described below:

- **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.
- **Need.** Here the problem is defined and defended. 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.
- **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.
- **Visualization.** This step looks to the future either positively or negatively. If positive, the benefits from enacting or choosing the solution are shown. If negative, the disadvantages of not doing any-thing to solve the problem are shown.
- **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.

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.

With any organizational pattern selected, it's imperative to group your main points around clear claims that are supported with evidence and explained with a warrant. As you develop your persuasive arguments, stay appraised of who your audience is and best practices for persuasion.

Developing the Persuasive Speech: Appealing to anAudience

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 13.1) is a tool that allows you to visualize your audience's relationship with your topic.

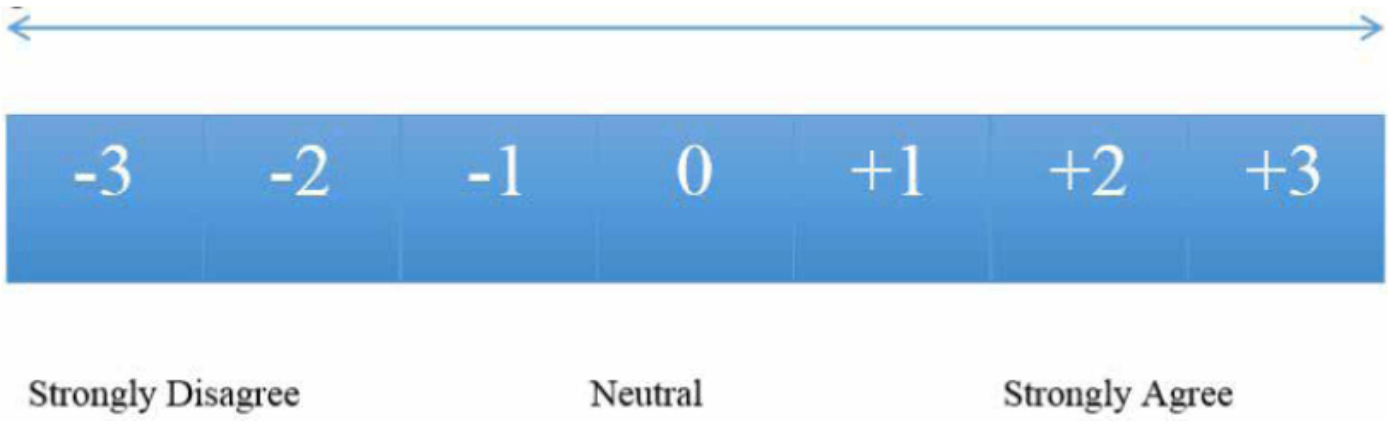

Figure 13.1

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.

Throwback: Use Chapter 2 to dig deeper into audience values, beliefs, and attitudes.

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 re-cap.

Ethos is the influence of speaker credentials and character in a speech. Ethos is achieved through citing reliable, authoritative sources, strong arguments, showing awareness of the audience, and effective delivery.

Pathos means using the emotions such as love, anger, joy, hate, desire for community to persuade the audience of the rightness of a proposition.

Finally, logos refers to the organized and logical arguments that are used to support a claim.

So, what do these mean in practice? Suppose that your speech is trying to motivate the audience to support expanding bus routes on your campus. Use Table 13.2 to track the use of rhetorical appeals.

Using Rhetorical Appeals		
Ethos	**Pathos**	**Logos**
"On days with poor weather, rain, or snow, many of you are like me, waiting in a pile up of students to catch the campus bus. As one of those students..." "After speaking with the transportation department on campus..."	"Imagine yourself at the bus stop. Waiting. Your clock ticks as missing class becomes a vivid thought. As more time passes, your heart races, knowing you'll miss a big test with no late work."	"In a study conducted by transportation department on campus, 63% of students reported that unpredictable and slow buses led to missing class."
	Table 13.2	

In sum, the audience plays a central role in persuasion, so staying tuned-in to audience beliefs and expectations is key.

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, we 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. Look back to the persuasive continuum scale in Figure 13.1. Trying to move an audience from -3 to +2 or +3 is too big a move. Since change is resisted, 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. Even moving someone from -3 to -2 is progress, and 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 does 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.

Understanding and Avoiding Fallacies

So far, we've discussed persuasive speaking and strategies to move your audience along the persuasive continuum. Motivating your audience to change, however, must be done ethically while using good reasons.

In Chapter 5, we began discussing best practices in constructing arguments. In this section, we dive deeper into reasoning by highlighting a common pitfall: the use of **fallacies**— erroneous conclusions or statements made from poor analyses. There are actually dozens upon dozens of fallacies, and we identify 9 common fallacies 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 Fac e book, 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 **strawperson** 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

Appealsto 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.

Section Summary

Fallacies reduce good reasoning and they weaken your argument. To avoid fallacies, think critically about what evidence is being used, and if your claim and warrant are reasonable explanations and articulations of that evidence. A key way to avoid fallacies is to double and triple check your evidence to make sure that a) the evidence is credible, b) there is enough evidence to support your claim, and c) you have explained the evidence using good reasons.

Conclusion

Persuasive speaking is an opportunity to share a passion or cause that you believe will matter to society and help the audience live a better life. Even if you are initially uncomfortable with the idea of persuasion, we use it all the time in different ways. Choose your topic based on your own commitment and experience, look for quality evidence, craft your proposition so that it will be clear and audience appropriate, and put the finishing touches on it with an eye toward enhancing your logos, ethos, and pathos.

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4.3: Online Public Speaking

Learning Objectives

- Explore digital public speaking as an emerging medium
- Define synchronous and asynchronous communication
- Strategize best practices for online speaking

Traditionally, public speaking has been understood as a face-to-face exchange between a designated speaker and an audience. Like we discussed in Chapter 1, this understanding of public speaking has a 2500-year history. In fact, when you imagine a public speaker, you likely picture a person standing on a stage with a podium and speaking in front of a live audience.

However, new media and digital technologies have begun expanding both our access to public speakers and our platforms to speak and reach new audiences. YouTube—a global video sharing service—has more than 1.8 billion monthly users (Gilbert, 2018), and these are just people who log-in! If you're like us, you've likely watched hours of content published on YouTube, from instructional videos to political commentary. You may even access videos on Instagram Live or Facebook. With access to these platforms, speakers are now able to broadcast their insights and advocacies to a global audience.

Businesses, too, have begun using online public speaking. Webinars, video conferences, and digital speakers have permeated professional industries, and it's becoming increasingly important to consider best practices for creating and being in the audience for online public speeches.

Like any approach toward public speaking, online public speaking offers a variety of opportunities and constraints. Below, we outline what digital public speaking is and how to prepare to speak online.

Online Public Speaking

Onlinepublic speaking – also knowns as digital oratory—is a "thesis-driven, vocal, embodied public address that is housed within (online) new media platforms" (Lind, 2012, p. 164). Like all public speeches, an online speech should be well-prepared, organized, well-reasoned, and well-rehearsed. As you think through an online speech, purpose, synchronicity, and the audience all play key roles.

Purpose

Online speaking opportunities are not created equally, and each speech will have different goals—informing, persuading, or entertaining. Remember that digital oratory requires a thesis statement, and the purpose will dictate how you craft the information that you're going to present. With ready access to video technology that can be transmitted through our phones, it can be tempting to log-in and let our followers into our lives through a stream-of-consciousness vlog, but that's not the type of digital oratory that constitutes prepared public speaking. Instead, it's important to begin by asking: what's my purpose? What's my thesis? Then, organize your speech around the answer.

For example, you might be participating—or leading—a "**webinar,"** which is a meeting or presentation over the Internet using a tool such as Blackboard Collaborate, Citrix, GoToMeeting, Adobe Connect, or one of many other web conferencing tools. You could also record an instructional video that details how to navigate a new piece of technology. Alternatively, you may be asked to send a digital response that reviews a policy change or advocacy. Each speech will have a different purpose and, in turn, different expectations on what you should include. Once you've identified the goal, use earlier chapters to begin crafting content.

Synchronicity

Like we mentioned, traditional public speaking occurs in face-to-face contexts. If you're presenting a speech live, you're speaking **synchronously**, meaning your audience is experiencing it in real-time. Some online public speeches occur synchronously. If

you're speaking to a non-profit organization about a local food pantry project through Skype and the members of the organization are tuning in live to watch and hear your presentation, the speech is synchronous.

In synchronous online speaking, many of the same face-to-face speaking principles apply. Like we've discussed, live presentations are ephemeral, meaning they happen once. In synchronous online speaking – unless it's being recorded – you have one chance to create a clear message, so it's imperative that your content and information are crafted for clear understanding.

Alternatively, you may speak **asynchronously**, meaning that the speech may be recorded and watched at a different time. YouTube, for example, houses many asynchronous videos, allowing audiences to tune in and watch when their schedule allows it. With an asynchronous video, speakers may have additional time to record, watch, and re-do if necessary. Similarly, audiences also have the ability to re-watch your presentation or pause the speech, if needed.

Each option provides different opportunities and constraints.

In synchronous speaking, you may be more comfortable in adopting and applying face-to-face public speaking strategies, including integrating live audience feedback. It's common in synchronous online speaking for audiences to post questions or provide live feedback, allowing you to adjust your content and fill in gaps. If there is a technological mishap, however, you aren't able to correct it later. The mishap also happens in real time, and those barriers can influence your ethos as a speaker.

In asynchronous speaking, you are able to control the content more easily because you can re-record, so if there's a technological error, you can fix it! However, you lose the ability for audiences to provide you with live feedback, so you may be unaware if there's a key question or issue that audiences need answered. We'll discuss audiences in more detail below.

The Audience

New media has expanded the audience pool for public speaking. In traditional public speaking, the audience is often limited to those individuals who show up for the event—the audience is explicit or **discrete.** In online speaking, you may have a discrete or dispersed audience. These different audience types, along with synchronicity, alter how audience engagement can occur.

Consider our earlier example about presenting to a non-profit organization through Skype. In this example, it's likely that you're aware of who the audience is, so you're able to link your content to the discrete (or defined) audience.

However, your audience may be dispersed and more difficult to determine. If you become passionate about a local policy, for example, and decide to post a speech on YouTube, the audience is **dispersed** because it's unclear who will click the link. With a dispersed audience, it can be difficult to make specific references or calls to action because geographic locations may alter what individuals are able to do.

With a dispersed audience, there's also an increased risk that audience members won't view your digital speech. In Chapter 3, we discussed how digital communication has led to information overload – we've all experienced it. If you're like us, you might scan through Instagram stories, clicking past images or videos that don't catch your attention. If you're posting a digital speech with a less-defined audience, the first few lines – the attention getter – become crucial to hook them into watching. Spend a little extra time crafting and rehearsing your attention getter.

Being in the Audience: you'll likely audience many online public speeches – synchronous and asynchronous. Remember to take your position as an audience member seriously and avoid negative comments or trolling behavior. Even if you don't know the speaker, how you contribute to the dialogue online (or how you communicate) still functions constitutively, so make sure the world-making that you're participating in is ethical.

Section Summary

As you can see, there are quite a few variations that define the context of a digital speech: an informative, asynchronous speech with a discrete audience; a persuasive synchronous speech with a dispersed audience. The more information you have about these variations, the more you can be prepared to digitally speak with confidence and clarity.

Rehearsing to Speak Online

Rehearsing to speak online can feel a bit odd, especially when video software enters the mix. You'll be more effective in rehearsal

if you're aware of the speaking context, including the categories mentioned in the previous section: purpose, synchronicity, and audience. Knowing the context will and should inform how you rehearse for a digital speech because you should always rehearse under the conditions that you'll speak.

Pro-Tip: Rehearse under the conditions that you'll speak.

Generally, we recommend integrating aesthetic strategies (as discussed in Part 3 of this book) as you would for other speeches—including the purposeful development of verbal, nonverbal delivery, and presentation aids. There are a few additional variables for delivering a speech digitally that we'll track below.

Verbal Delivery

Verbal delivery is key in a digital speech – particularly webinars or web conferencing where your vocals overlay a slideshow and your body isn't visible to an audience. Verbal enunciation, punctuation, rate, and pauses become key to maintaining your audiences' attention. "Energy" becomes a key word – an energetic voice has variety and interest to it.

Audio-recording yourself during rehearsal on your smartphone or other device is a good first step, followed by thinking critically and honestly about whether your voice is listless, flat, or lacks energy. 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. As we have mentioned repeatedly through this book, preparing means practicing your speech orally and physically, many times.

Sound and projection are two variables that can affect your verbal delivery in digital contexts. It's important to rehearse with any technology – including a microphone – that will be present and in the physical context that you'll record the formal speech. If you have a microphone, you will need to alter your projection level. If you don't have a microphone, be aware of how the recording device will pick up sound – including your voice and other noise around you. Extra noise can influence your credibility and the likelihood that an audience will continue listening.

For example, one of your authors recently had a local mayoral race, and the candidates used Instagram Live as a platform to deliver their insights. One candidate sat outside and, after they gave an initial welcome, began answering questions that were posted live. Sadly, however, being outside without a microphone made it difficult to hear, and there was lots of noisy feedback from the wind.

Like we mentioned above, effective rehearsal occurs under the conditions that you'll speak. There are additional factors in digital contexts that can influence your vocal delivery, so rehearse with those factors in mind.

Nonverbal Delivery

When rehearsing your nonverbal delivery, ask, "what's visible in the video?"

If your body is visible, you should rehearse with Chapter 8, nonverbal delivery, in mind. As you rehearse, be conscious of where the recording device will be. Will there be just one? Will there be multiple videos? How far away? In some instances, audiences may have the ability to view your speech from multiple vantage points. Being aware of where those cameras are—one or multiple – is key to rehearsing your eye contact and facial expressions.

Eye contact is still a key part of a digital speech. While you can avoid staring directly into the camera for an extended period of time, audiences still want some form of engagement, and eye contact allows you to make that connection. If you are recording the speech with or without a live audience, view the camera as your "audience substitute."

Your facial expressions are also visible in a digital speech. If the camera is close up, this is even more true. Rehearse under these conditions, and record your facial expressions to see how they are translating to others. Also, ask: what is visible in the video? What adjustments do you want to make? Can you move further back? Can you adjust the camera? You will only have answers to these questions through a videoed rehearsal.

Finally, your background is also part of your video's nonverbal aesthetics. Make sure that you consider how the background might translate to your audience. Is it messy? Distracting? Is it a white background? If so, you should avoid wearing white and disappearing into the walls.

Remember that your goal is to create an aesthetic experience that honors the purpose of your speech, so being accountable to

all nonverbal factors will increase your ethos.

Additional Preparation Tips:

1. Make sure you will not be interrupted during the web conference.
2. Have notes and anything else you need right at hand. While you can use a computer to display them, be conscious of your audience's ability to see you reading.
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.

Presentation Aids

In some cases, an online speech will include presentation aids. It's important to determine a) if the presentation aid is necessary and b) if you're able to provide that presentation aid in a different form.

First, are you certain you need a presentation aid? It can be tempting to use a presentation aid for a digital speech to avoid being visible to the audience. After all, it's common for digital presentation software to display either a visual aid or your body. If you're only using a visual aid to avoid being displayed, that's likely a poor reason, particularly because your embodied presentation is more interesting to the audience.

If you deem that a presentation aid is absolutely necessary (or required), make sure you're following the guidelines from Chapter 10. Also, ask: do I need to provide it live or in the recording? If you're presenting to a discrete audience and want to provide a graph or some data, send the information in a report ahead of time. This will allow your audience to feel acquainted with the information and can save you from having an additional technological component.

Section Summary

Like any public speech, when speaking online, you are responsible for crafting an effective advocacy that is composed of well-reasoned arguments that are delivered with purposeful aesthetic choices. This section has introduced variables that digital public speaking asks us to consider when rehearsing. We must underscore one key reminder: rehearse under the conditions that you'll speak. Be confident that you're aware of:

- what technology will be needed;
- where it will be located;
- what you are responsible for;
- how your embodiment of information translates.

Speaking for an Online Class

- Film your whole body—not just your head and shoulders
- Do tech walk-throughs and make sure your camera is working well and picking up your voice. 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 in some manner.
- 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.
- Be conscious of lighting. The light should be coming from behind the camera.

Conclusion

Digital public speaking is evolving. These tips and tactics should help not just avoid the major problems but also cross the finish

line into an effective presentation.

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4.4: Ceremonial Speaking

Learning Objectives

- Understand the purpose and goals of special occasion speeches;
- Identify the types of special occasion speeches;
- Understand the proper techniques for creating an aesthetic experience when delivering a special occasion speech.

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. Attend a wedding? If so, toasts likely occurred. The more special occasion speeches you audience, 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 face, 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.

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, 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.

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.

Be careful not to focus too much on comedy and forget to leave the audience with a serious message. When you're considering content, ask, "what do I want to leave the audience with? How can I tie that message together?" Once you have a core idea, begin working outward and find comedic entrances.

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).

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.
- Lastly, explain why the project is important for the community in which it is located. 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 to 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!

As such, while you are speaking, you need to focus your attention toward 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.

Speeches to Eulogize and Memorialize

A **eulogy** is a speech given in honor of someone who has passed away. 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.

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.

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.

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).
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."
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.

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. A famous and well-thought-out commencement speech was given by famed Harry Potter author J. K. Rowling 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. 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.

Summary

It is not unrealistic to think that you will be called upon at various points in your life to give one or more of these speeches. Knowing the types and basic structures will help when those moments arise.

To help us think through how to be effective in delivering special occasion speeches, let’s look at preparation and aesthetics.

Preparing for Special Occasion Speaking

First, and foremost, the biggest mistake you can make when standing to deliver a special occasion speech is to underprepared or simply not prepare at all. We’ve stressed the need for preparation throughout this text, and just because you’re giving a toast or a eulogy doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t think through the speech before you stand up and speak out. If the situation is impromptu, jotting some basic notes on a napkin is better than not having any plan for what you are going to say.

To guarantee effective and efficient preparation, make sure you’re comfortable and understand the expectations of the occasion, audience, and be mindful of time. Now that you have a better understanding of the types of special occasion speaking, use the following suggestions as you prepare.

Adapt 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 introducing a long-time community activity.
- You are delivering the commencement address at your university.

How might you adapt your message to account for these occasions? After reading through types of special occasion speeches, you should have a better idea of how expectations may change depending on the occasion.

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.

Adapt to Your Audience

Once again, we cannot stress the importance of audience adaptation enough in this text. Different audiences will respond differently to speech material, so the more you know about your audience, the more likely you'll succeed in your speech.

Like we mentioned above, special occasions often unify the community or audience, and in order for that to be effective, you must be reflexive about a) who your audience is and b) any audiences you may be representing.

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 when preparing for special occasion speeches successfully is to be mindful of your time. Different speech situations have their own conventions and rules with regard to time.

Shorter Lengths	**Gray Area**	**Longer Lengths**
Speeches of Introduction	Eulogies	Commencement Speeches
Speeches of Preparation	After-Dinner	Keynote Address
Acceptance Speeches	Commemorative Speeches	
Toasts		

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, 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.

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.

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. Raprot 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 good, 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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