ESSENTIALS OF EXEMPLARY PUBLIC SPEAKING



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Licensing

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Overview of Chapters

Chapter 1 highlights the significance of public speaking and discusses three primary speech types: informative, persuasive, and entertaining. This chapter explores foundational rhetorical theories, including the cannons of rhetoric and Aristotelian proofs as well as relevant principles of human communication. It covers essential communication elements and models, audience feedback, and the impact of context and noise on messages. The historical role of public speaking in Greek and Roman traditions is noted for its relevance to contemporary education.

Chapter 2 explores overcoming communication apprehension in public speaking, outlining causes, types, and strategies for management. It addresses the physiological responses to speech anxiety and dispels myths about stage fright. Factors such as context and audience perception can increase anxiety. Recommendations for management include positive thinking, audience analysis, and practice, with techniques like cognitive restructuring and preparation for unforeseen issues.

Chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of a specific purpose statement in speech development, distinguishing it from the central idea, which may change. It suggests personal inventory, topic selection tools, and audience needs assessment via surveys.

Chapter 4 outlines the importance of ethics in public speaking, highlighting the need for respecting diverse audiences and using reliable evidence. It contrasts ethical practices with unethical ones, including a focus on audience perception of credibility. Plagiarism is emphasized as a key ethical violation, advocating for citation training. The chapter also offers practical guidelines for ethical communication and presents case studies illustrating ethical dilemmas in public speaking.

Chapter 5 discusses the significance of audience analysis in public speaking for effective communication. It emphasizes tailored messaging to meet diverse audience needs, avoiding stereotypes, and using ethical language to boost engagement. The chapter outlines methods for audience analysis, such as observation and surveys, and highlights the role of nonverbal cues and bias awareness.

Chapter 6 underscores the significance of evidence and context in claims, examining unsupported assertions. It reviews fact-checking organizations and emphasizes the importance of credible support in enhancing speeches. Various types of support, including facts and narratives, are discussed alongside effective usage methods.

Chapter 7 highlights the importance of reliable research for effective communication, distinguishing between primary and secondary sources. It discusses utilizing libraries for accessing peer-reviewed materials and enhancing online search techniques. The significance of evaluating information credibility through frameworks like SIFT and CRAAP is emphasized, alongside the necessity of citing sources in public speaking.

Chapter 8 emphasizes the significance of clear organization in public speaking to improve audience understanding and retention, suggesting three to five main points. It covers organizational patterns such as chronological and problem-cause-solution, as well as the function of connectives.

Chapter 9 emphasizes effective speech-making through strong introductions and conclusions to engage audiences. It underscores the importance of credibility, focusing on competence, trustworthiness, and goodwill. Attention-gaining strategies, a clear thesis, and previews of main points are essential. Conclusions should restate the thesis and highlight key points. Ethical considerations in speech preparation stress the importance of awareness of sources and biases.

Chapter 10 highlights the significance of choosing informative speaking topics that mitigate audience confusion. It discusses the use of various explanation types (elucidative, quasi-scientific, transformative) to clarify complex ideas. Exercises provided focus on customizing topics for different audiences, pinpointing areas of confusion, differentiating informative from persuasive speeches, and formulating purpose and thesis statements for a sample informative speech.

Chapter 11 highlights the importance of language in effective speech delivery, focusing on word choice for clarity, vividness, and ethical considerations. It discourages sexist language and clichés, advocating for precise and personalized communication. The chapter includes review questions and activities to reinforce these concepts and encourages speakers to reflect on their language choices and their influence on audience perception.

Chapter 12 outlines four speech delivery types: impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript, and memorized, stressing the importance of adapting strategies for different settings. Key elements for engaging audiences include effective notecards, a conversational style, and vocalics. It highlights the role of physical manipulation and practice in effective delivery. Additionally, it proposes exercises to improve speaking skills through preparation, delivery, and self-evaluation.

Chapter 13 discusses the evolution of digital public speaking, contrasting online presentations with face-to-face communication. It outlines various types of online speeches and the technical considerations needed for effectiveness. The text offers resources and exercises to enhance online speaking skills and encourages reflection on concepts such as selective attention in digital formats.

Chapter 14 highlights the significance of visual aids in presentations, recommending their use only when they improve clarity and retention. It provides guidelines for effective slide design, emphasizing brevity, clarity, and visibility while advising against distractions. The chapter also stresses the importance of practice with visual aids and professionalism during technical difficulties.

Chapter 15 discusses improving listening skills, differentiating between listening and hearing, and addressing challenges like noise and biases. It outlines listening stages and emphasizes critical and ethical listening, as well as various styles. Effective listening enhances student performance, relationships, and public speaking.

Chapter 16 discusses persuasive speaking's goal to influence positive change through tailored arguments and ethical communication. It emphasizes understanding audience and proposition types while utilizing credibility and emotional appeals. The text also contains references on public speaking, environmental issues, and communication strategies, highlighting the importance of effective messaging and societal impacts in persuasion across various contexts.

Chapter 17 emphasizes critical thinking's significance in daily life, distinguishing it from simply being critical. It discusses the importance of logical arguments and fallacies in decision-making and public speaking. The chapter includes activities for practical application, such as analyzing debates and recognizing media fallacies, ultimately equipping readers with skills to construct sound arguments and evaluate information validity.

Chapter 18 emphasizes the importance of delivery in special occasion speaking. Success hinges on thorough preparation, organization, and practice, allowing the speaker to connect deeply with the audience. Different speech types, like toasts and eulogies, require specific considerations. Engaging the audience is crucial, and various exercises can reinforce effective speaking principles.

Appendix A provides essential guidance for college students on adapting to student life, effective learning strategies, textbook use, memorization techniques, managing anxiety during tests and speeches, and test-taking skills while ensuring academic integrity.

Appendix B discusses the effective use of humor in public speaking to enhance audience engagement, retention, and rapport. While humor can be beneficial, it also carries risks such as offending listeners or trivializing serious topics. Effective humor should be relevant and culturally sensitive, and includes various forms like stories or visuals. Preparation and practice are crucial for mastering humor, which can ultimately enrich the speaker's message and audience connection.

Appendix C focuses on the integration of non-native English speakers in public speaking classes, highlighting their valuable contributions and the importance of embracing accents as part of cultural identity. It discusses the diversity of American accents and challenges faced by English Language Learners (ELLs), promoting clear communication.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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1.1: Learning Objectives
1.2: Public Speaking in the Twenty-First Century
1.3: Why Study Public Speaking?
1.4: Why Is Public Speaking Important?
1.5: Basic Principles of Human Communication
1.6: Models of Communication
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1.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Understand why we should study public speaking.
2. Explain the definition of public speaking.
3. Understand the importance of public speaking today.
4. Explain the rhetorical situation.
5. Describe the three types of public speaking in everyday life: informative, persuasive, and entertaining.
6. Explain the benefits of taking a course in and engaging in public speaking.
7. Describe the key elements involved in the process of communication.
8. Distinguish between the linear model of communication and the transactional model of communication.
9. Explain Greek and Roman public speaking traditions.
10. Reflect on foundational rhetorical theories such as the canons of rhetoric and Aristotelian proofs.
11. Describe the principles of human communication.
12. Understand how public speaking evolved throughout the world.
13. Reflect on the diversity of public speaking practices today in relation to your particular cultural identities and speech communities.

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1.2: Public Speaking in the Twenty-First Century



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

In a world where people are bombarded with messages through television, social media, and the Internet, one of the first questions you may ask is, "Do people still give speeches?" Well, type the words "public speaking" into Amazon.com or Barnesandnoble.com, and you will find more than two thousand books with the words "public speaking" in the title. Most of these and other books related to public speaking are not college textbooks. In fact, many books written about public speaking are intended for very specific audiences: *A Handbook of Public Speaking for Scientists and Engineers* (by Peter Kenny), *Excuse Me! Let Me Speak!: A Young Person's Guide to Public Speaking* (by Michelle J. Dyett-Welcome), *Professionally Speaking: Public Speaking for Health Professionals* (by Frank De Piano and Arnold Melnick), and *Speaking Effectively: A Guide for Air Force Speakers* (by John A. Kline). If you search for "public speaking" in an online academic database, you'll find numerous articles on public speaking in business magazines (e.g., *BusinessWeek*, *Nonprofit World*) and academic journals (e.g., *Harvard Business Review*, *Journal of Business Communication*). There is so much information available about public speaking because it continues to be relevant even with the growth of technological means of communication. People continue to spend millions of dollars every year to listen to professional speakers. For example, attendees of TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) conferences, which invites speakers from around the world to share their ideas in short, eighteen-minute presentations.

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

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1.3: Why Study Public Speaking?



Image 1.1 Graduating Student

So you have found yourself having to take a public speaking course and you are probably wondering why. Or maybe you are simply interested in becoming a more well-rounded communicator. There are plenty of reasons why public speaking is not only a desirable course, but also a required course:

- we live in a democratic society with the First Amendment right guaranteeing freedom of expression or what we like to call Free Speech;
- we may need to advocate for ourselves or others in a public forum;
- more than likely our future careers or jobs would prefer for us to be skilled in communicating;
- it is a GE (general education) requirement at this college and at the CSU's and UC's;

Freedom of Speech

Image 1.2 Bill of Rights



Democracies throughout time have had a long tradition of oral communication as a way to express the ideas and desires of a country's population. Collectively, here in the United States, we believe in that democratic tradition and that tradition is guaranteed to us in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. In order to participate effectively in a democracy that provides space for freedom of expression, it is necessary to build our communication tool kit to include the skills associated with public speaking.

Public Advocacy

As part of our democratic freedom of expression, you may find yourself in a situation that requires you to advocate - speak for - yourself or others. For example, maybe the college parking fees are too expensive, but no one has shared that opinion with the campus decision makers. Through this course, you will develop the skills to advocate for issues that are important to you.

Career Skills

Employers want their employees to be able to communicate effectively; therefore communication skills are always listed in the top ten most desirable employee skills (Peart, 2019); *Forbes* lists verbal communication as the 5th most important skill. In addition to being able to clearly write our ideas, employers want us to be able to clearly verbalize our ideas.

University GE Requirement

For many four-year universities, public speaking is a requirement for graduation. Many of you all will be transferring to CSU's or UC's and will need to have passed your public speaking course in order to earn a degree from either of those college systems. Take a look at the Cal State website to learn more about general education requirements, which are part of lower division requirements, in order to graduate: California State Universities GE Requirements.

Local Graduation Requirement

In addition to public speaking as a required GE course for the CSU's or UC's, students must take a course with a public speaking component to graduate from our college. If you are curious about your other GE requirements, check out the Citrus College Degree requirements page.

References

Peart, N. (2019). The 12 most Important skills you need to succeed at work. *Forbes*. Retrieved from forbes.com [www.forbes.com]
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1.4: Why Is Public Speaking Important?

In today's world, we are constantly inundated with messages. No matter where you live, where you work or go to school, or what kinds of media you use, you are probably exposed to hundreds. if not thousands, of advertising messages every day. Because we live in a world where we are overwhelmed with content, communicating information in a way that is accessible to others is more important today than ever before. To help us further understand why public speaking is important, we will first examine public speaking in everyday life. We will then discuss how public speaking can benefit you personally.

Everyday Public Speaking

Every single day people across the United States and around the world stand up in front of some kind of audience and speak. In fact, there's even a monthly publication that reproduces some of the top speeches from around the United States called *Pro Rhetoric: Vital Speeches of the Day.* Although public speeches are of various types, they can generally be grouped into three categories based on their intended purpose: informative, persuasive, and entertaining.

Informative Speaking

> Informative speaking is presented for the purpose of sharing knowledge with the audience, teaching the audience about a topic.

One of the most common types of public speaking is **informative speaking**. The primary purpose of informative presentations is to share one's knowledge of a subject with an audience, teaching and providing information for the purpose of expanding the audience's knowledge. Reasons for making an informative speech vary widely. For example, you might be asked to instruct a group of coworkers on how to use new computer software or to report to a group of managers how your latest project is coming along. A local community group might wish to hear about your volunteer activities in New Orleans during spring break, or your classmates may want you to share your expertise on Mediterranean cooking. What all these examples have in common is the goal of imparting information to an audience.

Informative speaking is integrated into many different occupations. Physicians often lecture about their areas of expertise to medical students, other physicians, and patients. Teachers find themselves presenting to parents as well as to their students. Firefighters give demonstrations about how to effectively control a fire in the house. Informative speaking is a common part of numerous jobs and other everyday activities. As a result, learning how to speak effectively is an essential skill in today's world.

Persuasive Speaking

> Persuasive speaking is presented to persuade the audience to take action or to reinforce or change their beliefs.

A second common reason for speaking to an audience is to **persuade** others. In our everyday lives, we are often called on to convince, motivate, or call to action others to change their beliefs, take an action, or reconsider a decision. From the days of Ancient Greeks and Aristotle, the importance of **persuasive speaking** has been studied, the ability to motivate someone to take action or believe your side of the argument is a key skill that matters in business and in our personal lives. Advocating for music education in your local school district, convincing clients to purchase your company's products, or inspiring high school students to attend college all involve influencing other people through public speaking.

For some people, such as elected officials, giving persuasive speeches is a crucial part of attaining and continuing career success. Other people make careers out of speaking to groups of people who pay to listen to them. Motivational authors and speakers, such as Les Brown, make millions of dollars each year from people who want to be motivated to do better in their lives. Brian Tracy, another professional speaker and author, specializes in helping business leaders become more productive and effective in the workplace.

Whether public speaking is something you do every day or just a few times a year, persuading others is a challenging task. If you develop the skill to persuade effectively, it can be personally and professionally rewarding.

Speeches to Entertain

> Speeches to Entertain happens at special occasions and is focused on creating ceremony.

Speeches to Entertain involves an array of speaking occasions ranging from introductions to wedding toasts, to presenting and accepting awards, to delivering eulogies at funerals and memorial services in addition to after-dinner speeches and motivational speeches. Speeches to Entertain has been important since the time of the ancient Greeks, when Aristotle identified **epideictic speaking** (speaking in a ceremonial context) as an important type of address. As with persuasive and informative speaking, there are professionals, from religious leaders to comedians, who make a living simply from delivering entertaining speeches. As anyone who has watched an awards show on television or has seen an incoherent best man deliver a wedding toast can attest, speaking to entertain is a task that requires preparation and practice to be effective.Personal Benefits of Public Speaking

Communication skills are in the top 10 required skills for business success (Hicks, 2020). That fact alone makes learning about public speaking worthwhile. However, there are many other benefits of communicating effectively for the hundreds of thousands of college students every year who take public speaking courses. Let's take a look at some of the personal benefits you'll get both from a course in public speaking and from giving public speeches.

Benefits of Public Speaking Courses

> Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel – Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

- developing critical thinking skills,
- strengthening verbal and nonverbal skills,
- overcoming fear of public speaking,
- learning how to effectively advocate for causes you are passionate about,
- building confidence and leadership skills.

Developing Critical Thinking Skills

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

Another benefit to public speaking is that it will enhance your ability to conduct and analyze research. Public speakers must provide credible evidence within their speeches. Your public speaking course will further refine your ability to find and utilize a range of sources. And finally, your speeches will be timed and you will be required to fit the most important information into a short time frame. Since you can't say everything about your topic, you will need to choose the most important information to help your audience understand your topic.

Strengthening Verbal and Nonverbal Skills

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

Overcoming Fear of Public Speaking

An additional benefit of taking a public speaking class is that it will help reduce your fear of public speaking. Whether they've spoken in public a lot or are just getting started, most people experience some anxiety when engaging in public speaking. Fear of public speaking is a learned skill that can be overcome by practicing and engaging in public speaking forums (Raja, 2017). By taking a course in public speaking, students become better acquainted with the public speaking process, making them more confident and less apprehensive. In addition, you will learn specific strategies for overcoming the challenges of speech anxiety. We will discuss this topic in greater detail throughout this book.

Professional Benefits of Public Speaking

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

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

Influencing the World around You

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

Developing Leadership Skills

Have you ever thought about climbing the corporate ladder and eventually finding yourself in a management or other leadership position? If so, then public speaking skills are very important. If you want people to follow you, you have to communicate effectively and clearly what followers should do. Communication skills for a leader is a powerful tool that inspires change from those around them, and working towards a common object (Landry, 2019).

Becoming a Thought Leader

Even if you are not in an official leadership position, effective public speaking can help you become a "**thought leader**." Joel Kurtzman, editor of *Strategy & Business*, coined this term to call attention to individuals who contribute new ideas to the world of business (Joe, 2023). According to Joe (2023), thought leaders influence others, serve as trusted sources, encourage growth, and inspire innovative ideas. To achieve thought leader status, individuals must communicate their ideas to others through both writing and public speaking. Lizotte (2008) demonstrates how becoming a thought leader can be personally and financially rewarding at the same time: when others look to you as a thought leader, you will be more desired and make more money as a result. Whether standing before a group of executives discussing the next great trend in business or delivering a webinar, thought leaders use public speaking every day to create the future that the rest of us live in.

Watch public speaking professor Bridget Sampson's (2017) Ted Talk to find out about the impact public speaking can make on your life:



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1.5: Basic Principles of Human Communication

Definition of Communication

The origin of the word **communication** can be traced back to the Latin word *communico*, which is translated to mean "to join or unite," "to connect," "to participate in" or "to share with all." This root word is the same one from which we get not only the word *communicate*, but also *common*, *commune*, *communion*, and *community*. Thus, we can define communication as a process by which we share ideas or information with other people. We commonly think of communication as talking, but it is much broader than just speech. Other characteristics of voice communicate messages, and we communicate, as well, with eyes, facial expressions, hand gestures, body position, and movement. Let us examine some basic principles about how we communicate with one another.

Communication Is Symbolic

Have you ever noticed that we can hear or look at something like the word "cat" and immediately know what those three letters mean? From the moment you enter grade school, you are taught how to recognize sequences of letters that form words that help us understand the world. With these words, we can create sentences, paragraphs, and books like this one. The letters used to create the word "cat" and then the word itself is what communication scholars call symbols. A **symbol** is a mark, object, or sign that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention.

Let's think about one of the most important words commonly tossed around, love. The four letters that make of the word "l," "o," "v," and "e," are visual symbols that, when combined, form the word "love," which is a symbol associated with intense regard or liking. For example, I can "love" chocolate. However, the same four-letter word has other meanings attached to it as well. For example, "love" can represent a deeply intimate relationship or a romantic attachment. In the first case, we could love our parents/guardians and friends, but in the second case, we experience love as a factor of a deep romantic/sexual relationship. These are just three associations we have with the same symbol, love. In Figure 1.5.1, we see American Sign Language (ASL) letters for the word "love." In this case, the hands themselves represent symbols for English letters, which is an agreed upon convention of users of ASL to represent "love."

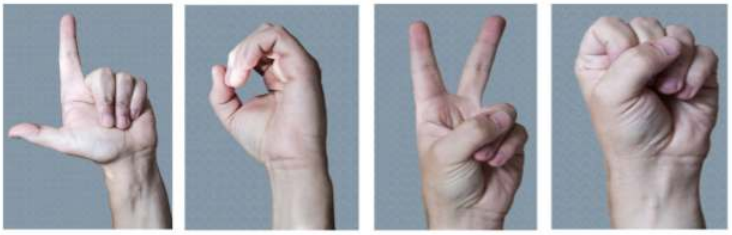


Figure 1.5.1: Child Using ASL to Sign Love

Symbols can also be visual representations of ideas and concepts. For example, look at the symbols in Figure 1.5.2 of various social media icons. In this image, you see symbols for a range of different social media sites, including Facebook (lowercase "f"), Twitter (the bird), Snap Chat (the ghost image), and many others. Admittedly, the icon for YouTube uses its name.

The Symbol is Not the Thing

Now that we've explained what symbols are, we should probably offer a few very important guides. First, the symbol is not the thing that it is representing. For example, the word "dog" is not a member of the canine family that greets you when you come home every night. If we look back at those symbols listed in Figure 1.5.1, those symbols are not the organizations themselves. The "p" with a circle around it is not Pinterest. The actual thing that is "Pinterest" is a series of computer code that exists on the World Wide Web that allows us, people, to interact.



Figure 1.5.2: Social Media Icons

Arbitrariness of Symbols

How we assign symbols is entirely arbitrary. For example, in Figure 1.5.3, we see two animals that are categorized under the symbols “dog” and “cat.” In this image, the “dog” is on the left side, and the “cat” is on the right side. The words we associate with these animals only exist because we have said it’s so for many, many years. Back when humans were labeling these animals, we could just have easily called the one on the left “cat” and the one on the right “dog,” but we didn’t. If we called the animal on the left “cat,” would that change the nature of what that animal is? Not really. The only thing that would change is the symbol we have associated with that animal.



Figure 1.5.3: Dog and Cat

Let’s look at another symbolic example you are probably familiar with – :). The “smiley” face or the two pieces of punctuation (colon followed by closed parentheses) is probably the most notable symbol used in Internet communication. This symbol may seem like it’s everywhere today, but it’s only existed since September 1982. In early September 1982, a joke was posted on an electronic bulletin board about a fake chemical spill at Carnegie Mellon University. At the time, there was no easy way to distinguish between serious versus non-serious information. A computer scientist named Scott E. Fahlman entered the debate with the following message:

The Original Emoticons

> I propose that [sic] the following character sequence for joke markers:
>
> :-)
>
> Read it sideways. Actually, it is probably more economical to mark things that are NOT jokes, given current trends. For this, use:
>
> :-(

Thus the first emoticon, a sequence of keyboard characters used to represent facial expressions or emotions, was born. Even the universal symbol for happiness, the yellow circle with the smiling face, had only existed since 1963 when graphic artist Harvey Ross Ball created it. The happy face was created as a way to raise employee morale at State Mutual Life Assurance Company of Worcester, Massachusetts. Of course, when you merge the happy face with emoticons, we eventually ended up with emojis (Figure 1.5.4). Of course, many people today just take emojis for granted without ever knowing their origin at all.



Figure 1.5.4: Emojis

Communication Is Shared Meaning

Hopefully, in our previous discussion about symbols, you noticed that although the assignment of symbols to real things and ideas is arbitrary, our understanding of them exists because we agree to their meaning. If we were talking and I said, “it’s time for tea,” you may think that I’m going to put on some boiling water and pull out the oolong tea. However, if I said, “it’s time for tea” in the United Kingdom, you would assume that we were getting ready for our evening meal. Same word, but two very different meanings depending on the culture within which one uses the term. In the United Kingdom, high tea (or meat tea) is the evening meal. Dinner, on the other hand, would represent the large meal of the day, which is usually eaten in the middle of the day. Of course, in the United States, we refer to the middle of the day meal as lunch and often refer to the evening meal as dinner (or supper).

Let’s imagine that you were recently at a party. Two of your friends had recently attended the same Broadway play together. You ask them “how the play was,” and here’s how the first friend responded:

> So, we got to the theatre 20 minutes early to ensure we were able to get comfortable and could do some people watching before the show started. The person sitting in front of us had the worst comb-over I had ever seen. Halfway through Act 1, the hair was flopping back in our laps like the legs of a spider. I mean, those strands of hair had to be 8 to 9 inches long and came down on us like it was pleading with us to rescue it. Oh, and this one woman who was sitting to our right was wearing this huge fur hat-turban thing on her head. It looked like some kind of furry animal crawled up on her head and died. I felt horrible for the poor guy that was sitting behind her because I’m sure he couldn’t see anything over or around that thing.

Here’s is how your second friend described the experience:

> I thought the play was good enough. It had some guy from the UK who tried to have a Brooklyn accent that came in and out. The set was pretty cool though. At one point, the set turned from a boring looking office building into a giant tree. That was pretty darn cool. As for the overall story, it was good, I guess. The show just wasn’t something I would normally see.

In this case, you have the same experience described by two different people. We are only talking about the experience each person had in an abstract sense. In both cases, you had friends reporting on the same experience but from their perceptions of the experience. With your first friend, you learn more about what was going on around your friend in the theatre but not about the show itself. The second friend provided you with more details about her perception of the play, the acting, the scenery, and the story. Did we learn anything about the content of the “play” through either conversation? Not really.

Many of our conversations resemble this type of experience recall. In both cases, we have two individuals who are attempting to share with us through communication specific ideas and meanings. However, sharing meaning is not always very easy. In both cases, you asked your friends, “how the play was.” In the first case, your friend interpreted this phrase as being asked about their experience at the theatre itself. In the second case, your friend interpreted your phrase as being a request for her opinion or critique of the play. As you can see in this example, it’s easy to get very different responses based on how people interpret what you are asking.

Communication scholars often say that “meanings aren’t in words, they’re in people” because of this issue related to interpretation. Yes, there are dictionary definitions of words. Earlier in this chapter, we provided three different dictionary-type definitions for the word “love:” 1) intense regard or liking, 2) a deeply intimate relationship, or 3) a romantic/sexual attachment. These types of definitions we often call denotative definitions. However, it’s important to understand that in addition to **denotative definitions**, there are also **connotative definitions**, or the emotions or associations a person makes when exposed to a symbol. For example,

how one personally understands or experiences the word “love” is connotative. The warm feeling you get, the memories of experiencing love, all come together to give you a general, personalized understanding of the word itself. One of the biggest problems that occur is when one person’s denotative meaning conflicts with another person’s connotative meaning. For example, when I write the word “dog,” many of you think of four-legged furry family members. If you’ve never been a dog owner, you may just generally think about these animals as members of the canine family. If, however, you’ve had a bad experience with a dog in the past, you may have very negative feelings that could lead you to feel anxious or experience dread when you hear the word “dog.” As another example, think about clowns. Some people see clowns as cheery characters associated with the circus and birthday parties. Other people are genuinely terrified by clowns. Both the dog and clown cases illustrate how we can have symbols that have different meanings to different people.

Communication Involves Intentionality

One area that often involves a bit of controversy in the field of communication is what is called intentionality. Intentionality asks whether an individual purposefully intends to interact with another person and attempt shared meaning. Each time you communicate with others, there is intentionality involved. You may want to offer your opinions or thoughts on a certain topic. However, intentionality is an important concept in communication. Think about times where you might have talked aloud without realizing another person could hear you. Communication can occur at any time. When there is intent among the parties to converse with each other, then it makes the communication more effective.

Others argue that you “cannot, not communicate.” This idea notes that we are always communicating with those around us. As we’ll talk more about later in this book, communication can be both verbal (the words we speak) and nonverbal (gestures, use of space, facial expressions, how we say words, etc.). From this perspective, our bodies are always in a state of nonverbal communication, whether it’s intended or not. Maybe you’ve walked past someone’s office and saw them hunched over at their desk, staring at a computer screen. Based on the posture of the other person, you decide not to say “hi” because the person looks like they are deep in thought and probably busy. In this case, we interpret the person’s nonverbal communication as saying, “I’m busy.” In reality, that person could just as easily be looking at Facebook and killing time until someone drops by and says, “hi.”

Dimensions of Communication

When we communicate with other people, we must always remember that our communication is interpreted at multiple levels. Two common dimensions used to ascertain meaning during communication are relational and content

Relational Dimension

Every time we communicate with others, there is a relational dimension. You can communicate in a tone of friendship, love, hatred, and so forth. This is indicated in how you communicate with your receiver. Think about the phrase, “You are crazy!” It means different things depending on the source of the message. For instance, if your boss said it, you might take it harsher than if your close friend said it to you. You are more likely to receive a message more accurately when you can define the type of relationship that you have with this person. Hence, your relationship with the person determines how you are more likely to interpret the message. Take another example of the words “I want to see you now!” These same words might mean different things if it comes from your boss or if it comes from your lover. You will know that if your boss wants to see you, then it is probably an urgent matter that needs your immediate attention. However, if your lover said it, then you might think that they miss you and can’t bear the thought of being without you for too long.

Content Dimension

In the same fashion, every time we speak, we have a content dimension. The content dimension is the information that is stated explicitly in the message. When people focus on the content of a message, then ignore the relationship dimension. They are focused on the specific words that were used to convey the message. For instance, if you ran into an ex-lover who said “I’m happy for you” about your new relationship. You might wonder what that phrase means. Did it mean that your ex was truly happy for you, or that they were happy to see you in a new relationship, or that your ex thinks that you are happy? One will ponder many interpretations of the message, especially if a relationship is not truly defined.

Another example might be a new acquaintance who talks about how your appearance looks “interesting.” You might be wondering if your new friend is sarcastic, or if they just didn’t know a nicer way of expressing their opinion. Because your relationship is so new, you might think about why they decided to pick that term over another term. Hence, the content of a message impacts how it is received.

Communication Is a Process

The word “process” refers to the idea that something is ongoing, dynamic, and changing with a purpose or towards some end. A communication scholar named David K. Berlo (1960) was the first to discuss human communication as a process back in 1960. We’ll examine Berlo’s ideas in more detail later in this chapter, but for now, it’s important to understand the basic concept of communication as a process. From Berlo’s perspective, communication is a series of ongoing interactions that change over time. For example, think about the number of “inside jokes” you may have with your best friend. Sometimes you can get to the point where all you say is one word, and both of you can crack up laughing. This level of familiarity and short-hand communication didn’t exist when you first met but has developed over time. Ultimately, the more interaction you have with someone, the more your relationship with that person will evolve.

Communication Is Culturally Determined

The word culture refers to a “group of people who through a process of learning can share perceptions of the world that influences their beliefs, values, norms, and rules, which eventually affect behavior” (Wrench, McCroskey, & Richmond, 2008, p. 421). Let’s breakdown this definition. First, it’s essential to recognize that culture is something we learn. From the moment we are born, we start to learn about our culture. We learn culture from our families, our schools, our peers, and many other sources as we age. Specifically, we learn perceptions of the world. We learn about morality. We learn about our relationship with our surroundings. We learn about our places in a greater society. These perceptions ultimately influence what we believe, what we value, what we consider “normal,” and what rules we live by. For example, many of us have beliefs, values, norms, and rules that are directly related to the religion in which we were raised. As an institution, religion is often one of the dominant factors of culture around the world.

Let’s start by looking at how religion can impact beliefs. Your faith can impact what you believe about the nature of life and death. For some, depending on how you live, you’ll either go to a happy place (Heaven, Nirvana, Elysium, etc.) or a negative place (Hell, Samsara, Tartarus, etc.). We should mention that Samsara is less a “place” and more the process of reincarnation as well as one’s actions and consequences from the past, present, and future.

Religion can also impact what you value. Cherokee are taught to value the earth and the importance of keep balance with the earth. Judaic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, etc.), on the other hand, teach that humans have been placed on earth to dominate and control the earth. As such, the value is more on what the earth can provide than on ensuring harmony with nature.

Religion can also impact what you view as “normal.” Many adherents to Islam stress the importance of female modesty, so it is normal for women to cover their heads when in public or completely cover their entire bodies from head to toe. On the other hand, one branch of Raëlianism promotes a pro-sex feminist stance where nudity and sex work are normal and even celebrated.

Different religions have different rules that get created and handed down. For most Western readers, the most famous set of rules is probably the Judaic Tradition’s Ten Commandments. Conversely, Hindus have a text of religious laws transmitted in the Vedas. Most major religions have, at some point or another, had religious texts that became enshrined laws within those societies.

Finally, these beliefs, values, norms, and rules ultimately impact how all of us interact and behave with others. For example, because of the Islamic rules on and norms about female modesty, in many Islamic countries, women cannot speak with men unless they are directly related to them by birth or marriage. The critical part to remember about these actual behaviors is that we often have no idea how (and to what degree) our culture influences our communicative behavior until we are interacting with someone from a culture that differs from ours. We’ll talk more about issues of intercultural interpersonal interactions later in this text.

Communication Occurs in a Context

Another factor that influences how we understand others is the context, the circumstance, environment, setting, and/or situation surrounding an interaction. Most people learning about context are generally exposed during elementary school when you are trying to figure out the meaning of a specific word. You may have seen a complicated word and been told to use “context clues” to understand what the word means. In the same vein, when we analyze how people are communicating, we must understand the context of that communication.

Imagine you’re hanging out at your local restaurant, and you hear someone at the next table say, “I can’t believe that guy. He’s always out in left field!” As an American idiom, we know that “out in left field” generally refers to something unexpected or unusual. The term stems out of baseball because the player who hangs out in left field has the farthest to throw to get a baseball back to the first baseman in an attempt to tag out a runner. However, if you were listening to this conversation in farmland, you

could be hearing someone describe a specific geographic location (e.g., “He was out in left field chasing after a goat who stumbled that way”). In this case, context does matter.

Communication Is Purposeful

We communicate for different reasons. We communicate in an attempt to persuade people. We communicate to get people to like us. We communicate to express our liking of other people. We could list different reasons why we communicate with other people. Often we may not even be aware of the specific reason or need we have for communicating with others.

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1.6: Models of Communication

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

Linear Model of Communication

The first theoretical model of communication was proposed in 1949 by Shannon and Weaver for Bell Laboratories. This three-part model was intended to capture the radio and television transmission process. However it was later adapted to human communication and is now known as the **Linear Model of Communication**.

The first part of the model is the sender, and this is the person who is speaking. The second part of the model is the channel, which is the apparatus for carrying the message (i.e., the phone or TV). The third part of the model is the receiver, and this is the person who picks up the message.

In this model, communication is seen as a one-way process of transmitting a message from one person to another person. This model can be found in Figure 1.6.1. If you think about situations when you communicate with another person face-to-face or when you give a speech, you probably realize that this model is inadequate—communication is much more complicated than firing off a message to others.



Figure 1.6.1: Linear Model of Communication

Transactional Model of Communication

Models of communication have evolved significantly since Shannon and Weaver first proposed their well-known conceptual model over seventy years ago. One of the most useful models for understanding public speaking is Barnlund's **Transactional Model of Communication**. In this model, communication is seen as an ongoing, circular process. We are constantly affecting and are affected by those we communicate with.

The transactional model has a number of interdependent processes and components, including the encoding and decoding processes, the communicator, the message, the channel and noise. Although not directly addressed in Barnlund's (2008) original transactional model, participants' worldviews and the context also play an important role in the communication process. See Figure 1.6.2 for an illustration.

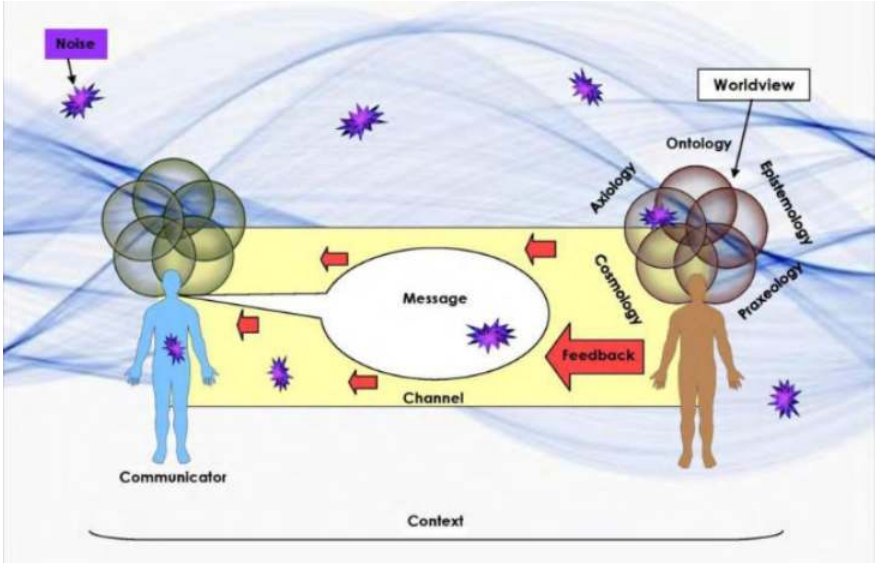


Figure 1.6.2: Transactional Model of Communication

Contributors and Attributions

- Template:ContribCCComm105

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1.7: The Rhetorical Situation

What is a Rhetorical Situation?

Under what conditions does persuasion take place?

The same question can be made for rhetoric: under what contexts does rhetorical discourse become possible? This question was the basis for Bitzer's (2009) article "The Rhetorical Situation." In this article, Bitzer (2009) defines three elements that are required for rhetorical discourse to exist. These elements are:

1. the rhetorical exigence
2. the rhetorical audience
3. the rhetorical constraints

When combined, these three elements make up what Bitzer (2009) calls the rhetorical situation. More broadly, Bitzer (2009) defines a **rhetorical situation** as "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence" (pp. 19-20).

That's a very complex quote, so we are going to break it down. If it helps, we can use the term "communication context" in place of rhetorical situation as both mean the same thing. At it's core, Bitzer (2009) tells us what is the communication context for persuasion: what are the parts of it and what does it look like? To answer those questions, though, we will need to go over some terminology.

What is Rhetoric?

It's important that we have a clear definition of it before we go any further. According to Bitzer (2009), "a work of rhetoric is pragmatic; it comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself; it functions ultimately to produce change or action in the world; it performs some task" (p. 19).

In other words, **rhetoric** is practical, purposeful communication that attempts to create change in the world by enabling a **rhetor** to persuade people to change their beliefs or solve problems.

That probably sounds likes a pretty big claim! How does rhetoric change the world? Bitzer (2009) writes, "…rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action" (p. 19). This means that rhetors do not act directly. If they see a problem, they are not the ones showing up, rolling up their sleeves, and creating change themselves; rather, they create change through communicating messages that bring together the thoughts and actions of an audience.

This is the core or rhetorical discourse. It is not the rhetor that is on the ground creating change, rather they use their words to convince others to do it. Rhetors use communication not only to help an audience think in a certain way, but also to inspire the audience to act according to the ideas they've been convinced to accept. Thus, Bitzer (2009) asserts that "the rhetor alters reality by bringing into existence a discourse of such a character that the audience, in thought and action, is so engaged that [they] becomes the mediator of change" (p. 19).

That may sound all well and good, but what does it have to do with working in a professional setting when you leave the college? We now know that rhetoric is communication that persuades an audience to think in a certain way, or do certain things. Will you be doing any of this in your career? Most definitely! The people you work with will have problems they need solved, and you will want to convince them that your plans, ideas, or solutions will solve those problems. If you can't, you may not get that important contract for your company, or you be passed over for future projects. Rhetorical techniques can help you be more successful.

Exigence

Whenever we wish to persuade an audience to take action or change their beliefs, we must first have a clear definition of the problem we would like them to address. This problem is what is known as **exigence.** A precise understanding of a problem better equips us to find a solution, and enables the audience to better understand how their behaviour or beliefs could improve the situation.

Keep in mind, however, that even though we are using the world “problem” here, that doesn’t mean that an exigence is always negative. In fact, the exigence could be something that needs to be said or done, which don’t always have a negative connotation.

Additionally, it’s important to understand that not all problems are rhetorical in nature. As Bitzer (2009) indicates for an exigence to be rhetorical, it must be able to be affected by human activity. Many problems we face do not have a rhetorical exigence because of factors beyond our control: natural disasters, diseases, and death are all examples of phenomena that continue to exist regardless of human behaviour. However, within these non-rhetorical exigences, one can find many potentially rhetorical exigences since people can be persuaded to behave in ways that minimize the harm done by such phenomena.

The other important distinguishing feature of a rhetorical exigence is that it requires the use of communication in order to resolve or mitigate the problem it is addressing. If you can solve the issue by means other than communication, then it is not considered a rhetorical exigence.

This distinction is important to understand, as you will need to pick a topic with rhetorical exigence for both your written report and presentation in this course. Students often struggle with picking a topic that meets this criteria, so let’s look at a few examples where we show the difference between exigence and rhetorical exigence. We will lay out some scenarios and explain why they do or do not have rhetorical exigence. If you can, try to predict what would be a rhetorical exigence for the scenario before you read further.

The news is reporting that a severe winter storm bringing 50 centimeters of snow is about to reach our area.

The winter storm itself has non-rhetorical exigence since no human intervention could stop a winter storm. It will happen regardless of what actions humans do or do not take. However, the potential loss of power and access to grocery stores could be examples of rhetorical exigences in the situation. People could be persuaded to prepare for power outages by buying a generator or buying lots of warm blankets. Alternatively, people could be convinced stock up on supplies ahead of time like water and non-perishable foods.

After reading the explanation above, it may come as no surprise to you that debates often occur about whether an exigence is rhetorical or not. Take the following example:

Climate change is drastically impacting our environment and humans need to step in to slow its effects.

It is widely and generally accepted that human activity contributes to climate change, yet detractors attempt to argue that climate change is natural process that is unresponsive to human behaviour. As a result, they regard attempts to mitigate or remediate its effects are potentially misguided. Potential debates like these show that while you may feel your problem has a clear rhetorical exigence, others may not agree with you.

That being said, the act of telling an audience that humans need to step in to stop climate change does not have rhetorical exigence in of itself. This is because, even if your audience agrees, they may not know what to do, or feel like they can’t make a meaningful impact on such a global issue.

However, according the vast majority of researchers, *specific* human activities contribute significantly to climate change. Thus, such activities can be examples of rhetorical exigences because populations can be persuaded to change their behaviour. They can use fewer disposable products or invest in renewable energy and thereby mitigate the potential damage caused by an increasing atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide.

Let’s look at this another way: Consider the difference between these two statements in terms of their exigence:

(1) “I want my audience to reduce the time they idle their vehicle because the earth’s climate is heating up.”

(2) “I want my audience to reduce the time they idle their vehicle because vehicle emissions contribute to the current increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide, which contributes to climate change.”

Although we understand the implied argument of the first example due to our familiarity with this particular exigence, the second example better establishes the credibility of the rhetor because of the clarity of thought it expresses. It carefully draws the connection between human behaviour and its undesirable effects, and clearly presents the exigence as a condition we can improve through our collective effort, as opposed to it being an abstract quality of nature that is only implicitly connected to our activity.

This distinction between exigence and rhetorical exigence is tough. A lot of students struggle with it, so if you are still unclear, do not hesitate to reach out to your instructor for help.

Audience

The goal of rhetorical discourse is to "produce change by influencing the decision and action of persons who function as mediators of change" (Bitzer, 2009, p. 20). Obviously, we can't do that without an audience.

Like with exigence though, it is important to distinguish between an audience and a rhetorical audience as they are not the same thing. For example, you have probably walked by the dozens of bulletin boards on campus that advertise different presentations that you can attend for free. In many of those cases, the presenter is talking about their research. You could be in the audience for any of those presentations and learn something new and valuable about a topic, but would they push you to make a change?

Probably not. In those circumstances, you are part of an audience, but not a rhetorical audience.

According to Bitzer (2009), a rhetorical audience has two criteria.

1. The audience must be able to take action that can either solve the problem or at least improve the situation.
    - This criterion might seem obvious, but it reminds us of the importance of finding a way for our audience to solve, or at least mitigate, the problem we've identified, or of finding an audience that has the power to do so.
2. There must be some way for the author or speaker to persuade the audience to change their opinion or take action.
    - If the audience is unwilling or unable to consider the rhetor's message, there is no rhetorical situation, since no change can happen through persuasive communication.

In summary, a rhetorical audience is one that can take action to solve a problem *and* can be persuaded by the rhetor to take that action.

Constraints

Obliviously, all this talk about convincing others to take action comes with some limits. These limits are what Bitzer (2009) calls **constraints.** A constraint is anything that can make it difficult for your message to be received. Sources of constraints include, but are not limited to**:**

- beliefs
- attitudes
- documents
- facts
- traditions
- images
- interests
- motives

These constraints are what limits a rhetor's effectiveness in persuading their rhetorical audience. It's important to note, however, that these constraints come from both sides. Specifically, a rhetor's beliefs may affect how they design a message, and similarly, an audience's beliefs will determine how they receive that message.

As a result, constraints can not be simply acknowledged by the rhetor and then ignored. They must be used as tool to help design the message itself. For example, let's say you want to convince your rhetorical audience to vote in favor of a project that will create a waste-to-energy plant as a way to generate new energy for your city. You may personally know that process is safe for the environment, but your rhetorical audience does not know that. Some, maybe all, will be concerned at the idea of smoke from burned trash getting into the atmosphere. Therefore, you must address this constraint in your presentation by talking about how filtering works.

Here's another example. One of the best ways to understand Bitzer's point about constraints is to imagine a situation in which you wish to persuade an audience to solve an exigence. Let's return to the exigence we considered above: idling vehicles contribute significantly to increased atmospheric carbon dioxide, which is responsible for climate change. Some constraints in this rhetorical situation could include:

1. disagreement about the degree to which climate change is a threat to our ecosystem
2. an inclination to value our own comfort and convenience above the well-being of future generations
3. the difficulty of changing one's habits in spite one's belief in the importance of doing so
4. doubts concerning the likelihood that changing one's idling habits will mitigate the problem

Other types of constraints naturally arise from the medium that you use to communicate your message; for instance, are you delivering a speech, posting on social media, writing an editorial, or speaking with your colleagues or family? Constraints also arise due to your personality; for instance, what sorts of communicative risks are your willing to take, and are they likely to yield a positive response?

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1.8: Elements of the Communication Process

Encoding and Decoding

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

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

Communicator

The term **communicator** refers to each person in the interaction or speech setting. It is used instead of sender and receiver, because when we are communicating with other people, we are not only sending a message, we are receiving messages from others simultaneously.

When we speak, we observe others' nonverbal behavior to see if they understand us, and we gauge their emotional state. The information we gain from these observations is known as feedback. Over the telephone, we listen to paralinguistic cues, such as pitch, tone, volume, and fillers (i.e., "um," "uh," "er," "like," and so on). This means that communication is not a one-way process.

Even in a public speaking situation, we watch and listen to audience members' responses. If audience members are interested, agree, and understand us, they may lean forward in their seats, nod their heads, have positive or neutral facial expressions, and provide favorable vocal cues (such as laughter, "That's right," "Uh huh," or "Amen!"). If audience members are bored, disagree, or are confused by our message, they may be texting or looking away from us, shake their heads, have unhappy or confused expressions on their faces, or present oppositional vocal cues (like groans, "I don't think so," "That doesn't make sense," or "You're crazy!"). Thus, communication is always a transactional process—a give and take of messages.

Message

The **message** involves those verbal and nonverbal behaviors enacted by communicators that are interpreted with meaning by others. The verbal portion of the message refers to the words that we speak, while the nonverbal portion includes our tone of voice and other non-vocal components such as personal appearance, posture, gestures and body movements, eye behavior, the way we use space, and even the way that we smell.

For instance, the person who gets up to speak wearing a nice suit will be interpreted more positively than a person giving the exact same speech wearing sweats and a graphic t-shirt. Or if a speaker tries to convince others to donate to a charity that builds wells in poor African villages using a monotone voice, she will not be as effective as the speaker who gives the same speech but speaks with a solemn tone of voice. If there is ever a conflict between the verbal and the non-verbal aspects of a message, people will generally believe the nonverbal portion of the message.

To test this, tighten your muscles, clench your fists at your sides, pull your eyebrows together, purse your lips, and tell someone in a harsh voice, "NO, I'm NOT angry!" See if they believe your words or your nonverbal behavior.

The message can also be intentional or unintentional. When the message is intentional, this means that we have an image in our mind that we wish to communicate to an audience or a person in a conversation, and we can successfully convey the image from our mind to others' minds with relative accuracy.

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

Channel

The **channel** is very simply the means through which the message travels. In face-to-face communication, the channel involves all of our senses, so the channel is what we see, hear, touch, smell, and perhaps what we taste. When we're communicating with someone online, the channel is the computer; when texting, the channel is the cell phone; and when watching a movie on cable, the channel is the TV.



Figure 1.8.1: Nixon and Kennedy Debate. Image is in the Public Domain

The channel can have a profound impact on the way a message is interpreted. Listening to a recording of a speaker does not have the same psychological impact as listening to the same speech in person or watching that person on television.

One famous example of this is the 1960 televised presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. According to History.com (2010), on camera, Nixon looked away from the camera at the reporters asking him questions, he was sweating and pale, he had facial hair stubble, and he wore a grey suit that faded into the set background. "Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley reportedly said [of Nixon], 'My God, they've embalmed him before he even died.'"

Kennedy, on the other hand, looked into the camera, was tanned, wore a dark suit that made him stand out from the background, and appeared to be calm after spending the entire weekend with aides practicing in a hotel room. Most of those who listened to the radio broadcast of the debate felt that it was a tie or that Nixon had won, while 70% of those watching the televised debate felt that Kennedy was the winner.

Noise

The next aspect of the model of communication is noise. **Noise** refers to anything that interferes with message transmission or reception (i.e., getting the image from your head into others' heads). There are several different types of noise. The first type of noise is **physiological noise**, and this refers to bodily processes and states that interfere with a message. For instance, if a speaker has a headache or the flu, or if audience members are hot or hungry these conditions may interfere with message accuracy.

The second type of noise is psychological noise. **Psychological noise** refers to mental states or emotional states that impede message transmission or reception. For example, if someone has just broken up with a significant other, or if they're worried about their grandmother who is in the hospital, or if they are thinking about their shopping list, this may interfere with communication processes as well.

The third type of noise is actual **physical noise**, consists of various sounds in an environment that interfere with a source's ability to hear and this would be simply the actual sound level in a room. Loud music playing at a party, a number of voices of people talking excitedly, a lawnmower right outside the window, or anything that is overly loud will interfere with communication.

The last type of noise is semantic noise. **Semantic noise** refers to message interference that results from different meanings people attach to messages. Worldview, culture, and language can impact how messages are interpreted. Worldview is discussed in more detail below, but suffice it to say that the greater the difference in worldview, the more difficult it is to understand one another and communicate effectively.

Worldview

Most people don't give a lot of thought to the communication process. In the majority of our interactions with others, we are operating on automatic pilot. Although the encoding and decoding processes may appear to be fairly straightforward, it is actually much more complicated than it seems.



Figure 1.8.2: Unsplash.com(opens in new window) by sarthak choudhary(opens in new window)

The reason for this is because we all have different worldviews. **Worldview** is the overall framework through which an individual sees, thinks about, and interprets the world and interacts with it.

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



Figure 1.8.3: Lasagna(opens in new window) is used under a CC-BY 2.0(opens in new window) license.

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

Complicating matters is the fact that the more abstract the word becomes, the more room there is for interpretation. **Abstract words** (words that refer to ideas or concepts that are removed from material reality) like "peace," "love," "immoral," "justice," "freedom," "success," and "honor" can have a number of different meanings; each of which is predicated on one's worldview.

Communicators have their own unique worldviews that shape both the encoding and decoding processes, which means that we can never be completely understood by another person. People from the Midwest may call carbonated beverages "pop," while those from the East Coast may say "soda," and those from Georgia may say "Coke." Never take communication for granted, and never assume your listener will understand you. It takes hard work to make yourself understood by an audience.

Context

The last element of the communication process is the **context** in which the speech or interaction takes place. In the 1980's context was taught as the actual physical setting where communication occurred, such as in a place of worship, an apartment, a workplace, a noisy restaurant, or a grocery store. People communicate differently in each one of these places as there are unwritten rules of communication (called **norms**) that govern these settings.



Figure 1.8.4: "Talking technique" by The U.S. Army. CC-BY.

More recently the concept of context has evolved and expanded to include the type of relationships we have with others and the communicative rules that govern those relationships. So you do not speak the same way to your best friend as you do to a small child, your parent, your boss, your doctor, or a police officer. And you may speak to your best friend differently in your apartment than you do in your parents' home, and your communication may also change when you are both out with friends on the weekend. In sum, the context refers to the norms that govern communication in different situations and relationships.

Em Griffin (1987), a long-time professor of communication at Wheaton College and author of several textbooks, compares the communication process to three games, dependent on one's theory of how it works. Some think of communication like bowling, where the speaker throws a message at an audience in order to knock them down. The audience does not really respond or have very much to say about the act; they only react. Some think of communication like table tennis (ping-pong); there is back and forth between the participants, but the goal is to win. Griffin says the better game metaphor is charades, or Pictionary®, where a team together tries to understand meaning and one player has to make many attempts to get the team to guess the right answer. It is collaborative and involves trial and error. Models of communication that show the value of feedback in recalibrating the message are like the image of charades. An ethical speaker sees public speaking as tool used to communicate a message to benefit an audience.

Additionally, communication is referred to a symbolic process. In this context, a **symbol** is a word, icon, picture, object, or number that is used to stand for or represent a concept, thing, or experience. Symbols almost always have more than one specific meaning or concept they represent. A flag, for example, is a symbol of a country or political unit, but it also represents the history, culture, and feelings that people in that country experience about various aspects of the culture.

The word "car" or "automobile" represents a machine with four tires, windows, metal body, internal combustion engine, and so on, but it also represents personal, individual experiences and associations with cars. We call this difference **denotative** (the objective or literal meaning shared by most people using the word) and the **connotative** (the subjective, cultural, or personal meaning the word evokes in people together or individually).

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1.9: History of Public Speaking

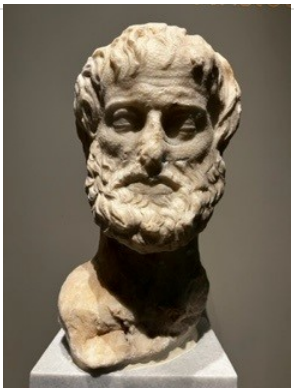


Figure 1.1: Aristotle Bust - Nat'l Archaeological Museum

In the beginning of this chapter, we discussed how public speaking is an important skill because we live in a democratic society, thereby providing us the opportunity to express our ideas and ideals through public discourse (public speaking); verbally expressing ideas publicly is a Greek tradition. However, only adhering to the Greek tradition excludes other cultures' public speaking traditions, which are just as important. In this section we explore the Greek tradition as well as other public speaking traditions.

Greek Tradition

Aristotle, a student of Plato, formalized the tradition of public speaking with his work *Rhetoric*. In Rhetoric, Aristotle claimed that there were three types of situations requiring speeches: deliberative, epideictic, and judicial (i.e. policy changes, memorializing/celebrating an individual, arguing for a guilty or innocent verdict). Aristotle also stated that there are three important factors that must be addressed when delivering a speech: ethos, pathos, and logos. **Ethos** is the audience's perception of a speaker's credibility. **Pathos** is "the emotional constitution of the audience" (Shields, 2022, sec. 13). **Logos** is the entirety of the speech. We continue to utilize and apply all three aspects of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* today. In the table below, we see how to apply Aristotle's *Rhetoric:*

Table 1.1 - Aristotle's *Rhetoric* Explained

Ethos	trustworthiness of speaker	knowledge of speaker	concern for well-being of audience
Pathos	audience's feeling towards speaker	audience's feeling toward situation	audience's change in feeling through speech
Logos	language choices	evidence in speech (examples, data, stories)	arrangement of ideas (main points) in speech

We will employ the use of ethos, pathos, and logos when we focus on persuasive speaking later in this text.

Since women were not allowed in public spaces in ancient Greece, they were not allowed to participate in public speaking. Therefore women's voices were often not heard or minimized. Yet we cannot assume that Greek women did not influence public speaking. For example, one of the most important eulogies - a speech given at a funeral - was Pericles' Funeral Oration. However, a few important Greek philosophers and/or historians suggest that Pericles was an unskilled writer and, therefore, would not have been able to craft such an effective speech. Thus they attributed the creation of the Funeral Oration to his wife Aspasia (Dangour, 2021). There is no way to be sure; however, Socrates, by way of Plato, suggests that Aspasia wrote the speech. Socrates also attributes Aspasia with helping him improve his own communication skills.



Figure 1.2: Image - Aspasia

Roman Tradition

Cicero (106 - 43 BC), who was born a couple hundred years after Aristotle added to the European tradition of public speaking with his manuscript *De Republica*, *De Oratore*, *and De Inventione*. All of these books contributed to the discipline of public speaking. Where Aristotle identified the three factors necessary to be an effective speaker, Cicero identified the five aspects in the speech-making process often referred to as the **five cannons of rhetoric** (see Table 1.2): invention, disposition, style, delivery, memory (Valenzano & Braden, 2015).

Table 1.2 - Cicero's Canon's Explained

Invention	Creating the arguments or main points
Disposition	Organization of the arguments or main points
Style	Language choices (formal vs. informal)
Delivery	Way in which a speech is verbally presented
Memory	Ability to recall information without having to use notes

As the popularity of Christianity grew in Europe, priests adopted, deleted, or expanded on many of the Greek and Roman rhetorical traditions. St. Augustine's manuscripts demonstrate a shift in rhetorical traditions. Augustine, born in 354 in northern Africa, traveled to Rome and Milan to teach rhetoric; however, while in Milan, he converted to Christianity. At this point he began focusing on how effective public speaking - or preaching - was necessary for teaching the scriptures to Christians (Golden, Berquist, Coleman, Sproule, 2004). Augustine continued to expand on the tradition of public speaking, but adapted an approach that focused less on style. Much of what we learn in this course is based on the Greco-Roman tradition of public speaking, which is a Euro-centric understanding of public speaking, but other cultures throughout World history have privileged different aspects of public speaking.

Differences in Public Speaking Traditions

Since public speaking is the performance of one person speaking in front of a group of people, it implies that ideas of the individual are more important than the ideas of the group. While this is not necessarily the case, cultures in which the ideas and will of the group are more important than the individual tend to have fewer public situations and their criteria for effective speeches is different (Power & Galvin, 1997).

Muslim

While Christianity was growing in Europe and various converts were building upon the work of the Greek and Roman traditions, a Muslim rhetorical tradition was growing and flourishing in the Middle Ages. Medieval Muslim preachers had a formula for a well-delivered speech; delivery criteria was explicitly stated (Jones, 2012). "There is a corporeal component of rhetorical eloquence, which the *khatib* displays through the control of his body: calmness of limbs, steady gaze, and so on" (p. 87). In addition to the importance of body movement - or lack thereof - and eye contact, "clarity, concision, and appropriate style and register were essential for the effective preaching of jihad" (p. 107).

New Guinea

In New Guinea, public speaking serves many purposes. Contemporaries believed that New Guinean speech was derivative of those found in Africa (Rumsey, 1986). Yet Harris (2007) stated that New Guinean public speaking functions as art, political agency, and social agency. Harris further quoted Bob Connolly's description of New Guineans, "I don't think any culture anywhere has produced such a concentration of people with quite extraordinary oratorical ability" (para. 12). It seems that public speaking events were often places in which group relationships were tested (Rumsey, 1986).

Native North Americans

We have so far read about how European traditions of public speaking inform our current public speaking curriculum. Yet prior to Europeans arriving in the Americas, Native Americans had their own public speaking traditions. Unfortunately, our understanding of Native Americans' oratory is incomplete due to the fact that most of their speeches were performed within in the context of negotiations between whites and these speeches were recorded by whites (Yagelski, 1995). When one culture writes about another culture, they write about that "other" culture from their own perspective, which is then filtered through their own worldviews. However, we can gain some insight into Native American public speaking traditions.

Yagelski notes Strickland's research with, "public speaking figured into Cherokee life in several vital ways: storytelling provided a means for transmission of myths and cultural knowledge; persuasive speeches were delivered in open meetings during which important tribal decisions were made; sarcasm was sometimes used as a means of public punishment" (p. 69). Furthermore, indigenous people of the plains were socially required to belong to smaller "clubs" or groups within their tribes and both men and women were required to utilize public speaking while participating in activities. According to Monroe (2014), the plateau Indians of the Pacific Northwest employed several rhetorical devices: personal experience as evidence, "high affect techniques in retelling that experience" (p. 22), arranging the story in a way to create the most suspense, and concluding with the thesis. Again, keep in mind, that the Native Americans primarily used oratory to convey all information; therefore, there are limited indigenous written documents detailing their rhetorical traditions.

Douglas-Pryce (2025) critiques the Eurocentric focus in public speaking histories, highlighting neglected contributions from diverse cultures like ancient India and Native America in the following chapter, Questioning and Decentering the History of Public Speaking(opens in new window) This author emphasizes the importance of acknowledging non-Western rhetorical traditions to empower underrepresented voices and promote inclusivity in communication education.

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1.10: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

This chapter explored the benefits of studying public speaking. We explained three types of speeches: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. We also learned about the key elements of the process of communication, and we provided two models that work to explain this process. The speeches you give will be given in a particular context. In your role as communicator, you will encode and deliver a message, which will then be decoded by audience members. At the same time, you are speaking, you will be receiving verbal and nonverbal feedback from the audience. The way that the message is decoded will depend entirely on the amount of noise interfering with the message as well as the worldviews of audience members. We explored the Greek and Roman history of public speaking and we discussed the importance of considering the practice of public speaking throughout history and around the world.

Review Questions

1. What are the personal, professional and public benefits of enhancing your public speaking skills?
2. What is the difference between the linear and transactional model of communication?
3. Explain the difference between the goals of an informative speech and a persuasive speech.
4. Provide an example of speech to entertain.
5. Define and give an original example of each of the elements of the communication process.
6. Explain and provide an example for each of the four types of noise.
7. Which of the elements of the communication process do you think has the greatest impact on the way a message is interpreted? Explain.
8. What do the Roman and Greek traditions of public speaking refer to?
9. How might we question and decenter the history of public speaking?
10. Name and explain an example of a speech that had an impact on you. Explain the how and why to speech had an impact on you, in detail.
11. Consider the statement, “History is never neutral or objective.” What does this mean? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? Can you think of examples that support or contradict this statement? What does this have to do with public speaking?
12. What are the implications and consequences of emphasizing European history and norms of public speaking norms at schools and in textbooks?

Exercises

1. Have students consider and write a response to the question below. After they have drafted their responses, pair or group students to share and discuss their responses. Next, bring the class together for a group discussion about the range of qualities that are part of being a “good” speaker and the diversity of public speaking practices.

2. Who is someone from your community or that you share similarities with, in terms of your cultural identity or background, you consider to be a “good” public speaker? What characteristics and qualities make that person a “good” speaker? You may also explain why you connect and identify with that speaker.

3. Note that responses do not need to be tied to “traditional” public speakers or political speech. There are many different types of public speakers—comedians, entertainers, religious leaders, various types of professionals, etc. Also, don’t forget the public speakers you’ve had contact with in your own daily lives and experiences.

Moving Forward

Now that you know about the traditions associated with public speaking, you will apply the following information throughout the course of your semester:

Textbook Chapters and Overview

Chapter	Chapter Title	Chapter Overview
1	Introduction to Public Speaking	Explains why public speaking is important, models and theories of communication, and the history of public speaking.

Chapter	Chapter Title	Chapter Overview
2	Communication Apprehension	We will cover why so many people experience anxiety around public speaking and communicating and how we can develop coping skills.
3	Developing a Topic for Your Speech	Before writing your speech, you will learn how to choose a topic and decide whether you are informing or persuading your audience or marking a special occasion.
4	Ethics and Public Speaking	Addresses the importance of ethical communication, types of credibility, as well as plagiarism.
5	Audience Analysis	This chapter covers the first step to writing your speech: figuring out who your audience is!
6	Supporting Ideas and Building Arguments	This chapter underscores the significance of evidence and context in claims, examining unsupported assertions.
7	Researching Your Topic	In this chapter you will learn how to research and find credible and reliable evidence.
8	Organization and Outlining Your Speech	Explains various ways to arrange the main points of a speech and how to write out the parts of a speech in an outline.
9	Introductions and Conclusions Matter	Explores the various criteria of an effective introduction and effective conclusion and how to craft introductions and conclusions.
10	Informative Speaking	This chapter explores what informative speaking is and how to develop an effective informative speech.
11	Using Language Well	This chapter highlights the importance of language in effective speech delivery, focusing on word choice for clarity, vividness, and ethical considerations.
12	Delivering Your Speech	In this chapter you will learn strategies and tips for effective verbal and nonverbal delivery.
13	Mediated Communication	In this chapter you will learn how to give a successful speech/presentation through technology such as Zoom, Google Meet, Teams, etc.
14	Presentation Aids-Design and Usage	This chapter will cover how to incorporate presentation aids successfully in your speech.

Chapter	Chapter Title	Chapter Overview
15	Listening	This chapter discusses improving listening skills, differentiating between listening and hearing, and addressing challenges like noise and biases.
16	Persuasive Speaking	This chapter discusses persuasive speaking's goal to influence positive change through tailored arguments and ethical communication.
17	Logical Reasoning	This chapter emphasizes critical thinking's significance in daily life, distinguishing it from simply being critical. It discusses the importance of logical arguments and fallacies in decision-making and public speaking.
20	Special Occasion Speaking	In the event you ever have to give a wedding toast, eulogy, or any other special occasion speech, this chapter will cover how to put together a short speech for any occasion.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Communication Apprehension

2.1: Learning Objectives
2.2: What Is Communication Apprehension?
2.3: Sources of Communication Apprehension
2.4: Reducing Communication Apprehension
2.5: Coping with the Unexpected
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2.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Explain the nature of communication apprehension.
2. List the physiological symptoms of communication apprehension.
3. Identify common myths about communication apprehension.
4. Distinguish among the four different types of communication apprehension.
5. Identify various factors that cause communication apprehension.
6. Explain steps for managing anxiety in the speech preparation process.
7. Identify effective techniques for coping with anxiety during delivery.

Students often share that they are not comfortable with the idea of speaking in front of an audience. One of your biggest concerns about public speaking might be how to deal with nervousness or unexpected events. Some people are not joking when they say they would rather die than stand up and speak in front of a live audience. The fear of public speaking ranks right up there with the fear of flying, death, and spiders (Wallechinsky, Wallace, & Wallace, 1977). Even if you are one of the fortunate few who don't typically get nervous when speaking in public, it's important to recognize things that can go wrong and be mentally prepared for them. On occasion, everyone misplaces speaking notes, has technical difficulties with a presentation aid, or gets distracted by an audience member. Speaking confidently involves knowing how to deal with these and other unexpected events.



Figure 2.1.1: Ron Bulovs – Speech! – CC BY 2.0

In this chapter, we will help you with speaking confidently by exploring what communication apprehension is, examining the different types and causes of communication apprehension, suggesting strategies you can use to manage your fear of public speaking, and providing tactics you can use to deal with a variety of unexpected events you might encounter while speaking.

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2.2: What Is Communication Apprehension?

Many different social situations, ranging from job interviews to dating to public speaking, can make us feel uncomfortable as we anticipate that we will be evaluated and judged by others. How well we communicate is intimately connected to our self-image, and the process of revealing ourselves to the evaluation of others can be threatening whether we are meeting new acquaintances, participating in group discussions, or speaking in front of an audience.

Definition of Communication Apprehension

According to James McCroskey (2001), **communication apprehension** is the broad term that refers to an individual's "fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons." At its heart, communication apprehension is a psychological response to evaluation. This psychological response, however, quickly becomes physical as our body responds to the threat the mind perceives. Our bodies cannot distinguish between psychological and physical threats, so we react as though we were facing a Mack truck barreling in our direction. The body's circulatory and adrenal systems shift into overdrive, preparing us to function at maximum physical efficiency—the "flight or fight" response (Sapolsky, 2004). Yet instead of running away or fighting, all we need to do is stand and talk. When it comes to communication apprehension, our physical responses are often not well adapted to the nature of the threat we face, as the excess energy created by our body can make it harder for us to be effective public speakers. But because communication apprehension is rooted in our minds, if we understand more about the nature of the body's responses to stress, we can better develop mechanisms for managing the body's misguided attempts to help us cope with our fear of social judgment.

Physiological Symptoms of Communication Apprehension

There are a number of physical sensations associated with communication apprehension. We might notice our heart pounding or our hands feeling clammy. We may break out in a sweat. We may have "stomach butterflies" or even feel nauseated. Our hands and legs might start to shake, or we may begin to pace nervously. Our voices may quiver, and we may have a "dry mouth" sensation that makes it difficult to articulate even simple words. Breathing becomes more rapid and, in extreme cases, we might feel dizzy or light-headed. Anxiety about communicating is profoundly disconcerting because we feel powerless to control our bodies. Furthermore, we may become so anxious that we fear we will forget our name, much less remember the main points of the speech we are about to deliver.

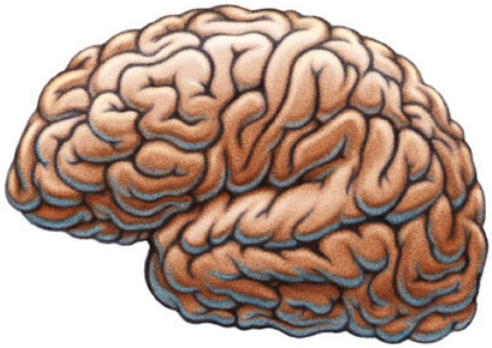


Figure 2.2.1: Isaac Mao – Brain – CC BY 2.0.

The **physiological changes** produced in the body at critical moments are designed to contribute to the efficient use of muscles and expand available energy. Circulation and breathing become more rapid so that additional oxygen can reach the muscles. Increased circulation causes us to sweat. Adrenaline rushes through our body, instructing the body to speed up its movements. If we stay immobile behind a lectern, this hormonal urge to speed up may produce shaking and trembling. Additionally, digestive processes are inhibited so we will not lapse into the relaxed, sleepy state that is typical after eating. Instead of feeling sleepy, we feel butterflies in the pit of our stomach. By understanding what is happening to our bodies in response to the stress of public speaking, we can better cope with these reactions and channel them in constructive directions.

Any conscious emotional state such as anxiety or excitement consists of two components: a primary reaction of the central nervous system and an intellectual interpretation of these physiological responses. The physiological state we label as communication anxiety does not differ from ones we label rage or excitement. Even experienced, effective speakers and performers experience

some communication apprehension. What differs is the mental label that we put on the experience. Effective speakers have learned to channel their body's reactions, positively, using the energy released by these physiological reactions to create animation and stage presence.

Below is a short TedTalk entitled *The science of stage fright and how to overcome it* (Mikael Cho, 2013) that discusses the science behind these physiological changes due to stage fright and some helpful tips on how to manage them.



Myths about Communication Apprehension

A wealth of conventional wisdom surrounds the discomfort of speaking anxiety, as it surrounds almost any phenomenon that makes us uncomfortable. Most of this "folk" knowledge misleads us, directing our attention away from effective strategies for thinking about and coping with anxiety reactions.



Figure 2.2.1: Speaker at Podium – CC BY 2.0.

Before we look in more detail at the types of communication apprehension, let's dispel some of the myths about it.

1. **People who suffer from speaking anxiety are neurotic.** As we have explained, speaking anxiety is a normal reaction. Good speakers can get nervous just as poor speakers do. Winston Churchill, for example, would get physically ill before major speeches in Parliament. Yet he rallied the British people in a time of crisis. Many people, even the most professional performers, experience anxiety about communicating.
2. **Telling a joke or two is always a good way to begin a speech.** Humor is some of the toughest material to deliver effectively because it requires an exquisite sense of timing. Nothing is worse than waiting for a laugh that does not come. Moreover, one person's joke is another person's slander. It is extremely easy to offend when using humor. The same material can play very differently with different audiences. For these reasons, it is not a good idea to start with a joke, particularly if it is not well related to your topic. Humor is just too unpredictable and difficult for many novice speakers. If you insist on using humor, make sure the "joke" is on you, not on someone else. Another tip is never to pause and wait for a laugh that may not come. If the audience catches the joke, fine. If not, you're not left standing in awkward silence waiting for a reaction.
3. **Imagine the audience is naked.** This tip just plain doesn't work because imagining the audience naked will do nothing to calm your nerves. The audience is not some abstract image in your mind. It consists of real individuals who you can connect with

through your material. To “imagine” the audience is to misdirect your focus from the real people in front of you to an “imagined” group. What we imagine is usually more threatening than the reality that we face.

4. **Any mistake means that you have “blown it.”** We all make mistakes. What matters is not whether we make a mistake but how well we recover. One of the authors of this book was giving a speech and wanted to thank a former student in the audience. Instead of saying “former student,” she said, “former friend.” After the audience stopped laughing, the speaker remarked, “Well, I guess she’ll be a *former* friend now!”—which got more laughter from the audience. A speech does not have to be perfect. You just have to make an effort to relate to the audience naturally and be willing to accept your mistakes.
5. **Avoid speaking anxiety by writing your speech out word for word and memorizing it.** Memorizing your speech word for word will likely make your apprehension worse rather than better. Instead of remembering three to five main points and subpoints, you will try to commit to memory more than a thousand bits of data. If you forget a point, the only way to get back on track is to start from the beginning. You are inviting your mind to go blank by overloading it with details. In addition, audiences do not like to listen to “canned,” or memorized, material. Your delivery is likely to suffer if you memorize. Audiences appreciate speakers who talk naturally to them rather than recite a written script.
6. **Audiences are out to get you.** With only a few exceptions, the natural state of audiences is empathy, not antipathy. Most face-to-face audiences are interested in your material, not in your image. Watching someone who is anxious tends to make audience members anxious themselves. Particularly in public speaking classes, audiences want to see you succeed. They know that they will soon be in your shoes and they identify with you, most likely hoping you’ll succeed and give them ideas for how to make their own speeches better. If you establish direct eye contact with real individuals in your audience, you will see them respond to what you are saying, and this response lets you know that you are succeeding.
7. **You will look to the audience as nervous as you feel.** Empirical research has shown that audiences do not perceive the level of nervousness that speakers report feeling (Clevenger, 1959). Most listeners judge speakers as less anxious than the speakers rate themselves. In other words, the audience is not likely to perceive accurately the level of anxiety you might be experiencing. Some of the most effective speakers will return to their seats after their speech and exclaim they were **so** nervous. Listeners will respond, “You didn’t look nervous.” Audiences do not necessarily perceive our fears. Consequently, don’t apologize for your nerves. There is a good chance the audience will not notice if you do not point it out to them.
8. **A little nervousness helps you give a better speech.** This “myth” is true! Professional speakers, actors, and other performers consistently rely on the heightened arousal of nervousness to channel extra energy into their performance. People would much rather listen to a speaker who is alert and enthusiastic than one who is relaxed to the point of boredom. Many professional speakers say that the day they stop feeling nervous is the day they should stop speaking in public. The goal is to control those nerves and channel them into your presentation.

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2.3: Sources of Communication Apprehension

We have said that experiencing some form of anxiety is a normal part of the communication process. Most people are anxious about being evaluated by an audience. Interestingly, many people assume that their nervousness is an experience unique to them. They assume that other people do not feel anxious when confronting the threat of public speaking (McCroskey, 2001). Although anxiety is a widely shared response to the stress of public speaking, not all anxiety is the same. Many researchers have investigated the differences between apprehension grounded in personality characteristics and anxiety prompted by a particular situation at a particular time (Witt, Brown, Roberts, Weisel, Sawyer, & Behnken 2006). McCroskey argues there are four types of communication apprehension: anxiety related to trait, context, audience, and situation (McCroskey, 2001). If you understand these different types of apprehension, you can gain insight into the varied communication factors that contribute to speaking anxiety.

1. Trait Anxiety

Some people are just more disposed to communication apprehension than others. As researchers Witt, et. al., (2006) explain, "**Trait anxiety** measures how people *generally* feel across situations and time periods." This means that some people feel more uncomfortable than the average person regardless of the context, audience, or situation. It doesn't matter whether you are raising your hand in a group discussion, talking with people you meet at a party, or giving speeches in a class, you're likely to be uncomfortable in all these settings if you experience trait anxiety. While trait anxiety is not the same as shyness, those with high trait anxiety are more likely to avoid exposure to public speaking situations, so their nervousness might be compounded by lack of experience or skill (Witt, et. al., 2006). People who experience trait anxiety may never like public speaking, but through preparation and practice, they can learn to give effective public speeches when they need to do so.

2. Context Anxiety

Context anxiety refers to anxiety prompted by specific communication contexts. Some of the major context factors that can heighten this form of anxiety are formality, uncertainty, and novelty.



Figure 2.3.1: MTEA – Michelle Alexander at Podium – CC BY-NC 2.0.

Formality

Some individuals can be perfectly composed when talking at a meeting or in a small group; yet when faced with a more formal public speaking setting, they become intimidated and nervous. As the formality of the communication context increases, the stakes are raised, sometimes prompting more apprehension. Certain communication contexts, such as a press conference or a courtroom, can make even the most confident individuals nervous. One reason is that these communication contexts presuppose an adversarial relationship between the speaker and some audience members.

Uncertainty

In addition, it is hard to predict and control the flow of information in such contexts, so the level of uncertainty is high. The feelings of context anxiety might be similar to those you experience on the first day of class with a new instructor: you don't

know what to expect, so you are more nervous than you might be later in the semester when you know the instructor and the class routine better.

Novelty

Additionally, most of us are not experienced in high-tension communication settings. The novelty of the communication context we encounter is another factor contributing to apprehension. Anxiety becomes more of an issue in communication environments that are new to us, even for those who are normally comfortable with speaking in public.

Most people can learn through practice to cope with their anxiety prompted by formal, uncertain, and novel communication contexts. Fortunately, most public speaking classroom contexts are not adversarial. The opportunities you have to practice giving speeches reduces the novelty and uncertainty of the public speaking context, enabling most students to learn how to cope with anxiety prompted by the communication context.

3. Audience Anxiety

For some individuals, it is not the communication context that prompts anxiety; it is the people in the audience they face. **Audience anxiety** describes communication apprehension prompted by specific audience characteristics. These characteristics include similarity, subordinate status, audience size, and familiarity.

You might have no difficulty talking to an audience of your peers in student government meetings, but an audience composed of parents and students on a campus visit might make you nervous because of the presence of parents in the audience. The degree of perceived similarity between you and your audience can influence your level of speech anxiety. We all prefer to talk to an audience that we believe shares our values more than to one that does not. The more dissimilar we are compared to our audience members, the more likely we are to be nervous. Studies have shown that subordinate status can also contribute to speaking anxiety (Witt, et. al., 2006). Talking in front of your boss or teacher may be intimidating, especially if you are being evaluated. The size of the audience can also play a role: the larger the audience, the more threatening it may seem. Finally, familiarity can be a factor. Some of us prefer talking to strangers rather than to people we know well. Others feel more nervous in front of an audience of friends and family because there is more pressure to perform well.

4. Situational Anxiety

Situational anxiety, McCroskey explains, is the communication apprehension created by “the unique combination of influences generated by audience, time and context” (McCroskey, 2001). Each communication event involves several dimensions: physical, temporal, social-psychological, and cultural. These dimensions combine to create a unique communication situation that is different from any previous communication event. The situation created by a given audience, in a given time, and in a given context can coalesce into situational anxiety.

For example, I once had to give a presentation at a general faculty meeting on general education assessment. To my surprise, I found myself particularly nervous about this speech. The audience was familiar to me but was relatively large compared to most classroom settings. I knew the audience well enough to know that my topic was controversial for some faculty members who resented the mandate for assessment coming from top administration. The meeting occurred late on a Friday afternoon, and my presentation was scheduled more than an hour into the two-hour meeting. All these factors combined to produce situational anxiety for me. While I successfully applied the principles that we will discuss in Section 3.3 for managing stage fright, this speaking situation stands out in my mind as one of the most nerve-wracking speaking challenges I have ever faced.

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2.4: Reducing Communication Apprehension

Experiencing some nervousness about public speaking is normal. The energy created by this physiological response can be functional if you harness it as a resource for more effective public speaking. In this section, we suggest a number of steps that you can take to channel your stage fright into excitement and animation. We will begin with specific speech-related considerations and then briefly examine some of the more general anxiety management options available.

Speech-Related Considerations

Communication apprehension does not necessarily remain constant throughout all the stages of speech preparation and delivery. Researchers (Witt, et. al., 2006) studied the ebb and flow of anxiety levels at four stages in the delivery of a speech. They compared indicators of physiological stress at different milestones in the process :

- anticipation (the minute prior to starting the speech),
- confrontation (the first minute of the speech),
- adaptation (the last minute of the speech), and
- release (the minute immediately following the end of the speech)

These researchers found that anxiety typically peaked at the anticipatory stage. In other words, we are likely to be most anxious right before we get up to speak. As we progress through our speech, our level of anxiety is likely to decline. Planning your speech to incorporate techniques for managing your nervousness at different times will help you decrease the overall level of stress you experience. We also offer a number of suggestions for managing your reactions while you are delivering your speech.

Think Positively

As we mentioned earlier, communication apprehension begins in the mind as a psychological response. This underscores the importance of a speaker's psychological attitude toward speaking. To prepare yourself mentally for a successful speaking experience, we recommend using a technique called **cognitive restructuring**. Cognitive restructuring is simply changing how you label the physiological responses you will experience. Rather than thinking of public speaking as a dreaded obligation, make a conscious decision to consider it an exciting opportunity. The first audience member that you have to convince is yourself, by deliberately replacing negative thoughts with positive ones. If you say something to yourself often enough, you will gradually come to believe it.

We also suggest practicing what communication scholars call **positive self-talk** rather than **negative self-talk** (Metcalfe, 1994; Beebe & Beebe, 2000). If you find yourself thinking, "I'm going to forget everything when I get to the front of the room," turn that negative message around to a positive one. Tell yourself, "I have notes to remind me what comes next, and the audience won't know if I don't cover everything in the order I planned." The idea is to dispute your negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones, even if you think you are "conning" yourself. By monitoring how you talk about yourself, you can unlearn old patterns and change the ways you think about things that produce anxiety.

Reducing Anxiety through Preparation

As we have said earlier in this chapter, uncertainty makes for greater anxiety. Nothing is more frightening than facing the unknown. Although no one can see into the future and predict everything that will happen during a speech, every speaker can and should prepare so that the "unknowns" of the speech event are kept to a minimum. You can do this by gaining as much knowledge as possible about whom you will be addressing, what you will say, how you will say it, and where the speech will take place.

Analyze Your Audience

The audience that we imagine in our minds is almost always more threatening than the reality of the people sitting in front of us. The more information you have about the characteristics of your audience, the more you will be able to craft an effective message. Since your stage fright is likely to be at its highest in the beginning of your speech, it is helpful to open the speech with a technique to prompt an audience response. You might try posing a question, asking for a show of hands, or sharing a story that you know is relevant to your listeners' experience. When you see the audience responding to you by nodding, smiling, or answering questions, you will have directed the focus of attention from yourself to the audience. Such responses indicate success; they are positively reinforcing, and thus reduce your nervousness.

Clearly Organize Your Ideas

Being prepared as a speaker means knowing the main points of your message so well that you can remember them even when you are feeling highly anxious, and the best way to learn those points is to create an outline for your speech. With a clear outline to follow, you will find it much easier to move from one point to the next without stumbling or getting lost.

A note of caution is in order: you do not want to react to the stress of speaking by writing and memorizing a manuscript. Your audience will usually be able to tell that you wrote your speech out verbatim, and they will tune out very quickly. You are setting yourself up for disaster if you try to memorize a written text because the pressure of having to remember all those particulars will be tremendous. Moreover, if you have a momentary memory lapse during a memorized speech, you may have a lot of trouble continuing without starting over at the beginning.

What you do want to prepare is a simple outline that reminds you of the progression of ideas in your speech. What is important is the order of your points, not the specifics of each sentence. It is perfectly fine if your speech varies in terms of specific language or examples each time you practice it.

Adapt Your Language to the Oral Mode

Another reason not to write out your speech as a manuscript is that to speak effectively you want your language to be adapted to the oral, not the written, mode. You will find your speaking anxiety more manageable if you speak in the oral mode because it will help you to feel like you are having a conversation with friends rather than delivering a formal proclamation.

Appropriate oral style is more concrete and vivid than written style. Effective speaking relies on verbs rather than nouns, and the language is less complex. Long sentences may work well for novelists such as William Faulkner or James Joyce, where readers can go back and reread passages two, three, or even seven or eight times. Your listeners, though, cannot “rewind” you in order to catch ideas they miss the first time through.

Don’t be afraid to use personal pronouns freely, frequently saying “I” and “me”—or better yet, “us” and “we.” Personal pronouns are much more effective in speaking than language constructions, such as the following “this author,” because they help you to build a connection with your audience. Another oral technique is to build audience questions into your speech. Rhetorical questions, questions that do not require a verbal answer, invite the audience to participate with your material by thinking about the implications of the question and how it might be answered. If you are graphic and concrete in your language selection, your audience is more likely to listen attentively. You will be able to see the audience listening, and this feedback will help to reduce your anxiety.

Practice in Conditions Similar to Those You Will Face When Speaking

It is not enough to practice your speech silently in your head. To reduce anxiety and increase the likelihood of a successful performance, you need to practice out loud in a situation similar to the one you will face when actually performing your speech. Practice delivering your speech out loud while standing on your feet. If you make a mistake, do not stop to correct it but continue all the way through your speech; that is what you will have to do when you are in front of the audience.

If possible, practice in the actual room where you will be giving your speech. Not only will you have a better sense of what it will feel like to actually speak, but you may also have the chance to practice using presentation aids and potentially avoid distractions and glitches like incompatible computers, blown projector bulbs, or sunlight glaring in your eyes.

Two very useful tools for anxiety-reducing practice are a clock and a mirror. Use the clock to time your speech, being aware that most novice speakers speak too fast, not too slowly. By ensuring that you are within the time guidelines, you will eliminate the embarrassment of having to cut your remarks short because you’ve run out of time or of not having enough to say to fulfill the assignment. Use the mirror to gauge how well you are maintaining eye contact with your audience; it will allow you to check that you are looking up from your notes. It will also help you build the habit of using appropriate facial expressions to convey the emotions in your speech. While you might feel a little absurd practicing your speech out loud in front of a mirror, the practice that you do before your speech can make you much less anxious when it comes time to face the audience.

Watch What You Eat

A final tip about preparation is to watch what you eat immediately before speaking. The butterflies in your stomach are likely to be more noticeable if you skip normal meals. While you should eat normally, you should avoid caffeinated drinks because they can make your shaking hands worse. Carbohydrates operate as natural sedatives, so you may want to eat carbohydrates to help slow

down your metabolism and to avoid fried or very spicy foods that may upset your stomach. Especially if you are speaking in the morning, be sure to have breakfast. If you haven't had anything to eat or drink since dinner the night before, dizziness and light-headedness are very real possibilities.

Reducing Nervousness during Delivery

Anticipate the Reactions of Your Body

There are a number of steps you can take to counteract the negative physiological effects of stress on the body. **Deep breathing** will help to counteract the effects of excess adrenaline. You can place symbols in your notes, like "slow down" or ☺, that remind you to pause and breathe during points in your speech. It is also a good idea to pause a moment before you get started to set an appropriate pace from the onset. Look at your audience and smile. It is a reflex for some of your audience members to smile back. Those smiles will reassure you that your audience members are friendly.

Physical movement helps to channel some of the excess energy that your body produces in response to anxiety. If at all possible, move around the front of the room rather than remaining imprisoned behind the lectern or gripping it for dear life (avoid pacing nervously from side to side, however). Move closer to the audience and then stop for a moment. If you are afraid that moving away from the lectern will reveal your shaking hands, use note cards rather than a sheet of paper for your outline. Note cards do not quiver like paper, and they provide you with something to do with your hands.

Vocal warm-ups are also important before speaking. Just as athletes warm up before practice or competition and musicians warm up before playing, speakers need to get their voices ready to speak. Talking with others before your speech or quietly humming to yourself can get your voice ready for your presentation. You can even sing or practice a bit of your speech out loud while you're in the shower (just don't wake the neighbors), where the warm, moist air is beneficial for your vocal mechanism. Gently yawning a few times is also an excellent way to stretch the key muscle groups involved in speaking.

Immediately before you speak, you can relax the muscles of your neck and shoulders, rolling your head gently from side to side. Allow your arms to hang down your sides and stretch out your shoulders. **Isometric exercises** that involve momentarily tensing and then relaxing specific muscle groups are an effective way to keep your muscles from becoming stiff.

Focus on the Audience, Not on Yourself

During your speech, make a point of establishing direct eye contact with your audience members. By looking at individuals, you establish a series of one-to-one contacts similar to interpersonal communication. An audience becomes much less threatening when you think of them not as an anonymous mass but as a collection of individuals.

A colleague once shared his worst speaking experience when he reached the front of the room and forgot everything he was supposed to say. When I asked what he saw when he was in the front of the room, he looked at me like I was crazy. He responded, "I didn't see anything. All I remember is a mental image of me up there in the front of the room blowing it." Speaking anxiety becomes more intense if you focus on yourself rather than concentrating on your audience and your material.

Maintain Your Sense of Humor

No matter how well we plan, unexpected things happen. That fact is what makes the public speaking situation so interesting. When the unexpected happens to you, do not let it rattle you. At the end of a class period late in the afternoon of a long day, a student raised her hand and asked me if I knew that I was wearing two different colored shoes, one black and one blue. I looked down and saw that she was right; my shoes did not match. I laughed at myself, complimented the student on her observational abilities and moved on with the important thing, the material I had to deliver.

Stress Management Techniques

Even when we employ positive thinking and are well prepared, some of us still feel a great deal of anxiety about public speaking. When that is the case, it can be more helpful to use stress management than to try to make the anxiety go away.

One general technique for managing stress is positive visualization. **Visualization** is the process of seeing something in your mind's eye; essentially it is a form of self-hypnosis. Frequently used in sports training, positive visualization involves using the imagination to create images of relaxation or ultimate success. Essentially, you imagine in great detail the goal for which you are striving, say, a rousing round of applause after you give your speech. You mentally picture yourself standing at the front of the room, delivering your introduction, moving through the body of your speech, highlighting your presentation aids, and sharing a memorable conclusion. If you imagine a positive outcome, your body will respond to it as through it were real. Such mind-body

techniques create the psychological grounds for us to achieve the goals we have imagined. As we discussed earlier, communication apprehension has a psychological basis, so mind-body techniques such as visualization can be important to reducing anxiety. It's important to keep in mind, though, that visualization does not mean you can skip practicing your speech out loud. Just as an athlete still needs to work out and practice the sport, you need to practice your speech in order to achieve the positive results you visualize.

Systematic desensitization is a behavioral modification technique that helps individuals overcome anxiety disorders. People with phobias, or irrational fears, tend to avoid the object of their fear. For example, people with a phobia of elevators avoid riding in elevators—and this only adds to their fear because they never "learn" that riding in elevators is usually perfectly safe. Systematic desensitization changes this avoidance pattern by gradually exposing the individual to the object of fear until it can be tolerated.

First, the individual is trained in specific muscle relaxation techniques. Next, the individual learns to respond with conscious relaxation even when confronted with the situation that previously caused them fear. James McCroskey used this technique to treat students who suffered from severe, trait-based communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1972). He found that "the technique was eighty to ninety percent effective" for the people who received the training (McCroskey, 2001). If you're highly anxious about public speaking, you might begin a program of systematic desensitization by watching someone else give a speech. Once you are able to do this without discomfort, you would then move to talking about giving a speech yourself, practicing, and, eventually, delivering your speech.

The success of techniques such as these clearly indicates that increased exposure to public speaking reduces overall anxiety. Consequently, you should seek out opportunities to speak in public rather than avoid them. As the famous political orator William Jennings Bryan once noted, "The ability to speak effectively is an acquirement rather than a gift" (Carnegie, 1955).

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2.5: Coping with the Unexpected

Even the most prepared, confident public speaker may encounter unexpected challenges during the speech. This section discusses some common unexpected events and addresses some general strategies for combating the unexpected when you encounter it in your own speaking.

Nearly every experienced speaker has gotten to the middle of a presentation and realized that a key note card is missing or that they skipped important information from the beginning of the speech. When encountering these difficulties, a good strategy is to pause for a moment to think through what you want to do next. Is it important to include the missing information, or can it be omitted without hurting the audience's ability to understand the rest of your speech? If it needs to be included, do you want to add the information now, or will it fit better later in the speech? It is often difficult to remain silent when you encounter this situation, but pausing for a few seconds will help you to figure out what to do and may be less distracting to the audience than sputtering through a few "ums" and "uhs."

Technical Difficulties

Technology has become a very useful aid in public speaking, allowing us to use audio or video clips, presentation software, or direct links to websites. However, one of the best known truisms about technology is that it does break down. Web servers go offline, files will not download in a timely manner, and media are incompatible with the computer in the presentation room, shared files get locked, and passwords get forgotten. It is important to always have a backup plan, developed in advance, in case of technical difficulties with your presentation materials. As you develop your speech and visual aids, think through what you will do if you cannot show a particular graph or if your presentation slides are hopelessly garbled. Although your beautifully prepared chart may be superior to the oral description you can provide, your ability to provide a succinct oral description when technology fails can give your audience the information they need.

External Distractions

Although many public speaking instructors directly address audience etiquette during speeches, you're still likely to encounter an audience member who walks in late, a ringing cell phone, or even a car alarm going off outside your classroom. If you are distracted by external events like these, it is often useful, and sometimes necessary (as in the case of the loud car alarm), to pause and wait so that you can regain the audience's attention and be heard.

Whatever the unexpected event, your most important job as a speaker is to maintain your composure. It is important not to get upset or angry because of these types of glitches—and, once again, the key to this is being fully prepared. If you keep your cool and quickly implement a "plan B" for moving forward with your speech, your audience is likely to be impressed and may listen even more attentively to the rest of your presentation.

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2.6: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

This chapter focused on building confidence in public speaking by addressing communication apprehension, its types, causes, and strategies for managing fears.Communication apprehension refers to the fear or anxiety people experience at the thought of being evaluated by others. Some anxiety is a normal part of the communication process. The psychological threat individuals perceive in the communication situation prompts physiological changes designed to help the body respond. These physical reactions to stress create the uncomfortable feelings of unease called speech anxiety and may include sweaty palms, shaking, butterflies in the stomach, and dry mouth.

There are many steps you can take during the speech preparation process to manage your communication apprehension, including thinking positively, analyzing your audience, clearly organizing your ideas, adapting your language to the oral mode, and practicing. You can employ a variety of techniques while you are speaking to reduce your apprehension, such as anticipating your body's reactions, focusing on the audience, and maintaining your sense of humor. Stress management techniques, including cognitive restructuring and systematic desensitization, can also be helpful. Plan ahead for how to cope with unexpected difficulties such as forgetting part of your speech content, having technical trouble with visual aids, or being interrupted by external distractions.

Exercises

1. Create an inventory of the physiological symptoms of communication apprehension you experience when engaged in public speaking. Which ones are you most interested in learning to manage?
2. With a partner or in a small group, discuss which myths create the biggest problems for public speakers. Why do people believe in these myths?
3. Make a list of sources of your communication apprehension. What factors contribute most to your anxiety about public speaking?
4. Go to www.hypknowsis.com(opens in new window) and practice a few of the simple beginning visualization exercises presented there.
5. Make a plan for managing your anxiety before and during your speech that includes specific techniques you want to try before your next public speaking assignment.
6. Talk to people who engage in public speaking regularly (e.g., teachers and professionals) and find out what unexpected events have happened when they were giving speeches. What did they do to deal with these unexpected happenings?
7. Fill out the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA24). The measure can be found at wwww.jamesmccroskey.com(opens in new window) [www.jamescmccroskey.com].
8. Complete the exercise below to test you understanding of key concepts from this chapter.

Test Your Knowledge of Communication Apprehension

Table 3.1 Myths or Facts about Communication Apprehension

Instructions: For each of the following questions, check either "myth" or "fact."		Myth	Fact
1.	Audiences will be able to tell how nervous you feel.		
2.	Some stage fright might be a good thing, as you can channel it to make your delivery more energetic.		
3.	Most audiences are basically hostile, looking to see you make a fool of yourself.		
4.	Experienced speakers don't feel any stage fright.		

Instructions: For each of the following questions, check either “myth” or “fact.”		Myth	Fact
5.	Most speakers tend to relax as they progress through their speeches.		
6.	Moving around the front of the room during your speech will make you less nervous.		
7.	Most audiences would rather see a speaker do well.		
8.	Focusing on yourself rather than the audience is an effective way to reduce your stage fright.		
9.	The positive or negative label you ascribe to the public speaking situation will influence how nervous you feel.		
10.	Telling a joke in your introduction is guaranteed to get the audience on your side.		
Scoring: Myths: 1, 3, 4, 8, and 10; Facts: 2, 5, 6, 7, and 9			

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Developing a Topic for Your Speech

3.1: Learning Objectives
3.2: Getting Started with Your Topic
3.3: Formulating a Specific Purpose Statement
3.4: Formulating a Central Idea Statement
3.5: Problems to Avoid with Specific Purpose and Central Idea Statements
3.6: What If You Draw a Blank?
3.7: Conclusion and Exercises

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3.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Distinguish between the specific purpose, central idea, and main points of a speech.
2. Differentiate between a speech to inform, persuade, and inspire or entertain.
3. Write a specific purpose statement.
4. Write a thesis or central idea statement.
5. Understand and conduct a basic personal inventory.
6. Explain how to identify and use finding aids for topic selection.

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3.2: Getting Started with Your Topic

Purpose

So far in this book we have examined many practical and theoretical aspects of public speaking as a method of communicating and as an art form. In this chapter we are going to get into the real meat of putting your speech together.

Often when we get to the point of sitting down to prepare a speech, we think about topics. That is understandable, but before we go any further, let's recalibrate our minds to think also, or even more, about "purpose." There are some benefits to considering purpose and topic simultaneously. Doing so will help you focus your speech to a manageable amount of content and become more audience-centered. Also you will be able to make strategic decisions about other aspects of the speech, such as organization, supporting evidence, and visual aids.

Speeches have traditionally been seen to have one of three broad purposes: to inform, to persuade, and— Well, to be honest, different words are used for the third kind of speech purpose: to inspire, to amuse, to please, to delight, or to entertain. We will just use "to inspire" as the overall term here. These broad goals are commonly known as a speech's general purpose, since, in general, you are trying to inform, persuade, or entertain/inspire your audience without regard to specifically what the topic will be. Perhaps you could think of them as appealing to the understanding of the audience (informative), the will or action (persuasive), and the emotion or pleasure.

You will present three types of speeches in your public speaking class. An informative and a persuasive speech, and an entertaining speech or special occasion speech, such as a tribute (commemorative), an after-dinner speech, a toast, or a eulogy.

It should be understood that these three purposes are not necessarily exclusive of the others. A speech designed to be persuasive can also be informative and entertaining, even if neither of those is the main purpose.

As we saw in Chapter 1, the canons of rhetoric is the traditional way to explain the process of preparing a speech. That process is still a practical guide for today. The first canon, invention, or inventio, is discussed, at least in part, in this chapter. Although in modern times we tend to think of invention as the creation of a new technology, invention basically means "discovery" of what to say

The scholars of rhetoric from the ancient times encouraged the use of questions to "discover" the arguments and content of the speech. These were called "topoi" and there were a couple of dozen of them; modern scholars have reframed them as questions that can be used to develop reasons and material. These can be helpful in many ways, but here we will present just two basic questions you should consider for beginning your speech:

1. What value, connection, or interest does my purpose/topic have for the audience? What needs do they meet? and
2. Why would the audience consider me, the speaker, a credible source on this purpose/topic?

We suggest that these two questions be in your mind as you develop your speech. You should answer them, directly or indirectly, for your audience in your speech. If your audience is unfamiliar with your topic, for instance, you would want to address the first one early in the speech. If your audience does not know anything about you, you should mention (in an appropriate way) your background in the subject area.

Some of the most effective speeches are the ones that answer the questions in the minds of the audience.. To change our focus from speaking just to express ourselves to being audience-centered. We can uses the acronym "WIIFM." This is not a new radio station, but the abbreviation for "What's In It For Me?" The audience is asking this question, directly or indirectly, during a speech. Keep the WIIFM acronym in mind as you start to think about your speeches more and more from your audience's perspective.

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3.3: Formulating a Specific Purpose Statement

Now that you know your general purpose (to inform, to persuade, or to entertain), 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 by stating intended outcome or goal of the speech. So if your first speech is an informative speech, your general purpose will be to inform your audience about a very specific realm of knowledge, for example, the history of NASA's Shuttle program.

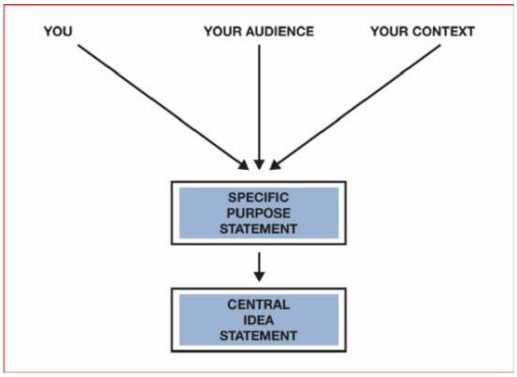


Figure 3.3.1: Building a specific purpose statement

In writing your specific purpose statement, you will take three contributing elements that will come together to help you determine your specific purpose. The diagram in Figure 4.1 shows those three elements. These three elements are **you** (your interests, your background, past jobs, experience, education, major), **your audience**, and **the context** or setting.

You

An old adage states, "Write about what you know." In many ways, that is a great place to start with creating a speech, although you will need to consult other sources as well. If you start with ideas that reflect your interests, goals, and passions, that passion and commitment will come across in your speech, give you more credibility in the eyes of your audience, and make your speech more interesting.

This would be a good place for you to do an inventory. Retail stores do regular inventories to know what is "really there" in the stores. 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. Figure 4.2 is a list of prompts for this inventory. To help generate some ideas for your speeches, complete the phrases and/or answer the questions in Figure 4.2 (Jobs I have had, Organizations I have been involved in, High school classes I enjoyed, Clubs I am in/have been in, Hobbies, Sports/Musical instruments I played, Places I've visited, Disease or disorders suffered by people I have known, Interesting people I have met, Interesting people I have read about or seen movies about, Favorite books, Favorite Music, Favorite movies or TV shows) to see if any ideas can be generated from experiences or interests you may not have realized you had.



Figure 3.3.2: A sample personal inventory.

This inventory may seem long and intrusive, but digging a little deeper may help you find ideas and directions that are unique to you. You want to find this kind of subject matter and not the same topics others will gravitate towards just because they saw a list on Google on informative speech topics. Also, generating your list based on these questions and prompts will get you excited about your topic and talking about it to your classmates. For example, a very common persuasive speech topic is organ donation. There is nothing wrong with that topic per se and it is an important issue. However, if you ask yourself the right questions, you may come up with something far more central to who you are and that might interest and/or apply to the audience more.

Another approach that you might find helpful is to determine what you are passionate about through two binary routes. First, you will obviously be passionate about the things you love, so talk about those. Is The Simpsons your favorite TV show? Then you can inform us on the people and vision of the team behind this highly popular and long-running TV show. Do you feel that Big Brothers Big Sisters is a vital organization in the way it helps kids? Then persuade us to volunteer there. Conversely, you can also be passionate about things you don't love (i.e., hate). Does it really annoy you when people don't use their turn signals? Then persuade us to always use them. Do you want to scream when you hear a cell phone go off at the movies? Then persuade us that cell phones should be banned in theaters.

The Audience

Of course, what you love or hate may be in stark contrast to how your audience feels, so it is important to keep them in mind as well, which brings us to the next contributing factor. After you examine what you know and are passionate about, you have to determine if and how the topic has practical value or interest for others. It may be that it is a topic the audience is not immediately interested in but needs to know about for their own benefit. Then it becomes necessary for you to find that angle and approach that will help them see the benefit of the topic and listen to you. The more you know about your audience, the better you can achieve this goal. Good speakers are very knowledgeable about their audiences.

The Context

Many aspects come into the context of a speech, the main ones are the time, place, and reason(s) for the event and the audience being there. Your classroom speeches have a fairly set context: time limits, the classroom, assignment specifications. Other speeches you will give in college (or in your career and personal life) will require you to think more deeply about the context just as you would the audience.

Putting It Together

Keeping these three inputs in mind, you can begin to write a specific purpose statement, which will be the foundation for everything you say in the speech and a guide for what you do not say. This formula will help you in putting together your specific purpose statement:

> **Specific Communication Word** *(inform, explain, demonstrate, describe, define, persuade, convince, prove, argue)*
>
> **Target Audience** *(my classmates, the members of the Social Work Club, my coworkers)*
>
> **The Content** *(how to bake brownies, that Macs are better than PCs)*

Each of these parts of the specific purpose is important. The first two parts make sure you are clear on your purpose and know specifically who will be hearing your message. However, we will focus on the last part here.

The content part of the specific purposes statement must first be singular and focused, and the content must match the purpose. The word "and" really should not appear in the specific purpose statement since that would make it seem that you have two purposes and two topics. Obviously, the specific purpose statement's content must be very narrowly defined and, well, specific. One mistake beginning speakers often make is to try to "cover" too much material. They tend to speak about the whole alphabet, A-Z on a subject, instead of just "T" or "L." This comes from an emphasis on the topic more than the purpose, and from not keeping audience and context in mind. In other words, go deep (specific), not broad. Examples in this chapter will show what that means.

Second, the content must match the focus of the purpose word. A common error is to match an informative purpose with a persuasive content clause or phrase. For example,

- *To explain to my classmates why term life insurance is a better option than whole life insurance policies.*
- *To inform my classmates about how the recent Supreme Court decision on police procedures during arrests is unconstitutional.*

Sometimes it takes an unbiased second party to see where your content and purpose may not match.

Third, the specific purpose statement should be relevant to the audience. How does the purpose and its topic touch upon their lives, wallets, relationships, careers, etc.? It is also a good idea to keep in mind what you want the audience to walk away with or what you want them to know, to be able to do, to think, to act upon, or to respond to your topic—your ultimate outcome or result.

To revisit an earlier example, "to explain to my classmates the history of NASA" would be far too much material and the audience may be unsure of its relevance. A more specific one such as "to inform my classmates about the decline of the Shuttle program" would be more manageable and closer to their experience. It would also reference two well-known historical tragedies involving the Shuttle program, the Challenger Disaster in 1986 and the Columbia Explosion in 2003. Here are several examples of specific purposes statements. Notice how they meet the standards of being singular, focused, relevant, and consistent.

- *To inform my classmates of the origin of the hospice movement.*
- *To describe to my coworkers the steps to apply for retirement.*
- *To define for a group of new graduate students the term "academic freedom."*
- *To explain to the Lions Club members the problems faced by veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.*
- *To persuade the members of the Greek society to take the spring break trip to Daytona Beach.*
- *To motivate my classmates to engage in the College's study abroad program.*
- *To convince my classroom audience that they need at least seven hours of sleep per night to do well in their studies.*

Now that you understand the basic form and function of a specific purpose statement, let's revisit the original diagram in Figure 3.3.1. The same topic for a different audience will create a somewhat different specific purpose statement. Public speaking is not a "one-size-fits-all" proposition. Let's take the subject of participating in the study abroad program. How would you change your approach if you were addressing first-semester freshmen instead of first-semester juniors? Or if you were speaking to high school students in one of the college's feeder high schools? Or if you were asked to share your experiences with a local civic group that

gave you a partial scholarship to participate in the program? You would have slightly different specific purpose statements although your experience and basic information are all the same.

For another example, let's say that one of your family members has benefited from being in the Special Olympics and you have volunteered two years at the local event. You could give a tribute (commemorative speech) about the work of Special Olympics (with the purpose to inspire), an informative speech on the scope or history of the Special Olympics, or a persuasive speech on why audience members should volunteer at next year's event. "Special Olympics" is a key word in every specific purpose, but the statements would otherwise be different.

Despite all the information given about specific purpose statements so far, the next thing you read will seem strange: Never start your speech by saying your specific purpose to the audience. In a sense, it is just for you and the instructor. For you, it's like a note you might tack on the mirror or refrigerator to keep you on track. For the instructor, it's a way for them to know you are accomplishing both the assignment and what you set out to do. Avoid the temptation to default to saying it at the beginning of your speech. It will seem awkward and repetitive.

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3.4: Formulating a Central Idea Statement

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. The statement that reveals your main points is commonly known as the **central idea or thesis statement** (or just the central idea).

Now, at this point we need to make a point about terminology. Your instructor may call the central idea statement "the thesis" or "the thesis statement." Your English composition instructor probably uses that term in your essay writing. Another instructor may call it the "main idea statement." All of these are basically synonymous and you should not let the terms confuse you, but you should use the term your instructor uses.

That said, is the central idea statement the very same thing as the thesis sentence in an essay? Yes, in that both are letting the audience know without a doubt your topic, purpose, direction, angle and/or point of view. No, in that the rules for writing a "thesis" or central idea statement in a speech are not as strict as in an essay. For example, it is acceptable in a speech to announce the topic and purpose, although it is usually not the most artful or effective way to do it. You may say,

- *"In this speech I will try to motivate you to join me next month as a volunteer at the regional Special Olympics."*

That would be followed by a preview statement of what the speech's arguments or reasons for participating will be, such as,

- *"You will see that it will benefit the community, the participants, and you individually."*

However, another approach is to "capsulize" the purpose, topic, approach, and preview in one succinct statement.

- *"Your involvement as a volunteer in next month's regional Special Olympics will be a rewarding experience that will benefit the community, the participants, and you personally."*

This last version is really the better approach and most likely the one your instructor will prefer.

So, you don't want to just repeat your specific purpose in the central idea statement, but you do want to provide complete information. Also, unlike the formal thesis of your English essays, the central idea statement in a speech can and should use personal language (I, me, we, us, you, your, etc.) and should attempt to be attention-getting and audience-focused. And importantly, just like a formal thesis sentence, it must be a complete, grammatical sentence.

The point of your central idea statement in terms of your audience is to reveal and clarify the ideas or assertions you will be addressing in your speech, more commonly known as your main points, to fulfill your specific purpose. 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 of pairs of specific purpose statements and central idea statements.

- *Specific Purpose: To explain to my classmates the effects of losing a pet on the elderly.*
- *Central Idea: When elderly persons lose their animal companions, they can experience serious psychological, emotional, and physical effects.*
- *Specific Purpose: To demonstrate to my audience the correct method for cleaning a computer keyboard.*
- *Central Idea: Your computer keyboard needs regular cleaning to function well, and you can achieve that in four easy steps.*
- *Specific Purpose: To persuade my political science class that labor unions are no longer a vital political force in the U.S.*
- *Central Idea: 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.*
- *Specific Purpose: To motivate my audience to oppose the policy of drug testing welfare recipients.*

- *Central Idea: Many voices are calling for welfare recipients to go through mandatory, regular drug testing, but this policy is unjust, impractical, and costly, and fair-minded Americans should actively oppose it.*
- *Specific Purpose: To explain to my fellow civic club members why I admire Representative John Lewis.*
- *Central Idea: 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.*
- *Specific Purpose: To describe how makeup is done for the TV show The Walking Dead.*
- *Central Idea: The wildly popular zombie show The Walking Dead achieves incredibly scary and believable makeup effects, and in the next few min*

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. Additionally, you will have a speech trying to do too much and that goes overtime.

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3.5: Problems to Avoid with Specific Purpose and Central Idea Statements

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

- *To explain to my classmates the history of ballet.*

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

- *To explain to my classmates how ballet came to be performed and studied in the U.S.*
- *To explain to my classmates the difference between Russian and French ballet.*
- *To explain to my classmates how ballet originated as an art form in the Renaissance.*
- *To explain to my classmates the origin of the ballet dancers' clothing.*

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:

- *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)*

The third problem happens when the "communication verb" in the specific purpose does not match the content; for example, persuasive content is paired with "to inform" or "to explain." If you resort to the word "why" in the thesis, it is probably persuasive.

- *To inform my audience why capital punishment is unconstitutional.* **(This cannot be informative since it is taking a side)**
- *To persuade my audience about the three types of individual retirement accounts.* **(This is not persuading the audience of anything, just informing)**
- *To inform my classmates that Universal Studios is a better theme park than Six Flags over Georgia.* **(This is clearly an opinion, hence persuasive)**

The fourth problem exists when the content part of the specific purpose statement has two parts and thus uses "and." A good speech follows the KISS rule—Keep It Simple, Speaker. One specific purpose is enough. These examples cover two different topics.

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

To fix this problem, you will need to select one of the topics in these examples and speak on just that:

- *To explain to my audience how to swing a golf club.*

OR

- *To explain to my audience how to choose the best golf shoes.*

Of course, the value of this topic depends on your audience's interest in golf and your own experience as a golfer.

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

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

Finally, the sixth problem occurs when the speech just gets off track of the specific purpose statement, in that it starts well but veers in another direction. This problem relates to the challenge of developing coherent main points, what might be called “the Roman numeral points” of the speech. The specific purpose usually determines the main points and the relevant structure. For example, if the specific purpose is:

- *To inform my classmates of the five stages of grief as described by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross.*

There is no place in this speech for a biography of Dr. Kubler-Ross, arguments against this model of grief, therapies for those undergoing grief, or steps for the audience to take to get counseling. All of those are different specific purposes. The main points would have to be the five stages, in order, as Dr. Kubler-Ross defined them.

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

- The specific purpose and central idea statements are not the same thing, although they are related.
- The central idea statement should be clear and not complicated or wordy; it should “stand out” to the audience. As you practice delivery, you should emphasize it with your voice.
- The central idea statement should not be the first thing you say, but should follow the steps of a good introduction as outlined in Chapter 9. Those steps include

    1. getting the audience’s attention,
    2. introduce your topic and state your thesis/central idea,
    3. establishing your credibility, and
    4. give your audience reasons to listen
    5. preview your main ideas

One last word. You will notice that we have said nothing about titles of your speeches so far. A title is a good thing and serves purposes. This textbook chooses to focus on the purpose and central idea as the basis, even the spine of the speech. A good source on titles can be found here: [How to write good speech titles] (Best Speech Topics [best-speech-topics.com]).

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3.6: What If You Draw a Blank?



Figure 3.6.1: Head scratcher (CC BY-NC 2.0; Babak Fakhamzadeh)

Uh-oh, what if you have no clue what to speak about at all? Thankfully, there are many places where you can get help finding a good topic for you. In this section, we're going to talk about a range of ways to find the best topic.

Conduct a Personal Inventory

The first way to find a good topic is to conduct what we call a personal inventory. A **personal inventory** is a detailed and descriptive list about an individual. In this case, we want you to think about you. Here are some basic questions to get you started:

- What's your major?
- What are your hobbies?
- What jobs have you had?
- What extracurricular activities have you engaged in?
- What clubs or groups do you belong to?
- What political issues interest you?
- Where have you traveled in life?
- What type of volunteer work have you done?
- What goals do you have in life?
- What social problems interest you?
- What books do you read?
- What movies do you watch?
- What games do you play?
- What unique skills do you possess?

After responding to these questions, you now have a range of areas that are unique to you that you could realistically develop into a speech. Here are some unique inventory items that could be turned into speeches for some of the authors of this textbook:

Richard A. Welter

1. Grew up as an air force dependent and lived on the island of Crete
2. Is a puppeteer
3. Has two puggles (half pug/half beagle) named Daikin and Teddy

Edith D. Cates

1. Worked as a teacher for the Medicine Chief of the Bear Tribe Medicine Society in Spokane, Washington
2. Was codirector of Bear Tribe Publishing Company
3. Specializes in storytelling

Bess E. Rigsby

1. Is an avid fan of the Baltimore Orioles
2. Spent a month in South Korea as part of a study/travel group
3. Is a history buff who likes visiting historic sites and national parks

Carl N. Cundiff

1. Briefly lived in the Dominican Republic with his family as a young boy
2. Is a DJ
3. Occasionally practices yoga

We wanted to note these interesting facts about our personal lives to illustrate the fact that each and every one of us has done unique and interesting things in our lives that could make really interesting and informative, persuasive, or entertaining speeches.

Use Finding Aids

If you're still just stumped after conducting a personal inventory, the next recommendation we have for helping you find a good topic is to use a finding aid. A **finding aid** is a tool that will help you find lists of possible topics. Let's look at four of them: best-seller lists, organizations that tally information, media outlets, and the Internet.

Best-Seller Lists

A best-seller list is a list of books that people are currently buying. These lists often contain various subdivisions including fiction, nonfiction, business, advice, or graphic novels. Table 6.1 contains a range of best-seller lists to examine:

Table 6.1 Best-Seller Lists

Name	Website
New York Times	NY Times Best Sellers(opens in new window) [www.nytimes.com]
Amazon.com	Amazon.com best sellers books [Amazon.com] [www.amazon.com]
USA Today	USA Today(opens in new window) [www.usatoday.com]
American Booksellers	Professional Bookselling(opens in new window) [www.bookweb.org]
Publisher's Weekly	Publisher's Weekly(opens in new window) [www.publishersweekly.com(opens in new window)]
The Washington Post	Washington Post(opens in new window) [www.washingtonpost.com]

It is important to realize that your goal in looking at best-seller lists is not to choose a book to serve as the topic of your speech—unless you've been assigned to give a book review! The point is that while all these lists indicate what people are reading, you can use them to find out what topics people are generally interested in right now.

Polling Organizations

In addition to numerous sources for best sellers, there are also a number of polling organizations that regularly conduct research on the American public. Not only are these organizations good for finding interesting research, but generally the most recent polls are an indication of what people are interested in understanding today. For example, The Gallup Organization regularly conducts polls to find out Americans' perceptions of current political issues, business issues, social issues, and a whole range of other interesting information. Often just looking at the Gallup Organization's website can help you find very interesting speech topics.

Table 6.2 Tallied Information

Name	Website

Name	Website
The Gallup Organization	Gallup.com(opens in new window) [www.gallup.com(opens in new window)]
US Census Bureau	Census.gov(opens in new window) [www.census.gov(opens in new window)]
Polling Report	Pollingreport.com(opens in new window) [www.pollingreport.com(opens in new window)]
Rasmussen Reports	Rasmussenreports.ocm(opens in new window) [www.rasmussenreports.com(opens in new window)]
Zogby International	Zogby.com(opens in new window) [www.zogby.com(opens in new window)]
Pew Research Center	Pewresearch.org(opens in new window) [pewresearch.org(opens in new window)]

Media Outlets

The next great ways to find interesting topics for your speeches are watching television and listening to the radio. The evening news, the History Channel, and the National Geographic channel can all provide ideas for many different speech topics. There are even a host of television shows that broadcast the latest and most interesting topics weekly (e.g., *Dateline*, *20/20*, *60 Minutes*). Here are some recent segments from *20/20* that could make interesting speeches: former *Tarzan* actor, Steve Sipek, has lived with tigers for forty years; the science behind the *Bachelor* phenomenon; the world of childhood schizophrenia; and a girl born with a rare "mermaid" condition.

As for listening to the radio, talk radio or even podcasts are often full of interesting possibilities for speech topics. Many of the most prominent talk radio shows and podcasts have two or three hours to fill five days a week, so the shows' producers are always looking for interesting topics. Why not let those producers do the investigative work for you? If you're listening to talk radio or a podcast and hear an interesting topic, write it down and think about using it for your next speech.

As with the best-seller list, it is important to realize that your goal is not to use a given television or radio program as the basis for your speech, much less to repeat the exact arguments that a talk radio host or caller has made. We are not advocating stealing someone's ideas—you need to do your own thinking to settle on your speech topic. You can certainly use ideas from the media as contributions to your speech; however, if you do this, it is only ethical to make sure that you correctly cite the show where you heard about the topic by telling your audience the title, station, and date when you heard it.

The Internet

You can, of course, also look for interesting speech topics online. While the Internet may not always provide the most reliable information, it is a rich source of interesting topics. For example, to browse many interesting blogs, check out findblogs.com(opens in new window) [www.findblogs.com]. This website links to hundreds of blogs you could peruse, searching for a topic that inspires you.

If you find yourself really stumped, there are even a handful of websites that specialize in helping people, just like you, find speech topics. Yes, that's right! Some insightful individuals have posted long lists of possible topics for your next speech right on the Internet. Here are some we recommend:

- myspeechclass.com(opens in new window) [www.myspeechclass.com]
- kirtland.edu(opens in new window) [www.kirtland.edu]

Using the Internet is a great way to find a topic, but you'll still need to put in the appropriate amount of your own thinking and time to really investigate your topic once you've found one that inspires you.

Poll Your Audience for Interests and Needs

The last way you can find a great topic is to conduct a simple poll of your audience to see what their interests and needs are. Let's handle these two methods separately. When you ask potential audience members about their interests, it's not hard to quickly find

that patterns of interests exist in every group. You can find out about interests by either formally handing people a questionnaire or just asking people casually. Suppose it's your turn to speak at your business club's next meeting. If you start asking your fellow club members and other local business owners if there are any specific problems their businesses are currently facing, you will probably start to see a pattern develop. While you may not be an expert on the topic initially, you can always do some research to see what experts have said on the topic and pull together a speech using that research.

The second type of poll you may conduct of your potential audience is what we call a needs analysis. A **needs analysis** involves a set of activities designed to determine your audience's needs, wants, wishes, or desires. The purpose of a needs analysis is to find a gap in information that you can fill as a speaker. Again, you can use either informal or formal methods to determine where a need is. Informally, you may ask people if they have problems with something specific like writing a business plan or cooking in a wok. The only problem that can occur with the informal method is that you often find out that people overestimate their own knowledge about a topic. Someone may think they know how to use a wok even though they've never owned one and never cooked in one. For that reason, we often use more formal methods of assessing needs.

The formal process for conducting a needs analysis is threefold: (1) find a gap in knowledge, (2) figure out the cause, and (3) identify solutions. First, you need to find that a gap in knowledge actually exists. Overall, this isn't very hard to do. You can have people try to accomplish a task or just orally have them explain a task to you, and if you find that they are lacking you'll know that there is a possible need. Second, you need to figure out what is causing the gap. One of the mistakes that people make is assuming that all gaps exist because of a lack of information. This is not necessarily true—it can also be because of lack of experience. For example, people may have learned how to drive a car in a driver education class, but if they've never been behind the wheel of a car, they're not really going to know how to drive. Would giving a speech on how to drive a car at this point be useful? No. Instead, these people need practice, not another speech. Lastly, when you determine that the major cause of the need is informational, it's time to determine the best way to deliver that information.

Key Takeaways

- Conducting a personal inventory is a good way to start the topic selection process. When we analyze our own experiences, interests, knowledge, and passions, we often find topics that others will also find interesting and useful.
- A speaker can investigate finding aids when searching for a good topic. Various finding aids have their positives and negatives, so we recommend investigating several different finding aids to see what topic ideas inspire you.
- One way to ensure a successful speech is to identify your audience's interests or needs. When the speaker's topic is immediately useful for the audience, the audience will listen to the speech and appreciate it.

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3.7: Conclusion and Exercises

In Conclusion

We discussed the importance of creating a specific purpose statement. You should now understand the difference between a specific purpose statement and a central idea/thesis statement. 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. The statement that reveals your main points is commonly known as the central idea or thesis statement.

You should be aware that all aspects of your speech are constantly going to change as you move toward actually giving your speech. The exact wording of your central idea/thesis may change and you can experiment with different versions for effectiveness. However, your specific purpose statement should not change unless there is a really good reason, and in some cases, your instructor will either discourage that, forbid it, or expect to be notified. There are many aspects to consider in the seemingly simple task of writing a specific purpose statement and its companion, the central idea/thesis statement. Writing a strong purpose statement in the beginning will save you some trouble later in the speech preparation process.

Exercises

1. Look at the questions posed in this chapter related to conducting a personal inventory. Do you see any potential speech ideas developing from your personal inventory? If yes, which one do you think would impact your audience the most?
2. Take a broad subject area and then use two of the different finding aids to see what types of topics appear. Are you finding similarities or differences? The goal of this activity is to demonstrate how taking a very broad topic can be narrowed down to a more manageable topic using finding aids.
3. For an upcoming speech in your public speaking class, create a simple survey to determine your audience's needs. Find out what your audience may find interesting. Remember, the goal is to find out what your audience needs, not necessarily what you think your audience needs.

Case Studies in Specific Purposes and Central Idea 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, as his instructor tells him to: 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 brainstormed 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. If 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 important questions of the value of her topic to the audience and why would the audience think she is credible?

Something to Think About

What if your informative speech has the specific purpose statement: To explain the biological and lifestyle cause of Type II diabetes. The assignment is a seven-minute speech, and when you practice it the first time, it is thirteen minutes long. Should you adjust the specific purpose statement? How?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Ethics in Public Speaking

4.1: Learning Objectives
4.2: Ethics and Public Speaking
4.3: Free Speech
4.4: Credibility and Ethics
4.5: Plagiarism
4.6: Conclusion and Exercises

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4.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

1. Discuss the meaning of ethics.
2. Distinguish between absolute and relativist perspectives on ethics.
3. Identify and apply the code of ethics for ethical public speaking established by the National Communication Association.
4. Distinguish between ethical and unethical speech.
5. Define the concept of free speech and discuss its origins.
6. Discuss the First Amendment to the US Constitution in terms of free speech.
7. Understand the importance of credibility.
8. Consider the three types of plagiarism and how to cite sources appropriately.

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4.2: Ethics and Public Speaking

Introduction

“I regret it now because the information was wrong.”

— Colin Powell

The above quotation from former United States Secretary of State Colin Powell directly applies to the discussion we are about to have in this chapter, namely, ethics in public speaking. In a television interview on the Larry King Live CNN program first aired in 2010(opens in new window) [transcript(opens in new window)], Powell expressed regret for a speech he delivered to the United Nations in which he provided what he believed were justifiable reasons for the United States to go to war against Iraq following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States. Although Powell believed at the time of his speech that the information and evidence he provided in the speech were accurate, ostensibly because he trusted the officials who vetted the accuracy of the information, he later realized that the speech was based on misinformation and inaccurate evidence.

By expressing regret for delivering a speech filled with inaccuracies, Powell basically acknowledged that his speech was unethical. However, by publicly expressing regret for an unethical speech that he delivered, he fulfilled the ninth ethical principle of the National Communication Association’s code for ethical speaking, which states, “We accept responsibility for the short- and long-term consequences for our own communication and expect the same of others.” This principle calls for ethical speakers to take responsibility for mistakes and errors made in communication whether in the short or long term when they become aware of the errors and inaccuracies they expressed.

In this chapter we will explore the meaning of ethics, ethical perspectives, and the Code of Ethics of the National Communication Association, and we will distinguish between ethical and unethical speeches.

Ethics

Ethics has to do with social norms regarding right and wrong. It is a branch of philosophy that deals with right and wrong. Because different cultures have different norms about right and wrong, ethics is a very contested zone in all aspects of human encounters. One culture may consider something to be right while another may consider the same thing to be wrong. Hence, the contested nature of ethics. However, for effective communication, especially communication that is intended to move an audience to make choices or decisions, some basic agreement on what is right and wrong is necessary.

In *Institutio Oratoria* (Institutes of Oratory), the Roman rhetorician Quintilian wrote that the perfect orator is first “a good man speaking well.” This simple statement establishes a fundamental expectation for ethical public speaking, namely, that great oratory should entail both the ethical character of the speaker as well as delivery that embodies confidence, competence, dynamism, and goodwill (addresses the needs of an audience).

For Quintilian and other rhetoricians such as Cicero and St. Augustine, rhetoric or oratory should be grounded in truth and not deception. According to these rhetoricians, the communication of truth distinguishes ethical rhetoric from sophistic rhetoric which uses any means, including deceptive ways, untruths, and outright lies, to persuade an audience.

Ethical Perspectives

There are different perspectives on ethics, but this section will concentrate on two of them, namely, the absolute values perspective and the relativist perspective.

The **absolute values perspective** on ethics holds that irrespective of person, place, or time, right is right and wrong is wrong. In other words, there are universal ethical values that apply to all people and cultures. For example, it is wrong to kill or to tell a lie or to steal or to defraud. This means that irrespective of person or culture or situation, a person who tells a lie or kills or defrauds others has done an unethical act.

Ethical relativism on the other hand is the philosophical position that the sense of right and wrong is always relative to the individual and not universal to all people and situations. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines ethical relativism(opens in new window) as “the doctrine that there are no absolute truths in ethics and that what is morally right or wrong varies from person to person or from society to society.” The arguments for ethical relativism are mainly two-fold. According to Britannica, one argument, based on the thinking of Greek philosopher Herodotus (5th century BC), claims that every culture has its own customs and norms and no culture’s values, norms, and customs are better than those of another. A second argument in favor of ethical

relativism, according to Britannica, is based on the thinking of the 18th-century philosopher David Hume, who expressed the idea that moral values are grounded in emotion and not reason and cannot, therefore, be universalized.

Implications of Ethical Perspectives for Public Speaking

When applied to public speaking, the absolute values perspective on ethics implies that there are or should be rigorous principles that guide how to teach public speaking, how to write a speech, how to deliver a speech, how to reference sources, what is considered appropriate vocal projection, eye contact, posture, vocabulary, etc. This approach to public speaking can be regarded by minority groups based on race, culture, or nationality, as oppressive in the context of culturally sustaining pedagogies and the ongoing efforts to engage pedagogies that are inclusive, diverse, and equity minded.

On the other hand, a fundamental implication of ethical relativism for public speaking is that there are no universal norms or ethical codes that govern what and how to make public presentations. This means that depending on the speaker, context, audience, or purpose, a public speaker decides what and how to present without following a predetermined style. This also means that the principle of ethical relativism is more respectful of diverse cultural values, culturally relevant speech patterns, thought processes, and language use. In the context of culturally sustaining pedagogies, the relativist ethical perspective would allow more flexibility in how public speaking is taught and how students, depending on their various backgrounds, prepare and deliver speeches.

Credo for Ethical Communication

Despite the implications of the two ethical perspectives on ethics discussed above, the National Communication Association (NCA) has established a Credo for Ethical Communication to guide the practice of the discipline.

The NCA believes ethical communication is “fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media.” Conversely, the NCA believes that unethical communication threatens the well-being of individuals and society. Consequently, the NCA has established a Credo for Ethical Communication(opens in new window).

The NCA’s Credo for Ethical Communication is extensive, but for the purpose of this chapter addressing ethics in public speaking, it is important to outline and focus on the following principles.

Nine Principles of the Credo for Ethical Communication

1. We advocate truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, and reason as essential to the integrity of communication.
2. We endorse freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and tolerance of dissent to achieve the informed and responsible decision making fundamental to a civil society.
3. We strive to understand and respect other communicators before evaluating and responding to their messages.
4. We promote access to communication resources and opportunities as necessary to fulfill human potential and contribute to the well-being of individuals, families, communities, and society.
5. We promote communication climates of caring and mutual understanding that respect the unique needs and characteristics of individual communicators.
6. We condemn communication that degrades individuals and humanity through distortion, intimidation, coercion, and violence, and through the expression of intolerance and hatred.
7. We are committed to the courageous expression of personal convictions in pursuit of fairness and justice.
8. We advocate sharing information, opinions, and feelings when facing significant choices while also respecting privacy and confidentiality.
9. We accept responsibility for the short- and long-term consequences for our own communication and expect the same of others.

In essence, the principles outlined in the code emphasize the importance of communication that is grounded in truth, honesty, accuracy, and respect for the audience as an ethical responsibility of a speaker.

Distinguishing Between Ethical and Unethical Speeches

Based on the exploration of ethics, perspectives on ethics, and the NCA Credo for Ethical Communication, it is appropriate to observe that irrespective of cultural background or values, some general principles should guide what is ethical or unethical in public speaking.

Purpose of the Speech

Effective communication must be purpose-driven. The purpose of a speech is important because it lets the speaker and audience know the ultimate outcome of the speech. The purpose of the speech should seek to accomplish something good. If the purpose of a speech is unethical it means that it seeks to accomplish something bad. Let us explore some examples to illustrate. In the speech by former Secretary of State Colin Powell to the United Nations that we referenced in the introduction of this chapter, his purpose was to persuade the international community that Saddam Hussien, then President of Iraq, had weapons of mass destruction that posed serious security problems to the world and that the United States would have to go to war against Iraq in order to prevent the use of these weapons against the international community. The purpose of the speech was ethical in as far as it sought to protect the common good of the international community by preventing a nation and its leader from doing harm to people. On the other hand, a speech whose purpose is to arouse anger and resentment against specific groups of people, would be unethical because such a speech aims to do harm to a group of people by appealing to the emotion of anger in its audience, who might then act violently or discriminate against others, as evidenced by Hitler's Speech at Munich on March 15, 1929 to the German citizens (voters) and military.

Credibility of Evidence

Another element of an ethical speech is that the information given should be accurate and reliable. Accurate information is based on facts and not opinion; facts can be demonstrated or proven, while opinions are the personal views of a person that may or may not be factual. The evidence should also be accurate in the sense that it should fully and properly represent the ideas or statements of others within the context in which such ideas or statements are made. Evidence that is not accurate distorts the original message of the source of information and misleads an audience. The credibility of evidence is not only about what is stated but also about who says it. To be ethical, a public speaker must verify that the source of information they use as evidence to support claims is reliable or can be trusted. For example, the statements of a racist bigot in defense of racism cannot be considered reliable because of the personal disposition of the source.

Another important consideration about the credibility of evidence is crediting the sources of the information used. An ethical speaker must let the audience know the source of the information, including data, statistics, and images such as paintings, pictures, and drawings, if the information was taken from another person's work. Failing to credit the sources of information constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is using another person's ideas or work without crediting the source. We will discuss this in more detail later in this chapter and throughout this textbook.

Arrangement of Ideas

One other way to be an ethical speaker is to arrange your ideas in a way that makes it easy for the audience to follow the logical flow of the message. An ethical speaker should facilitate the understanding of the message and not confuse the audience with disorderly placement of ideas. In an orderly arrangement of ideas, the audience can easily follow how one idea moves to another or relates to another, whereas in a confusing arrangement of ideas, the audience struggles to see how one point relates to another or flows into another.

Language

An ethical speaker should always be mindful that the language used is familiar to the audience and not too technical or abstract. Using familiar language makes it easy for the audience to understand a message being communicated, while technical or abstract language may be appropriate only for specific audiences, especially based on profession and level of education. An ethical speaker also uses inclusive language. Racist, sexist, and abusive language looks down on a group of people while extolling the perceived superiority of the speaker over the audience.

Respect for the Audience

In addition to the above guidelines for ethical speaking, a speaker should show respect to an audience by being on time to the event and respect the time allotted for the speech. The speaker also shows respect to an audience by dressing appropriately and listening to the feedback from the audience and responding to questions from the audience honestly.

Delivery

Finally, an ethical speaker should know what they are talking about, be well prepared, dress appropriately, speak clearly, engage the audience through direct eye contact and body movements that show physical/mindful presence and attention to the audience.

Other Guiding Principles for Ethical Public Speaking

Many scholars of ethical communication agree that an ethical speaker should have integrity, competence, responsibility, respect, and concern (Plante, 2004). Integrity means being an honest, fair and a just person. Competence is a quality of someone who is knowledgeable and skilled in some job or task. Responsibility has to do with keeping promises and being attentive to one's obligations. An ethical speaker should be respectful of others in terms of paying attention to their rights, needs, dignity and be concerned about the needs of others.

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4.3: Free Speech

What Is Free Speech?

Free speech has been a constitutional right since the founding of our nation, and according to *Merriam Webster's Dictionary of Law*, **free speech** entails "the right to express information, ideas, and opinions free of government restrictions based on content and subject only to reasonable limitations (as the power of the government to avoid a clear and present danger) esp. as guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution" (Freedom of speech). Free speech is especially important to us as public speakers because expressing information and ideas is the purpose of public speaking. It is also important to audiences of public speeches because free speech allows us to hear and consider multiple points of view so that we can make more informed decisions.

The First Amendment to the Constitution

Free speech was so important to the founders of the United States that it is included in the first of the ten amendments to the US Constitution that are known as the Bill of Rights. This is not surprising, considering that many American colonists had crossed the Atlantic to escape religious persecution and that England had imposed many restrictions on personal freedoms during the colonial era. The text of the First Amendment reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances" (National Archives and Records Administration, 2011).

The freedoms protected by the First Amendment may seem perfectly natural today, but they were controversial in 1791 when the Bill of Rights was enacted. Proponents argued that individuals needed protection from overreaching powers of government, while opponents believed these protections were unnecessary and that amending them to the Constitution could weaken the union.

Freedom of speech, of the press, of religion, of association, of assembly and petition are all guaranteed in amendments to the US Constitution. Free speech allows us to exercise our other First Amendment rights. Freedom of assembly means that people can gather to discuss and protest issues of importance to them. If free speech were not protected, citizens would not be able to exercise their right to protest about activities such as war or policies such as health care reform.

Free speech does not mean, however, that every US citizen has the legal right to say anything at any time. If your speech is likely to lead to violence or other illegal acts, it is not protected. One recent example is a 2007 Supreme Court decision in the *Morse et al. v. Frederick* case. In this case, a high school student held up a sign reading "Bong Hits 4 Jesus" across from the school during the 2002 Olympic Torch Relay. The principal suspended the teenager, and the teen sued the principal for violating his First Amendment rights. Ultimately, the court decided that the principal had the right to suspend the student because he was advocating illegal behavior (Supreme Court of the United States, 2007).

The meaning of "free speech" is constantly being debated by politicians, judges, and the public, even within the United States, where this right has been discussed for over two hundred years. As US citizens, it is important to be aware of both the protections afforded by free speech and its limits so that we can be both articulate speakers and critical listeners when issues such as antiwar protests at military funerals or speech advocating violence against members of specific groups come up within our communities.



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Key Takeaways

- Freedom of speech is the right to express information, ideas, and opinions free of government restrictions based on content and subject only to reasonable limitations.
- Free speech helps us to enact other freedoms protected by the First Amendment, including freedom of assembly and freedom of religion. Without free speech, we would not be able to assemble in groups to publicly debate and challenge government policies or laws. Without free speech, we would not be able to exercise our rights to express our religious views even when they are at odds with popular opinion.

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4.4: Credibility and Ethics

When Aristotle used the term *ethos* in the 5th century B.C.E. to describe one of the means of persuasion, he defined it as the "wisdom, sagacity, and character of the rhetor" (see Chapter 16 for more coverage of ethos and Aristotle's other artistic proofs). Modern scholars of communication and persuasion speak more about "credibility" as an attitude the audience has toward the speaker, based on both reality and perception, rather than an innate trait of the speaker. Audience members trust the speaker to varying degrees, based on the evidence and knowledge they have about the speaker and how that lines up with certain factors:

- Similarity: does the speaker have experiences, values, and beliefs in common with the audience? Can the audience relate to the speaker because of these commonalities?
- Character: does the speaker, in word and action, in the speech and in everyday life, show honesty and integrity?
- Competence: does the speaker show that he/she has expertise and sound knowledge about the topic, especially through firsthand experience? And does the speaker show competence in his/her ability to communicate that expertise?
- Goodwill: does the audience perceive the speaker to have ethical intentions toward the audience?

In addition to these key areas will be the audience's perceptions, or even gut feelings, about more intangible characteristics of the speaker, such as appearance, friendliness, sense of humor, likability, appearance, poise, and communication ability. Many of these traits are conveyed through nonverbal aspects, such as facial expression, eye contact, good posture, and appropriate gestures (see Chapter 12 on Delivery).



Understandably, the same speaker will have a different level of credibility with different audiences. For example, in regard to presidential campaigns, it is interesting to listen to how different people respond to and "trust" different candidates. Donald Trump entered the presidential race as a Republican nominee and quickly became a frontrunner in many of the early polls and primaries, eventually winning the Electoral College votes, to the surprise of many. Those who voted for him often stated that they value his candor and willingness to say what he thinks because they perceive that as honest and different from other politicians. Others think he makes unwise and thoughtless statements, and they see that as a lack of competence and demeanor to be the national leader. Donald Trump is the same person, but different audiences respond to his behavior and statements in divergent ways.

The point is that character and competence are both valued by those who trust and those who distrust President Trump and the audience's perceptions contribute to his credibility (or lack of it). However, these groups express their values in different ways. When trying to develop your own credibility as a speaker with an audience, you have to keep in mind all four of the factors listed above. To portray oneself as "similar" to the audience but to do so deceptively will not contribute to credibility in the long run. To only pretend to have good will and want the best for the audience will also have a short-term effect. And to intentionally misrepresent your background, such as experience and credentials, is clearly unethical.

Not only does a speaker's level of credibility change or vary from audience to audience, it is also likely to change even during the presentation. These changes in credibility have been labeled as **initial, derived,** and **terminal** credibility.

Initial credibility is, as you would imagine, the speaker's credibility at the beginning of or even before the speech. There are a number of factors that would contribute to the initial credibility, even such matters as the "recommendation" of the person who introduces the speaker to the audience. Any knowledge the audience has of the speaker prior to the speech adds to the initial credibility. The initial credibility is important, of course, because it will influence the receptivity of the audience or how well they will listen and be open to the speaker's ideas. Initial credibility can be influenced also by the perception that the speaker is not well

dressed, prepared, or confident at the very beginning. Initial credibility is why how you walk to the lectern and give your introduction matter.

Derived credibility is how the audience members judge the speaker's credibility and trustworthiness throughout the process of the speech, which also can range from point to point in the speech. Perhaps you have seen those videos on a news program that show a political speaker on one pane of the video and a graph of the audience's response in real time to the speaker's message, usually noted as "approval rating" as the politician speaks. This could be based on the perception of the speaker's presentation style (delivery), language, specific opinions or viewpoints on subjects, open-mindedness, honesty, and other factors. The point of the derived credibility is that credibility is an active concept that is always changing.

Finally, **terminal credibility** is, as you would think, credibility at the end of the speech. The obvious importance of terminal credibility is that it would factor into the audience's final decision about what to do with the information, arguments, or appeals of the speaker – in other words, his or her persuasiveness. It would also determine whether the audience would listen to the speaker again in the future. The terminal credibility can be seen as a result of the initial and derived credibility.

Terminal credibility may end up being lower than the initial credibility, but the goal of any speaker should be to have higher terminal credibility. From an ethics standpoint, of course, credibility should not be enhanced by being untruthful with an audience, by misrepresenting one's viewpoint to please an audience, or by "pandering" to an audience (flattering them). One of the primary attributes of credibility at any stage should be transparency and honesty with the audience.

In conclusion, speaker's credibility does not exist alone. It is supported by a number of factors, including Aristotle's other two traditional forms of persuasion, *logos* (logic, evidence, good reasoning, lack of fallacious arguments) and *pathos* (personal and emotional appeals).

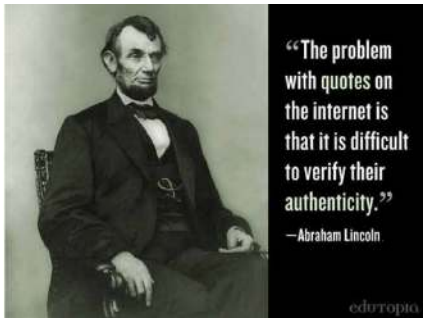
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4.5: Plagiarism

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). According to the student help website Plagiarism.org, sponsored by WriteCheck, plagiarism is often thought of as “copying another’s work or borrowing someone else’s original ideas” (“What is Plagiarism?”, 2017). However, this source goes on to say that the common definition may mislead some people. Plagiarism also includes:

- Turning in someone else’s work as your own;
- Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit;
- Failing to put quotation marks around an exact quotation correctly;
- Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation;
- Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit;
- Copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up 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. Many learning management systems, perhaps such as the one used at your institution, now have a plagiarism detection program embedded in the function where you submit assignments.

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. The Internet has made plagiarism easier and thus increased the student’s responsibility to know how to cite and use source material correctly.

Types of Plagiarism

In our long experience of teaching, we have encountered many instances of students presenting work they claim to be original and their own when it is not. We have also seen that students often do not intend to plagiarize but, due to poor training in high school, still are committing an act that could result in a failing grade or worse. Generally, there are three levels of plagiarism: stealing, sneaking, and borrowing. 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.” So let’s familiarize you with how plagiarism occurs in order to prevent it from happening.

Stealing

There is a saying in academia: “If you steal from one source, that is plagiarism; if you steal from twelve, that is scholarship.” Whoever originated this saying may have intended for it to be humorous, but it is a misrepresentation of both plagiarism and scholarship.

No one wants to be the victim of theft; if it has ever happened to you, you know how awful it feels. When a student takes an essay, research paper, speech, or outline completely from another source, whether it is a classmate who submitted it for another instructor, from some sort of online essay mill, or from elsewhere, this is an act of theft no better or worse than going into a store and shoplifting. The wrongness of the act is compounded by the fact that then the student lies about it being his or her own. If you are

tempted to do this, run the other way. Your instructor will probably have no mercy on you, and probably neither will the student conduct council.



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 or wrong if I wrote both and in my work I cited sources correctly?” 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, she, or they 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.

Another issue that often comes up with students happens when two or more students, perhaps in the same section or different sections of the same course and same instructor, submit the same assignment. When confronted, the student say, “We worked on it together.” If your instructor wants you to work collaboratively, he, she, or they will make that clear. Otherwise, do not do this–the situation usually ends quite badly for students.

Sneaking

In “sneaking plagiarism,” instead of taking work as a whole from another source, the student will 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 student will add a fresh introduction, a personal example or two, and an original conclusion. This “sneaky” plagiarism is easy today due to the Internet and the word processing functions of cutting and pasting.

In fact, many students do not see this as the same thing as stealing because they think “I did some research, I looked some stuff up, and I added some of my own work.” Unfortunately, this approach is only marginally better than stealing and will probably end up in the same penalties as the first type of plagiarism. Why? Because no source has been credited, and the student has “misappropriated” the expression of the ideas as well as the ideas themselves. Interestingly, this type of plagiarism can lead to copyright violation if the work with the plagiarism is published.

Most of the time students do not have to worry about copyright violation when they correctly use and cite material from a source. This is because in academic environments, “fair use” is the rule. In short, you are not making any money from using the copyrighted material, such as from a published book. You are only using it for learning purposes and not to make money, so “quoting” (using verbatim) with proper citation a small amount of the material is acceptable for a college class.

If, however, you were going to try to publish and sell an article or book and “borrowed” a large section of material without specifically obtaining permission from the original author, you would be guilty of copyright violation and by extension make your organization or company also guilty. When you enter your career field, the “fair use” principle no longer applies and you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holder and pay fees to use all or portions of a work. For more information on this very important and often misunderstood subject, visit the Creative Commons website and the Library of Congress.

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

Borrowing

The third type of plagiarism is “borrowing.” In this case, the student is not stealing wholesale. They may actually even give credit for the material, either correctly or incorrectly. They might say, “According to the official website of . . .” or “As found in an article in the Journal of Psychology, Dr. John Smith wrote . . .” Sounds good, right? Well, yes and no. It depends on whether the student has borrowed in a “sneaky way” (cutting and pasting passages together but this time indicating where the sections came from) or if the student is using the ideas but not the exact wording. In other words, has the student adequately, correctly, and honestly paraphrased or summarized the borrowed material, or just “strung the sources together” with some “according to’s”?

Ethically Crediting Sources

In using source material correctly, a speaker does three things:

1. Students often are puzzled about what and when to cite borrowed material from sources. At this point, your instructor may have specific instructions, and you should always follow those first. However, in most cases you can go by the “repeated information” rule. If you are doing research and access ten sources, and over half of them have the same piece of information (usually a historical or scientific fact or statistic), you can assume this is “common knowledge.” That is, it is common to anyone who knows anything about the subject, and then you do not have to have a citation. If you find a piece of information in one source only, it probably represents the original research or viewpoint of that writer, and should be cited clearly. On the other hand, there are exceptions. An often-cited or used piece of information has an original source, such as a government agency, and you would be better off to find the original source and cite that. Secondly, citing sources adds to your credibility as a prepared speaker. Again, your instructor’s directions on what and how much your cite bear upon this advice. Generally, it is better to err on the side of citing more than less.

(Note: This text and its examples use APA because the Communication discipline is considered a social science. As with other advice, use the format your instructor directs you to use.)

A speech is quite different. Saying “According to Jones, p. 78,” really does very little for the audience. They can’t turn to the back of the paper. They don’t have a way, other than oral communication, to understand the type of information being cited, how recent it is, the credibility of the author you are citing and why you think this person is a valid source, or the title of the work. It is necessary in a speech to give more complete information that would help the audience understand its value. The page number, the publishing company, and city it was published in are probably not important, but what is important is whether it is a website, a scholarly article, or a book; whether it was written in 1950 or 2010; and what is the position, background, or credentials of the source.

So, instead of “According to Jones, p. 78,” a better approach would be,

- *“According to Dr. Samuel Jones, Head of Cardiology at Vanderbilt University, in a 2010 article in a prestigious medical journal…”*

Or

- *“In her 2012 book, The Iraq War in Context, historian Mary Smith of the University of Georgia states that…”*

Or

- *"In consulting the website for the American Humane Society, I found these statistics about animal abuse compiled by the Society in 2012…”*

2. This approach shows more clearly that you have done proper research to support your ideas and arguments. It also allows your audience to find the material if they want more information. Notice that in all three examples the citation precedes the fact or information being cited. This order allows the audience to recognize the borrowed material better. The use of a clear citation up-front makes it more noticeable as well as more credible to the audience.

3.The speaker should phrase or summarize the ideas of the source into their own words. Paraphrasing, which is putting the words and ideas of others into one’s own authentic or personal language, is often misunderstood by students. Your instructor may walk you through an exercise to help your class understand that paraphrasing is not changing 10% of the words in a long quotation (such as two or three out of twenty) but still keeping most of the vocabulary and word order (called syntax) of the source. You should compose the information in your own “voice” or way of expressing yourself.

In fact, you would be better off to think in terms of summarizing your source material rather than paraphrasing. For one thing, you will be less likely to use too much of the original and therefore be skirting the edge of plagiarism. Secondly, you will usually want to put the main arguments of a source in your own words and make it shorter.

Here is an example of an original source and three possible ways to deal with it.

- Original information, posted on CNN.com website, October 31, 2015:
- *"The biggest federal inmate release on record will take place this weekend. About 6,600 inmates will be released, with 16,500 expected to get out the first year. More than 40,000 federal felons could be released early over the next several years, the U.S. Sentencing Commission said. The sentencing commission decided a year ago to lower maximum sentences for nonviolent drug offenders and to make the change retro-active, with the inmate releases effective November 1, 2015. Sentences were reduced an average of 18%, the commission said. Early release will be a challenge for the inmates as well as the judicial bureaucracy" (Casarez, 2015).*

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

- *The CNN News website says the federal government is releasing 40,000 felons from prison in the next few years.*
- *According to a report posted on CNN's website on October 31 of 2015, the federal government's Sentencing Commission is beginning to release prisoners in November based on a decision made in 2014. That decision was to make maximum sentences for nonviolent drug offenders shorter by an average of 18%. Over the next several years over 40,000 federal felons could be let go. However, this policy change to early release will not be easy for the justice system or those released.*
- *The largest release ever of federal inmates will take place in early November. At first 6,600 inmates will be released, and then over 16,000 over the first year. The U.S. Sentencing Commission says it could release over 40,000 federal felons over the upcoming years because the sentencing commission decided a year ago to lessen maximum sentences for nonviolent drug offenders and to make this this happen for those already in jail. When the Sentencing Commission says that when it made that decision, the sentences were reduced an average of 18%. Early release will be a challenge for the felons as well as the judicial system. This came from a story on CNN News website in later October 2015.*

If you chose the second citation, you would be correct. The first version does not really interpret the original statement correctly, and the third choice imitates the original almost entirely. Choice 2, on the other hand, is in completely different language and identifies the source of the information clearly and at the beginning.

This exercises may raise the question, "Should I always paraphrase or summarize rather than directly quote a source?" There are times when it is appropriate to use a source's exact wording, but quoting a source exactly should be done sparingly—sort of like using hot sauce! You should have a good reason for it, such as that the source is highly respected, has said the idea in a compelling way, or the material is well known and others would recognize it. If you do, you should make it clear you are quoting them exactly by the way you introduce and end the borrowed material.

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4.6: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

In this chapter, we explored the meaning of ethics, different perspectives on ethics, and we distinguished between ethical and unethical speeches. We also outlined the Credo for Ethical Communication by the National Communication Association and provided practical guidelines for ethical public speaking. In the context of higher education that emphasizes the need for culturally sustaining pedagogies, an ethical speaker must be respectful of diverse audiences they address. Ethical speakers should use evidence that is based on reliable facts while considering the lived experiences and needs of the audience.

Public speaking, or "rhetoric" as it was originally called, has long been considered a method in Western culture of building community, facilitating self-government, 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. Aristotle said that if a man was expected to defend himself physically and his ideas rhetorically.

Modern scholars of communication and persuasion speak more about "credibility" as an attitude the audience has toward the speaker, based on both reality and perception, rather than an innate trait of the speaker. Audience members trust the speaker to varying degrees, based on the evidence and knowledge they have about the speaker and how that lines up with certain factors.

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).

As mentioned before, students often have not been trained to use source material correctly and plagiarize unintentionally. But like the old saying goes, "Ignorance of the law is no excuse." You will still be held accountable whether you understand or not, so now, in your early college career, is the time you should learn to cite source material correctly in oral and written communication.

Review Questions and Exercises

1. What is your understanding of ethics and why is it important for public speakers?
2. Distinguish between absolute and relativist perspectives on ethics.
3. Identify nine principles of ethical communication outlined by the National Communication Association.
4. Provide an example of ethical and unethical speech.
5. What are your campus's internal codes on speech and free speech? Do you have free speech areas on campus? If so, how are they used and regulated?
6. Some college campuses have experienced controversy in recent years when they invited speakers such as Ward Churchill or those who deny that the Holocaust occurred to campus. Discuss in a small group how these controversies reflect the importance of free speech in our society.
7. Find a resource that you might use for your informative speech. On a sheet of paper, answer these 9 questions.
    - Is this information you found in a unique source, or information that was repeated in all or most of your sources? (This may bear upon whether you need to cite the information or not.)
    - Who is the original author or "speaker" of this quotation or material?
    - What is the title of source?
    - Is it a primary or secondary source? Is the writer quoting someone else (secondary) or is the author the one who discovered the knowledge/information? If the source is secondary, who is being quoted or cited originally?
    - What do you know about the source of the citation? Are they an expert, such as a scientist, doctor, government official, college professor, etc?
    - Where did you find the article? In what journal or magazine, on what website, in what book?
    - If a website, who sponsors the website (what organization, government, company)?
    - When was this information published? What is the date on it?
    - Are you repeating the source's words exactly or just abstracting (summarizing) what was said? Which would be better, in this case?
    - Now, write how you would cite this source in the speech. Some stem phrases would be "According to . . ." "In the article. . ." "On a webpage entitled . . ." "On the website for the . . . . organization. . ." "In my interview with Dr. Sam Smith, who is . . . ."

Case study

Jennifer has an informative speech due for Dr. MacKenzie's class. It is about why the gold standard is no longer used in American currency. She chose the subject because she had to write a paper about it in American history class. What should Jennifer consider in how she uses sources?

Jennifer's friend Beth approaches her about having to give an informative speech for Professor Daniels' class. Beth confesses she has been having personal problems and needs help, and she asks Jennifer to let her use some of her outline for Dr. MacKenzie's class. What would be the best course of action for Jennifer?

Case Study

Jerold Follinsworth is an elected official on the verge of giving the most important speech of his entire life, but he doesn't know which speech to give. He looks down at his hands and sees two very different speeches. The speech in his left hand clearly admits to the public that he has been having an affair with a senior staffer. The allegations have been around for a few months, but his office has been denying the allegations as slanderous attacks from his opponents. In his right hand, he has a speech that sidesteps the affair allegations and focuses on an important policy issue. If Jerold gives the speech in his left hand, an important initiative for his state will be defeated by his political enemies. If Jerold gives the speech in his right hand, he will be deceiving the public, but it will lead to increased growth in jobs for his state. Jerold asked his top speech writer to prepare both speeches. As Jerold waits in the wings for his press conference, he's just not sure which speech he should give.

1. What ethical communication choices do you see Jerold as having in this case?
2. How would you analyze Jerold's decision using the ethical pyramid?
3. How would you apply the National Communication Association (NCA) Credo for Ethical Communication to this case?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Audience Analysis

5.1: Learning Objectives
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5.3: Three Types of Audience Analysis
5.4: Methods of Conducting Audience Analysis
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5.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Recognize what audience analysis is and why it is important.
2. Understand the value of acknowledging your audience.
3. Explain how to adapt your speech to your audience's needs.
4. Recognize the importance of being aware of audience diversity.
5. Understand how to gather and use demographic information.
6. Understand how to gather and use psychographic information.
7. Understand how to gather and use situational information.
8. Learn tools for gathering audience information.
9. Understand how you can use your audience analysis when you prepare a speech.

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5.2: What is Audience Analysis and Why is it Important?

What Is an Audience Analysis?

Audience analysis is the process of gathering information about the people in your audience so that you can understand their needs, expectations, beliefs, values, attitudes, and likely opinions. In this chapter, we will first examine some reasons why audience analysis is important. We will then describe three different types of audience analysis and some techniques to use in conducting audience analysis. Finally, we will explain how you can use your audience analysis not only during the creation of your speech but also while you are delivering it.

One of the consequences of the First Amendment to the Constitution, which protects our right to speak freely, is that we focus so much on what we want to say that we often overlook the question of who our audience is. Does your audience care what you as a speaker think? Can they see how your speech applies to their lives and interests? The act of public speaking is a shared activity that involves interaction between speaker and audience. In order for your speech to get a fair hearing, you need to create a relationship with your listeners. Scholars Sprague, Stuart, and Bodary explain, "Speakers do not give speeches *to* audiences; they jointly create meaning *with* audiences" (Sprague, et al., 2010). The success of your speech rests in large part on how your audience receives and understands it.



Figure 5.2.1: Kim Davies – US Constitution – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Think of a time when you heard a speech that sounded "canned" or that fell flat because the audience didn't "get it." Chances are that this happened because the speaker neglected to consider that public speaking is an **audience-centered** activity. Worse, lack of consideration for one's audience can result in the embarrassment of alienating listeners by telling a joke they don't appreciate, or using language they find offensive. The best way to reduce the risk of such situations is to conduct an audience analysis as you prepare your speech.

Acknowledge the Audience

Picture yourself in front of the audience, about to deliver your speech. This is the moment when your relationship with your audience begins, and the quality of this relationship will influence how receptive they will be to your ideas, or at least how willing they'll be to listen to what you have to say. One of the best ways to initiate this relationship is by finding a way to acknowledge your audience. This can be as simple as establishing eye contact and thanking them for coming to hear your presentation. If they've braved bad weather, are missing a world-class sports event, or are putting up with an inconvenience such as a stuffy conference room, tell them how much you appreciate their presence in spite of the circumstances. This can go a long way toward getting them "on board" with your message.



Figure 5.2.1: Valerie Everett – Questions? – CC BY-SA 2.0.

For a political candidate who is traveling from town to town giving what may be perceived as the same campaign speech time and time again, a statement like “It’s great to be here in Springfield, and I want to thank the West Valley League of Women Voters and our hosts, the Downtown Senior Center, for the opportunity to be with you today” lets the audience know that the candidate has at least taken the trouble to tailor the speech to the present audience. Stephanie Coopman and James Lull tell us that Microsoft chairman Bill Gates often adapts to his audiences by thanking them for their participation in the computer industry or for their preparation to participate in an electronic world. The authors say, “Even those brief acknowledgments let audience members know that Gates had prepared his speech with them in mind” (Coopman & Lull, 2009).

Choose a Worthwhile Topic

Your selection of a topic should reflect your regard for the audience. There is no universal list of good or bad topics, but you have an ethical responsibility to select a topic that will be worth listening to. As a student, you are probably sensitive to how unpleasant it would be to listen to a speech on a highly complex or technical topic that you found impossible to understand. However, have you considered that audiences do not want to waste their time or attention listening to a speech that is too simple? Many students find themselves tempted to choose an easy topic, or a topic they already know a great deal about. This is an understandable temptation; if you are like most students, you have many commitments and the demands on your time are considerable. Many experts encourage students to begin with something they already know. However, our experience tells us that students often do this simply to reduce their workload. For example, if the purpose of your speech is to inform or persuade students in your public speaking class, a topic such as fitness, drunk driving, the Greek system (campus fraternities and sororities), or credit card responsibility may be easy for you to address, but it is unlikely to go very far toward informing your audience, and in all likelihood, it will not be persuading them either. Instead, your audience members and your professor will quickly recognize that you were thinking of your own needs rather than those of your audience.

To avoid this trap, it behooves you to seek a topic that will be novel and interesting both for you and for your audience. It will also be important to do some credible research in order to ensure that even the most informed audience members will learn something from you. There are many topics that could provide a refreshing departure from your usual academic studies. Topics such as the Bermuda Triangle, biopiracy, the environmental niche of sharks, the green lifestyle, and the historic Oneida Community all provide interesting views of human and natural phenomena not usually provided in public education. Such topics might be more likely to hold the interest of your classroom audience than topics they’ve heard about time and time again.

You should be aware that your audience will not have the same set of knowledge that you do. For instance, if you are speaking about biopiracy, you should probably define it and give a clear example. If your speech is on the green lifestyle, it would be important to frame it as a realistic choice, not a goal so remote as to be hopeless. In each case, you should use audience analysis to consider how your audience will respond to you, your topic, and your message.

Clarity

Nothing is more lamentable than a rhetorical actor who endeavors to make grandiose the impressions of others through the utilization of an elephantine albeit nonsensical **argot**—or nothing is worse than a speaker who tries to impress the audience with a giant vocabulary that no one understands. In the first portion of the preceding sentence, we pulled out as many polysyllabic words as we could find. Unfortunately, most people will just find the sentence wordy and the meaning will pass right over their heads. As such, we as public speakers must ensure that we are clear in what we say.

Make sure that you state your topic clearly at the outset, using words that your audience will understand. Letting them know what to expect from your speech shows consideration for them as listeners and lets them know that you value their time and attention.

Throughout your speech, define your terms clearly and carefully in order to avoid misleading or alarming people by mistake. Be careful not to use jargon or "insider" language that will exclude listeners who aren't "in the know." If you approach audience analysis in haste, you might find yourself presenting a speech with no clear message. You might avoid making any statements outright from fear of offending. It is much better to know to whom you're speaking and to present a clear, decisive message that lets listeners know what you think.

Controversial Topics Are Important and Risky

Some of the most interesting topics are controversial. They are **controversial topics** because people have deeply felt values and beliefs on different sides of those topics. For instance, before you choose nuclear energy as your topic, investigate the many voices speaking out both in favor and against increasing its use. Many people perceive nuclear energy as a clean, reliable, and much-needed source of energy. Others say that even the mining of uranium is harmful to the environment, that we lack satisfactory solutions for storing nuclear waste, and that nuclear power plants are vulnerable to errors and attacks. Another group might view the issue economically, believing that industry needs nuclear energy. Engineers might believe that if the national grid could be modernized, we would have enough energy, and that we should strive to use and waste less energy until modernization is feasible. Some might feel deep concern about our reliance on foreign oil. Others might view nuclear energy as more tried-and-true than other alternatives. The topic is extremely controversial, and yet it is interesting and very important.

You shouldn't avoid controversy altogether, but you should choose your topic carefully. Moreover, how you treat your audience is just as important as how you treat your topic. If your audience has widely diverse views, take the time to acknowledge the concerns they have. Treat them as intelligent people, even if you don't trust the completeness or the accuracy of their beliefs about your topic.

Adapt Your Speech to Audience Needs

When preparing a speech for a classroom audience consisting of other students and your professor, you may feel that you know their interests and expectations fairly well. However, we learn public speaking in order to be able to address other audiences where we can do some good. In some cases, your audience might consist of young children who are not ready to accept the fact that a whale is not a fish or that the moon is always round even though it sometimes appears to be a crescent or a half circle. In other cases, your audience might include retirees living on fixed incomes and who therefore might not agree that raising local taxes is a vital "investment in the future."

Even in an audience that appears to be *homogeneous*—composed of people who are very similar to one another—different listeners will understand the same ideas in different ways. Every member of every audience has his or her own **frame of reference**—the unique set of perspectives, experience, knowledge, and values belonging to every individual. An audience member who has been in a car accident caused by a drunk driver might not appreciate a lighthearted joke about barhopping. Similarly, stressing the importance of graduate school might be discouraging to audience members who don't know whether they can even afford to stay in college to complete an undergraduate degree.

These examples illustrate why audience analysis—the process of learning all you reasonably can about your audience—is so centrally important. Audience analysis includes consideration of **demographic information**, such as the gender, age range, marital status, race, and ethnicity of the people in your audience. Another, perhaps less obvious, demographic factor is *socioeconomic status*, which refers to a combination of characteristics including income, wealth, level of education, and occupational prestige. Each of these dimensions gives you some information about which kinds of topics, and which aspects of various topics, will be well received.

Suppose you are preparing to give an informative speech about early childhood health care. If your audience is a group of couples who have each recently had a new baby and who live in an affluent suburb, you can expect that they will be young adults with high socioeconomic status; they will likely be eager to know about the very best available health care for their children, whether they are healthy or have various medical problems. In contrast, if your audience is a group of nurses, they may differ in age, but will be similar in education and occupational prestige. They will already know quite a lot about the topic, so you will want to find an aspect that may be new for them, such as community health care resources for families with limited financial resources or for referring children with special needs. As another example, if you are addressing a city council committee that is considering whether to fund a children's health care initiative, your audience is likely to have very mixed demographics.

Audience analysis also takes into account what market researchers call **psychographic information**, which is more personal and more difficult to predict than demographics. Psychographic information involves the beliefs, attitudes, and values that your

audience members embrace. Respecting your audience means that you avoid offending, excluding, or trivializing the beliefs and values they hold. Returning to the topic of early childhood health care, you can expect new parents to be passionate about wanting the best for their child. The psychographics of a group of nurses would revolve around their professional competence and the need to provide "standard of care" for their patients. In a city council committee meeting, the topic of early childhood health care may be a highly personal and emotional issue for some of your listeners, while for others it may be strictly a matter of dollars and cents.

Consider Audience Diversity

Diversity is a key dimension of audience membership and, therefore, of audience analysis. While the term "diversity" is often used to refer to racial and ethnic minorities, it is important to realize that audiences can be diverse in many other ways as well. Being mindful of diversity means being respectful of all people and striving to avoid **racism**, **ethnocentrism**, **sexism**, **ageism**, **elitism**, and other assumptions. An interesting "ism" that is not often mentioned is *chronocentrism*, or the assumption that people today are superior to people who lived in earlier eras (Russell, 1991).

Sociologists John R. Logan and Wenquan Zhang analyzed racial and ethnic diversity in US cities and observed a pattern that rewrites the traditional "rules" of neighborhood change (Logan & Zhang, 2010). Whereas in our grandparents' day a racially mixed neighborhood was one with African American and white residents, in recent decades, many more people from a variety of Asian and Latin American countries have immigrated to the United States. As a result, many cities have neighborhoods that are richly diverse with Asian, Hispanic, and African American cultural influences as well as those of white European Americans. Each cultural group consists of people from many communities and occupations. Each cultural group came to the United States for different reasons and came from different communities and occupations within their original cultures. Even though it can be easy to assume that people from a culture are exactly like each other, we undermine our credibility when we create our message as though members of these cultures are carbon copies of each other.

One of the author's classes included two students from China. During a discussion of cultural similarity and difference, one remarked, "I thought we would have the same tastes in food because we are both from China, but she likes different spices and cooking techniques than I do."

While race, ethnicity, and culture may be relatively visible aspects of diversity, there are many other aspects that are less obvious, so your audience is often more diverse than you might initially think. Suppose you are going to give a talk on pool safety to residents of a very affluent suburban community—will all your audience members be wealthy? No. There might be some who are unemployed, some who are behind on their mortgage payments, some who live in rented rooms, not to mention some who work as babysitters or housekeepers. Furthermore, if your listeners have some characteristic in common, it doesn't mean that they all think alike. For instance, if your audience consists of people who are members of military families, don't assume that they all have identical beliefs about national security. If there are many business students in your audience, don't assume they all agree about the relative importance of ethics and profits. Instead, recognize that a range of opinion exists.

This is where the **frame of reference** we mentioned earlier becomes an important concept. People have a wide variety of reasons for making the choices they make and for doing the things they do. For instance, a business student, while knowing that profitability is important, might have a strong interest in green lifestyles, low energy use, and alternative energy sources, areas of economic development that might require a great deal of investment before profits are realized. In fact, some business students may want to be involved in a paradigm shift away from "business as usual."

These examples illustrate how important it is to use audience analysis to avoid **stereotyping**—taking for granted that people with a certain characteristic in common have the same likes, dislikes, values, and beliefs. All members of our audiences deserve to have the same sensitivity and the same respect extended to them as unique individuals. Respecting diversity is not merely a responsibility within public speaking; it should be a responsibility we strive to embrace in all our human interactions.

Avoid Offending Your Audience

It might seem obvious that speakers should use audience analysis to avoid making offensive remarks, but even very experienced speakers sometimes forget this basic rule. If you were an Anglo-American elected official addressing a Latino audience, would you make a joke about a Mexican American person's name sounding similar to the name of a popular brand of tequila? In fact, a state governor did just that in June 2011. Not suprisingly, news organizations covering the event reported that the joke fell flat (Shahid, 2011). People are members of groups they didn't choose and can't change. We didn't choose our race, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, intellectual potential, or appearance. We already know that jokes aimed at people because of their membership in these groups are not just politically incorrect but also ethically wrong.

It is not only insensitive humor that can offend an audience. Speakers also need to be aware of language and nonverbal behaviors that state or imply a negative message about people based on their various membership groups. Examples include language that suggests that all scientists are men, that all relationships are heterosexual, or that all ethnic minorities are unpatriotic. By the same token, we should avoid embedding assumptions about people in our messages. Even the most subtle suggestion may not go unnoticed. For example, if, in your speech, you assume that elderly people are frail and expensively medicated, you may offend people whose elder loved ones do not conform in any way to your assumptions.

Scholars Samovar and McDaniel tell us that ethical language choices require four guidelines:

1. Be accurate; present the facts accurately.
2. Be aware of the emotional impact; make sure that you don't manipulate feelings.
3. Avoid hateful words; refrain from language that disparages or belittles people.
4. Be sensitive to the audience; know how audience members prefer to be identified (e.g., Native American instead of Indian, women instead of girls, disabled instead of crippled) (Samovar & McDaniel, 2007).

If you alienate your audience, they will stop listening. They will refuse to accept your message, no matter how true or important it is. They might even become hostile. If you fail to recognize the complexity of your audience members and if you treat them as stereotypes, they will resent your assumptions and doubt your credibility.

Ethical Speaking Is Sincere Speaking

Ethos is the term Aristotle used to refer to what we now call **credibility**: the perception that the speaker is honest, knowledgeable, and rightly motivated. Your ethos, or credibility, must be established as you build rapport with your listeners. Have you put forth the effort to learn who they are and what you can offer to them in your speech? Do you respect them as individual human beings? Do you respect them enough to serve their needs and interests? Is your topic relevant and appropriate for them? Is your approach honest and sensitive to their preexisting beliefs? Your ability to answer these questions in a constructive way must be based on the best demographic and psychographic information you can use to learn about your listeners.

The audience needs to know they can trust the speaker's motivations, intentions, and knowledge. They must believe that the speaker has no hidden motives, will not manipulate or trick them, and has their best interests at heart.

In order to convey regard and respect for the audience, you must be sincere. You must examine the motives behind your topic choice, the true purpose of your speech, and your willingness to do the work of making sure the content of the speech is true and represents reality. This can be difficult for students who face time constraints and multiple demands on their efforts. However, the attitude you assume for this task represents, in part, the kind of professional, citizen, parent, and human being you want to be. Even if you've given this issue little thought up to now, you can examine your motives and the integrity of your research and message construction. Ethically, you should.

Key Takeaways

- Audience analysis should be conducted so you can acknowledge your audience and their beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes.
- Audience analysis should guide your choice of a topic so that you select a topic that is relevant and useful to them. Controversial topics can be excellent topics, but be sure to consider your audience when selecting your topic and deciding how to approach it.
- Audience analysis requires that you adapt to the needs of your audience; this includes considering cultural diversity, making your message clear, avoiding offensive remarks, and speaking with sincerity.

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5.3: Three Types of Audience Analysis

While audience analysis does not guarantee against errors in judgment, it will help you make good choices in topic, language, style of presentation, and other aspects of your speech. The more you know about your audience, the better you can serve their interests and needs. There are certainly limits to what we can learn through information collection, and we need to acknowledge that before making assumptions, but knowing how to gather and use information through audience analysis is an essential skill for successful speakers.



Figure 5.3.1: Thinkmedialabs – Audience – CC BY-NC 2.0.

1. Demographic Analysis

As indicated earlier, demographic information includes factors such as gender, age range, marital status, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. In your public speaking class, you probably already know how many students identify as male, female, or nonbinary, their approximate ages, and so forth. But how can you assess the demographics of an audience ahead of time if you have had no previous contact with them? In many cases, you can ask the person or organization that has invited you to speak; it's likely that they can tell you a lot about the demographics of the people who are expected to come to hear you.

Whatever method you use to gather demographics, exercise respect from the outset. For instance, if you are collecting information about whether audience members have ever been divorced, be aware that not everyone will want to answer your questions. You can't require them to do so, and you may not make assumptions about their reluctance to discuss the topic. You must allow them their privacy.

Age

There are certain things you can learn about an audience based on age. For instance, if your audience members are first-year college students, you can assume that they have grown up in the post-9/11 era and have limited memory of what life was like before the "war on terror." If your audience includes people in their forties, it is likely they remember a time when people feared they would contract the AIDS virus from shaking hands or using a public restroom. People who are in their sixties today came of age during the 1960s, the era of the Vietnam War and a time of social confrontation and experimentation. They also have frames of reference that contribute to the way they think, but it may not be easy to predict which side of the issues they support.

Gender

Gender can define human experience. Clearly, most women have had a different cultural experience from that of men within the same culture. Some women have found themselves excluded from certain careers. Some men have found themselves blamed for the limitations imposed on women. In books such as *You Just Don't Understand* and *Talking from 9 to 5*, linguist Deborah Tannen has written extensively on differences between men's and women's communication styles. Tannen explains, "This is not to say that all women and all men, or all boys and girls, behave any one way. Many factors influence our styles, including regional and ethnic

backgrounds, family experience and individual personality. But gender is a key factor, and understanding its influence can help clarify what happens when we talk" (Tannen, 1994).

Marriage tends to impose additional roles on both men and women and divorce even more so, especially if there are children. Even if your audience consists of young adults who have not yet made occupational or marital commitments, they are still aware that gender and the choices they make about issues such as careers and relationships will influence their experience as adults.

Culture

In past generations, Americans often used the metaphor of a "melting pot" to symbolize the assimilation of immigrants from various countries and cultures into a unified, harmonious "American people." Today, we are aware of the limitations in that metaphor, and have largely replaced it with a multiculturalist view that describes the American fabric as a "patchwork" or a "mosaic." We know that people who immigrate do not abandon their cultures of origin in order to conform to a standard American identity. In fact, cultural continuity is now viewed as a healthy source of identity.

We also know that subcultures and co-cultures exist within and alongside larger cultural groups. For example, while we are aware that Native American people do not all embrace the same values, beliefs, and customs as mainstream white Americans, we also know that members of the Navajo nation have different values, beliefs, and customs from those of members of the Sioux or the Seneca. We know that African American people in urban centers like Detroit and Boston do not share the same cultural experiences as those living in rural Mississippi. Similarly, white Americans in San Francisco may be culturally rooted in the narrative of distant ancestors from Scotland, Italy, or Sweden or in the experience of having emigrated much more recently from Australia, Croatia, or Poland.

Not all cultural membership is visibly obvious. For example, people in German American and Italian American families have widely different sets of values and practices, yet others may not be able to differentiate members of these groups. Differences are what make each group interesting and are important sources of knowledge, perspectives, and creativity.

Religion

There is wide variability in religion as well. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found in a nationwide survey that 84 percent of Americans identify with at least one of a dozen major religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and others. Within Christianity alone, there are half a dozen categories including Roman Catholic, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Orthodox (Greek and Russian), and a variety of Protestant denominations. Another 6 percent said they were unaffiliated but religious, meaning that only one American in ten is atheist, agnostic, or "nothing in particular" (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2008).

Even within a given denomination, a great deal of diversity can be found. For instance, among Roman Catholics alone, there are people who are devoutly religious, people who self-identify as Catholic but do not attend mass or engage in other religious practices, and others who faithfully make confession and attend mass but who openly question Papal doctrine on various issues. Catholicism among immigrants from the Caribbean and Brazil is often blended with indigenous religion or with religion imported from the west coast of Africa. It is very different from Catholicism in the Vatican.

The dimensions of diversity in the religion demographic are almost endless, and they are not limited by denomination. Imagine conducting an audience analysis of people belonging to an individual congregation rather than a denomination: even there, you will most likely find a multitude of variations that involve how one was brought up, adoption of a faith system as an adult, how strictly one observes religious practices, and so on.

Yet, even with these multiple facets, religion is still a meaningful demographic lens. It can be an indicator of probable patterns in family relationships, family size, and moral attitudes, and values.

Group Membership

In your classroom audience alone, there will be students from a variety of academic majors. Every major has its own set of values, goals, principles, and codes of ethics. A political science student preparing for law school might seem to have little in common with a student of music therapy, for instance. In addition, there are other group memberships that influence how audience members understand the world. Theater or musical groups, sports teams, campus organizations, political parties, volunteerism, and cultural communities all provide people with ways of understanding the world as it is and as we think it should be.

Because public speaking audiences are very often members of one group or another, group membership is a useful and often easy to access facet of audience analysis. The more you know about the associations of your audience members, the better prepared you will be to tailor your speech to their interests, expectations, and needs.

Education

Education is expensive, and people pursue education for many reasons. Some people seek to become educated, while others seek to earn professional credentials. Both are important motivations. If you know the educational goals of members of your audience, you might gain an understanding of their areas of interest. For instance, an airplane mechanic undergoes a very different kind of education and training from that of an accountant or a software engineer. This means that not only the attained level of education but also the particular field is important in your understanding of your audience.

Occupation

People choose occupations for reasons of motivation and interest, but their occupations also influence their perceptions and their interests. There are many misconceptions about most occupations. For instance, many people believe that teachers work an eight-hour day and have summers off. When you ask teachers, however, you might be surprised to find out that they take work home with them for evenings and weekends, and during the summer, they may teach summer school as well as taking courses in order to keep up with new developments in their fields. But even if you don't know those things, you would still know that teachers have had rigorous generalized and specialized qualifying education, that they have a complex set of responsibilities in the classroom and the institution, and that, to some extent, they have chosen a relatively low-paying occupation over such fields as law, advertising, media, fine and performing arts, or medicine. If your audience includes doctors and nurses, you know that you are speaking to people with differing but important philosophies of health and illness. Learning about those occupational realities is important in avoiding wrong assumptions and stereotypes. We insist that you not assume that nurses are merely doctors "lite." Their skills, concerns, and responsibilities are almost entirely different, and both are equally necessary to effective health care.

2. Psychographic Analysis

Whereas demographic characteristics describe the "facts" about the people in your audience and are focused on the external, psychographic characteristics explain the inner qualities. Although there are many ways to think about this topic, here the ones relevant to a speech will be explored: beliefs, attitudes, needs, and values.



Beliefs

Daryl Bem (1970) defined beliefs as "statements we hold to be true." Notice this definition does not say the beliefs are true, only that we hold them to be true and as such they determine how we respond to the world around us. Stereotypes are a kind of belief: we believe all the people in a certain group are "like that" or share a trait. Beliefs are not confined to the religious realm but touch all aspects of our experience. Sports fans believe certain things about their favorite teams. Republicans and Democrats believe certain, usually different, principles about how the government should be run.

Beliefs, according to Bem (1970), come essentially from our experience and from sources we trust. For example, a person may believe everyone should take public speaking because in their own experience the course helped them be successful in college and a career. Another person may believe that corporal punishment is good for children because their own parents–whom they love and trust–spanked them after their misbehavior.

Therefore, beliefs are hard to change—not impossible, just difficult. Beliefs are harder to change based on their level of each of these characteristics of belief:

- 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.

Beliefs can have varying levels of stability, centrality, salience, and strength. An educator's beliefs about the educational process and importance of education would be strong (support from everyday experience and reading sources of information), central (how he/she/they makes their living and defines their work), salient (they spends every day thinking about it), and stable (especially if they have been an educator a long time). Beliefs can be changed, and we will examine how in Chapter 16 under persuasion, but it is not a quick process.

Attitudes

The next psychographic characteristic, attitude, is sometimes a direct effect of belief. Attitude is defined as a stable positive or negative response to a person, idea, object, or policy (Bem, 1970). More specifically, Myers (2012) defines it as "a favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction toward someone or something, exhibited in one's beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior" (p. 36). 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? Psychologists and communication scholars study attitude formation and change probably as much as any other subject, and have found that attitude comes from experiences, peer groups, beliefs, rewards, and punishments.

Do not confuse attitude with "mood." Attitudes are stable; if you respond negatively to Brussels sprouts today, you probably will a week from now. That does not mean they are unchangeable, only that, like beliefs, they change slowly and in response to certain experiences, information, or strategies. As with beliefs, we will examine how to change attitudes in the chapter on persuasion. Changing attitudes is a primary task of public speakers because attitudes are the most determining factor in what people actually do. In other words, attitudes lead to actions, and interestingly, actions leads to and strengthen attitudes.

We may hold a belief that regular daily exercise is a healthy activity, but that does not mean we will have a positive attitude toward it. There may be other attitudes that compete with the belief, such as "I do not like to sweat," or "I don't like exercising alone." Also, we may not act upon a belief because we do not feel there is a direct, immediate benefit from it or we may not believe we have time right now in college. If we have a positive attitude toward exercise, we will more likely engage in it than if we only believe it is generally healthy

Values

As you can see, attitude and belief are somewhat complex "constructs," but fortunately the next two are more straightforward. (A construct is "a tool used in psychology to facilitate understanding of human behavior; a label for a cluster of related but co-varying behaviors" [Rogelberg, 2007].) 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 him 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 and beauty (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).

Therefore we can engage in the same behavior but for different values; one person may participate in a river cleanup because she values the future of the planet; another may value the appearance of the community in which she lives; another just because friends are involved and she values relationships. A few years ago political pundits coined the term "values voters," usually referring to social conservatives, but this is a misnomer because almost everyone votes and otherwise acts upon their values—what is important to the individual.

Needs

The fourth psychographic characteristic is needs, which are important deficiencies that we are motivated to fulfill. You may already be familiar with the well-known diagram known as Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). It is commonly discussed in the fields of management, psychology, and health professions. A version of it is shown in Figure 2.1. Some recent versions show it with 8 levels.) It is one way to think about needs. 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).

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. Maslow also believed that studying motivation was best done by understanding psychologically healthy individuals, and he also used child development to construct his model. (Maslow is not without his critics; see Neher, 1991).

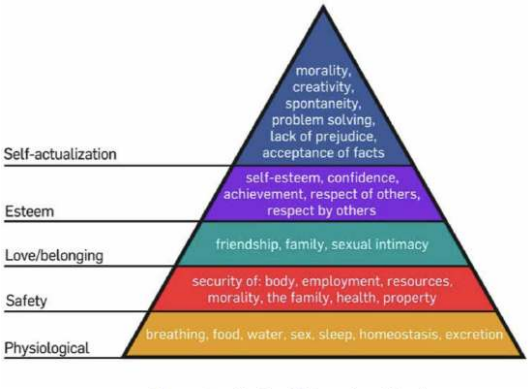


Figure 2.1 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In another course you might go into more depth about Maslow's philosophy and theory, but the key point to remember here is that your audience members are experiencing both "felt" and "real" needs. They may not even be aware of their needs. In a persuasive speech one of your tasks is to show the audience that needs exist that they might not know about. For example, gasoline sold in most of the U.S. has ethanol, a plant-based product, added to it, usually about 10%. Is this beneficial or detrimental for the planet, the engine of the car, or consumers' wallets? Your audience may not even be aware of the ethanol, its benefits, and the problems it can cause.

A "felt" need is another way to think about strong "wants" that the person believes will fulfill or satisfy them even if the item is not necessary for survival. For example, one humorous depiction of the Maslow's hierarchy of needs (seen on Facebook) has the words "wifi" scribbled at the bottom of the pyramid. Another meme has "coffee" scribbled at the bottom of the hierarchy. As great as wifi and coffee are, they are not crucial to human survival, either individually or collectively, but we do want them so strongly that they operate like needs.

So, how do these psychographic characteristics operate in preparing a speech? They are most applicable to a persuasive speech, but they do apply to other types of speeches as well. What are your audience's informational needs? What beliefs or attitudes do they have that could influence your choice of topic, sources, or examples? How can you make them interested in the speech by appealing to their values? The classroom speeches you give will allow you a place to practice audience analysis based on demographic and psychographic characteristics, and that practice will aid you in future presentations in the work place and community.

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Preexisting Notions about Your Topic

Many things are a great deal more complex than we realize. Media stereotypes often contribute to our oversimplifications. For instance, one of your authors, teaching public speaking in the past decade, was surprised to hear a student claim that "the hippies

meant well, but they did it wrong." Aside from the question of the "it" that was done wrong, there was a question about how little the student actually knew about the diverse hippy cultures and their aspirations. The student seemed unaware that some of "the hippies" were the forebears of such things as organic bakeries, natural food co-ops, urban gardens, recycling, alternative energy, wellness, and other arguably positive developments.

It's important to know your audience in order to make a rational judgment about how their views of your topic might be shaped. In speaking to an audience that might have differing definitions, you should take care to define your terms in a clear, honest way.

At the opposite end from oversimplification is the level of sophistication your audience might embody. Your audience analysis should include factors that reveal it. Suppose you are speaking about trends in civil rights in the United States. You cannot pretend that advancement of civil rights is virtually complete nor can you claim that no progress has been made. It is likely that in a college classroom, the audience will know that although much progress has been made, there are still pockets of prejudice, discrimination, and violence. When you speak to an audience that is cognitively complex, your strategy must be different from one you would use for an audience that is less educated in the topic. With a cognitively complex audience, you must acknowledge the overall complexity while stating that your focus will be on only one dimension. With an audience that's uninformed about your topic, that strategy in a persuasive speech could confuse them; they might well prefer a black-and-white message with no gray areas. You must decide whether it is ethical to represent your topic this way.

When you prepare to do your audience analysis, include questions that reveal how much your audience already knows about your topic. Try to ascertain the existence of stereotyped, oversimplified, or prejudiced attitudes about it. This could make a difference in your choice of topic or in your approach to the audience and topic.

Preexisting Notions about You

People form opinions readily. For instance, we know that students form impressions of teachers the moment they walk into our classrooms on the first day. You get an immediate impression of our age, competence, and attitude simply from our appearance and nonverbal behavior. In addition, many have heard other students say what they think of us.

The same is almost certainly true of you. But it's not always easy to get others to be honest about their impressions of you. They're likely to tell you what they think you want to hear. Sometimes, however, you do know what others think. They might think of you as a jock, a suit-wearing conservative, a nature lover, and so on. Based on these impressions, your audience might expect a boring speech, a shallow speech, a sermon, and so on. However, your concern should still be serving your audience's needs and interests, not debunking their opinions of you or managing your image. In order to help them be receptive, you address their interests directly, and make sure they get an interesting, ethical speech.

3. Situational Analysis

The next type of analysis is called the **situational audience analysis** because it focuses on characteristics related to the specific speaking situation. The situational audience analysis can be divided into two main questions:

1. How many people came to hear my speech and why are they here? What events, concerns, and needs motivated them to come? What is their interest level, and what else might be competing for their attention?
2. What is the physical environment of the speaking situation? What is the size of the audience, layout of the room, existence of a podium or a microphone, and availability of digital media for visual aids? Are there any distractions, such as traffic noise?

Audience Size

In a typical class, your audience is likely to consist of twenty to thirty listeners. This audience size gives you the latitude to be relatively informal within the bounds of good judgment. It isn't too difficult to let each audience member feel as though you're speaking to him or her. However, you would not become so informal that you allow your carefully prepared speech to lapse into shallow entertainment. With larger audiences, it's more difficult to reach out to each listener, and your speech will tend to be more formal, staying more strictly within its careful outline. You will have to work harder to prepare visual and audio material that reaches the people sitting at the back of the room, including possibly using amplification.

Occasion

There are many occasions for speeches. Awards ceremonies, conventions and conferences, holidays, and other celebrations are some examples. However, there are also less joyful reasons for a speech, such as funerals, disasters, and the delivery of bad news. As always, there are likely to be mixed reactions. For instance, award ceremonies are good for community and institutional morale,

but we wouldn't be surprised to find at least a little resentment from listeners who feel deserving but were overlooked. Likewise, for a speech announcing bad news, it is likely that at least a few listeners will be glad the bad news wasn't even worse. If your speech is to deliver bad news, it's important to be honest but also to avoid traumatizing your audience. For instance, if you are a condominium board member speaking to a residents' meeting after the building was damaged by a hurricane, you will need to provide accurate data about the extent of the damage and the anticipated cost and time required for repairs. At the same time, it would be needlessly upsetting to launch into a graphic description of injuries suffered by people, animals, and property in neighboring areas not connected to your condominium complex.

Some of the most successful speeches benefit from situational analysis to identify audience concerns related to the occasion. For example, when the president of the United States gives the annual State of the Union address, the occasion calls for commenting on the condition of the nation and outlining the legislative agenda for the coming year. The speech could be a formality that would interest only "policy wonks," or with the use of good situational audience analysis, it could be a popular event reinforcing the connection between the president and the American people. In January 2011, knowing that the United States' economy was slowly recovering and that jobless rates were still very high, President Barack Obama and his staff knew that the focus of the speech had to be on jobs. Similarly, in January 2003, President George W. Bush's State of the Union speech focused on the "war on terror" and his reasons for justifying the invasion of Iraq. If you look at the history of State of the Union Addresses, you'll often find that the speeches are tailored to the political, social, and economic situations facing the United States at those times.

Voluntariness of Audience

A **voluntary audience** gathers because they want to hear the speech, attend the event, or participate in an event. A classroom audience, in contrast, is likely to be a captive audience. **Captive audiences** are required to be present or feel obligated to do so. Given the limited choices perceived, a captive audience might give only grudging attention. Even when there's an element of choice, the likely consequences of nonattendance will keep audience members from leaving. The audience's relative perception of choice increases the importance of holding their interest.

Whether or not the audience members chose to be present, you want them to be interested in what you have to say. Almost any audience will be interested in a topic that pertains directly to them. However, your audience might also be receptive to topics that are indirectly or potentially pertinent to their lives. This means that if you choose a topic such as advances in the treatment of spinal cord injury or advances in green technology, you should do your best to show how these topics are potentially relevant to their lives or careers.

However, there are some topics that appeal to audience curiosity even when it seems there's little chance of direct pertinence. For instance, topics such as Blackbeard the pirate or ceremonial tattoos among the Maori might pique the interests of various audiences. Depending on the instructions you get from your instructor, you can consider building an interesting message about something outside the daily foci of our attention.

Physical Setting

The physical setting can make or break even the best speeches, so it is important to exercise as much control as you can over it. In your classroom, conditions might not be ideal, but at least the setting is familiar. Still, you know your classroom from the perspective of an audience member, not a speaker standing in the front—which is why you should seek out any opportunity to rehearse your speech during a minute when the room is empty. If you will be giving your presentation somewhere else, it is a good idea to visit the venue ahead of time if at all possible and make note of any factors that will affect how you present your speech. In any case, be sure to arrive well in advance of your speaking time so that you will have time to check that the microphone works, to test out any visual aids, and to request any needed adjustments in lighting, room ventilation, or other factors to eliminate distractions and make your audience more comfortable.

Key Takeaways

- Demographic audience analysis focuses on group memberships of audience members.
- Another element of audience is psychographic information, which focuses on audience attitudes, beliefs, and values.
- Situational analysis of the occasion, physical setting, and other factors are also critical to effective audience analysis.

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5.4: Methods of Conducting Audience Analysis

Now that we have described what audience analysis is and why it is important, let's examine some details of how to conduct it. Exactly how can you learn about the people who will make up your audience?



Figure 5.4.1: Penn State – MLK speaking to a crowd at Rec Hall – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Direct Observation

One way to learn about people is to observe them. By observing nonverbal patterns of behavior, you can learn a great deal as long as you are careful how you interpret the behaviors. For instance, do people greet each other with a handshake, a hug, a smile, or a nod? Do members of opposite sexes make physical contact? Does the setting suggest more conservative behavior? By listening in on conversations, you can find out the issues that concern people. Are people in the campus center talking about political unrest in the Middle East? About concerns over future Pell Grant funding? We suggest that you consider the ethical dimensions of eavesdropping, however. Are you simply overhearing an open conversation, or are you prying into a highly personal or private discussion?

Interviews and Surveys

Because your demographic analysis will be limited to your most likely audience, your most accurate way to learn about them is to seek personal information through interviews and surveys. An **interview** is a one-on-one exchange in which you ask questions of a **respondent**, whereas a **survey** is a set of questions administered to several—or, preferably, many—respondents. Interviews may be conducted face-to-face, by phone, or by written means, such as texting. They allow more in-depth discussion than surveys, and they are also more time consuming to conduct. Surveys are also sometimes conducted face-to-face or by phone, but online surveys are increasingly common. You may collect and tabulate survey results manually, or set up an automated online survey through the free or subscription portals of sites like Survey Monkey and Zoomerang. Using an online survey provides the advantage of keeping responses anonymous, which may increase your audience members' willingness to participate and to answer personal questions. Surveys are an efficient way to collect information quickly; however, in contrast to interviews, they don't allow for follow-up questions to help you understand why your respondent gave a certain answer.

When you use interviews and surveys, there are several important things to keep in mind:

- Make sure your interview and survey questions are directly related to your speech topic. Do not use interviews to delve into private areas of people's lives. For instance, if your speech is about the debate between creationism and evolution, limit your questions to their opinions about that topic; do not meander into their beliefs about sexual behavior or their personal religious practices.
- Create and use a standard set of questions. If you "ad lib" your questions so that they are phrased differently for different interviewees, you will be comparing "apples and oranges" when you compare the responses you've obtained.
- Keep interviews and surveys short, or you could alienate your audience long before your speech is even outlined. Tell them the purpose of the interview or survey and make sure they understand that their participation is voluntary.
- Don't rely on just a few respondents to inform you about your entire audience. In all likelihood, you have a cognitively diverse audience. In order to accurately identify trends, you will likely need to interview or survey at least ten to twenty people.

In addition, when you conduct interviews and surveys, keep in mind that people are sometimes less than honest in describing their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. This widely recognized weakness of interviews and survey research is known as *socially desirable responding*: the tendency to give responses that are considered socially acceptable. Marketing professor Ashok Lalwani divides

socially desirable responding into two types: (1) impression management, or intentionally portraying oneself in a favorable light and (2) self-deceptive enhancement, or exaggerating one's good qualities, often unconsciously (Lalwani, 2009).

You can reduce the effects of socially desirable responding by choosing your questions carefully. As marketing consultant Terry Vavra advises, "one should never ask what one can't logically expect respondents to honestly reveal" (Vavra, 2009). For example, if you want to know audience members' attitudes about body piercing, you are likely to get more honest answers by asking "Do you think body piercing is attractive?" rather than "How many piercings do you have and where on your body are they located?"

Focus Groups

A **focus group** is a small group of people who give you feedback about their perceptions. As with interviews and surveys, in a focus group you should use a limited list of carefully prepared questions designed to get at the information you need to understand their beliefs, attitudes, and values specifically related to your topic.

If you conduct a focus group, part of your task will be striking a balance between allowing the discussion to flow freely according to what group members have to say and keeping the group focused on the questions. It's also your job to guide the group in maintaining responsible and respectful behavior toward each other.

In evaluating focus group feedback, do your best to be receptive to what people had to say, whether or not it conforms to what you expected. Your purpose in conducting the group was to understand group members' beliefs, attitudes, and values about your topic, not to confirm your assumptions.

Using Existing Data about Your Audience

Occasionally, existing information will be available about your audience. For instance, if you have a student audience, it might not be difficult to find out what their academic majors are. You might also be able to find out their degree of investment in their educations; for instance, you could reasonably assume that the seniors in the audience have been successful students who have invested at least three years pursuing a higher education. Sophomores have at least survived their first year but may not have matched the seniors in demonstrating strong values toward education and the work ethic necessary to earn a degree.

In another kind of an audience, you might be able to learn other significant facts. For instance, are they veterans? Are they retired teachers? Are they members of a voluntary civic organization such as the Lions Club or Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)? This kind of information should help you respond to their concerns and interests.

In other cases, you may be able to use demographics collected by public and private organizations. Demographic analysis is done by the US Census Bureau through the American Community Survey, which is conducted every year, and through other specialized demographic surveys (Bureau of the Census, 2011; Bureau of the Census, 2011). The Census Bureau analysis generally captures information about people in all the regions of the United States, but you can drill down in census data to see results by state, by age group, by gender, by race, and by other factors.

Demographic information about narrower segments of the United States, down to the level of individual zip codes, is available through private organizations such as The Nielsen Company (www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp?ID=20&SubID=&pageName=ZIP%2BCode%2BLook-up), Sperling's Best Places (www.bestplaces.net), and Point2Homes (homes.point2.com). Sales and marketing professionals use this data, and you may find it useful for your audience analysis as well.

Key Takeaways

- Several options exist for learning about your audience, including direct observation, interviews, surveys, focus groups, and using existing research about your audience.
- In order to create effective tools for audience analysis, interview and survey questions must be clear and to the point, focus groups must be facilitated carefully, and you must be aware of multiple interpretations of direct observations or existing research about your audience.

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5.5: Using Your Audience Analysis

A good audience analysis takes time, thought, preparation, implementation, and processing. If done well, it will yield information that will help you interact effectively with your audience. Professional speakers, corporate executives, sales associates, and entertainers all rely on audience analysis to connect with their listeners. So do political candidates, whose chances of gaining votes depend on crafting the message and mood to appeal to each specific audience. One audience might be preoccupied with jobs, another with property taxes, and another with crime. Similarly, your audience analysis should help you identify the interests of your audience. Ultimately, a successful audience analysis can guide you in preparing the basic content of your speech and help you adjust your speech "on the fly."



Figure 5.5.1: Michigan Municipal League – Michigan Freedom of Information Act – CC BY-ND 2.0.

Prepare Content with Your Audience in Mind

The first thing a good audience analysis can do is help you focus your content for your specific audience. If you are planning on a delivering a persuasive speech on why people should become vegans and you find out through analysis that half of your audience are daughters and sons of cattle ranchers, you need to carefully think through your approach to the content. Maybe you'll need to tweak your topic to focus on just the benefits of veganism without trying to persuade the audience explicitly. The last thing you want to do as a speaker is stand before an audience who is highly negative toward your topic before you ever open your mouth. While there will always be some naysayers in any audience, if you think through your topic with your audience in mind, you may be able to find a topic that will be both interesting to you as a speaker and beneficial to your audience as well.

In addition to adjusting the topic of your speech prior to the speaking event, you can also use your audience analysis to help ensure that the content of your speech will be as clear and understandable as humanly possible. We can use our audience analysis to help sure that we are clear.

One area of clarity to be careful of is the use of idioms your audience may not know. An **idiom** is a word or phrase where the meaning cannot be predicted from normal, dictionary definitions. Many idioms are culturally or temporally based. For example, the phrase "according to Hoyle" indicates that something is done "by the book" or "by the rules," as in "These measurements aren't according to Hoyle, but they're close enough to give a general idea." Most of us have no clue who Hoyle was or what this idiom means. It refers to Edmond Hoyle, who wrote some of the most popular card-playing rule books back in the 1700s in England. Today, card game enthusiasts may understand the intent of "according to Hoyle," but for most people it no longer carries specific meaning. When thinking about your speech, be careful not to accidentally use idioms that you find commonplace but your audience may not.

Adjusting Your Speech Based on Your Analysis

In addition to using audience analysis to help formulate speech content, we can also use our audience analysis to make adjustments during the actual speech. These adjustments can pertain to the audience and to the physical setting.

The feedback you receive from your audience during your speech is a valuable indication of ways to adjust your presentation. If you're speaking after lunch and notice audience members looking drowsy, you can make adjustments to liven up the tone of your speech. You could use humor. You could raise your voice slightly. You could pose some questions and ask for a show of hands to get your listeners actively involved. As another example, you may notice from frowns and head shaking that some listeners aren't convinced by the arguments you are presenting. In this case, you could spend more time on a specific area of your speech and provide more evidence than you originally intended. Good speakers can learn a lot by watching their audience while speaking and then make specific adjustments to both the content and delivery of the speech to enhance the speech's ultimate impact.

The second kind of adjustment has to do with the physical setting for your speech. For example, your situational analysis may reveal that you'll be speaking in a large auditorium when you had expected a nice, cozy conference room. If you've created visual aids for a small, intimate environment, you may have to omit it, or tell your listeners that they can view it after the presentation. You may also need to account for a microphone. If you're lucky enough to have a cordless microphone, then you won't have to make too many adjustments to your speaking style. If, on the other hand, the microphone is corded or is attached to an unmovable podium, you'll have to make adjustments to how you deliver the presentation.

In preparing a speech about wealth distribution in the United States, one of our students had the opposite problem. Anticipating a large room, she had planned to use a one-hundred-foot tape measure to illustrate the percentage of the nation's wealth owned by the top one-fifth of the population. However, when she arrived she found that the room was only twelve by twenty feet, so that she had to walk back and forth zigzagging the tape from end to end to stretch out one hundred feet. Had she thought more creatively about how to adapt to the physical setting, she could have changed her plans to use just ten feet of the tape measure to symbolize 100 percent of the wealth.

Key Takeaways

- You can use your audience analysis to provide you further information about what types of content would be appropriate and meaningful for your specific audience.
- You can use your audience analysis to help you make adjustments to your speech in terms of both how you present the speech within a given environment and also how you adapt your content and delivery based on audience feedback during the speech.

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5.6: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the significance of audience analysis in public speaking, emphasizing the understanding of diverse audience needs and perspectives for effective communication. It stresses the importance of tailoring messages to avoid stereotypes and ensure ethical language, fostering engagement and comprehension. Sincere and respectful interactions build credibility and rapport, allowing speakers to connect meaningfully.

We explored the importance of audience analysis in effective speech-making, focusing on their psychographic characteristics—beliefs, attitudes, values, and needs. This chapter emphasizes understanding audience dynamics, social affiliations, and motivations while also acknowledging the limitations of such analysis.

We provided methods for audience analysis, highlighting the significance of understanding the audience for effective communication. Techniques discussed include direct observation, interviews, surveys, and focus groups, with guidelines for enhancing clarity and relevance. It stresses the value of nonverbal behavior observation and the importance of structured questions while addressing potential biases like socially desirable responding to improve information accuracy.

The importance of thorough audience analysis for effective communication in various fields like politics and business was discussed. It enables speakers to tailor content to specific interests, engage listeners, and adapt during speeches based on audience dynamics and settings. Key strategies include avoiding unfamiliar idioms, monitoring feedback, and adjusting presentations for clarity and effectiveness.

Exercises

1. Brainstorm a list of topics for an informative or persuasive speech. By yourself or with a partner, identify the kinds of information you need to know about your audience in order to make ethical decisions about how you approach the speech.
2. Make a list of values or opinions you have that might not conform to popular views. Why might these be important for a speaker to know before attempting to inform or persuade you?
3. Pretend you have been asked to give a speech about environmental conservation in the United States. What audience beliefs, attitudes, values, concerns, and other variables should you consider?
4. List the voluntary (political party, campus organization, etc.) and involuntary (age, race, sex, etc.) groups to which you belong. After each group, write a sentence or phrase about how that group influences your experience as a student.
5. In a short paragraph, define the term “fairness.” Compare your definition with someone else’s definition. What factors do you think contributed to differences in definition?
6. With a partner, identify an instance when you observed a speaker give a poor speech due to failing to analyze the situation. What steps could the speaker have taken to more effectively analyze the situation?
7. Write a coherent set of four clear questions about a given issue, such as campus library services, campus computer centers, or the process of course registration. Make your questions concrete and specific in order to address the information you seek. Do not allow opportunities for your respondent to change the subject. Test out your questions on a classmate.
8. Write a set of six questions about public speaking anxiety to be answered on a Likert-type scale (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree).
9. Create a seven-question set designed to discover your audience’s attitudes about your speech topic. Have a partner evaluate your questions for clarity, respect for audience privacy, and relevance to your topic.
10. Choose a topic. Then write a different concrete thesis statement for each of six different audiences: students, military veterans, taxpayers, registered nurses, crime victims, and professional athletes, for instance.
11. Think of a controversial topic and list all the various perspectives about it that you can think of or discover. If people of various perspectives were in your audience, how might you acknowledge them during your introduction?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Supporting Ideas and Building Arguments

6.1: Learning Objectives
6.2: Crafting Supporting Ideas
6.3: Using Research as Support
6.4: Exploring Types of Support
6.5: Using Support and Creating Arguments
6.6: Conclusion and Exercises

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6.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

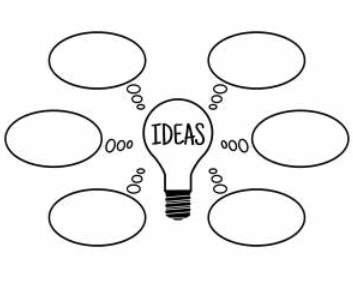
After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Define the term “support” and describe three reasons we use support in speeches.
2. Describe how speakers can use statistics to support their speeches.
3. Understand six types of support used in speeches.
4. Explain how to distinguish between useful and unreliable forms of support.
5. Describe the purpose of a reverse outline.
6. Explain why it is important to use support for every claim made within a speech.
7. Evaluate the three-step process for using support within a speech.

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6.2: Crafting Supporting Ideas



Every day, all around the world, people make claims without offering any information to support them or based on statistics or factoids presented out of context. Students on your campus might claim that local policies are biased against students but may not explain why. Politicians may make claims in their speeches about “family values” without defining what those values are or throw out statistics without giving credit to where they found those numbers. Indeed, the nonpartisan websites FactCheck.org and Politifact.com are dedicated to investigating and dispelling the claims that politicians make in their speeches, and Snopes.com investigates many of these claims as well.

In this chapter, we will learn why support is essential to effective presentations, as well as how to incorporate support to build stronger arguments within a speech.

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6.3: Using Research as Support



In public speaking, the word "**support**" refers to a range of strategies used to develop the central idea and specific purpose by providing corroborating evidence. Whether you are speaking to inform, persuade, or entertain, using support helps you create a more substantive and polished speech. We sometimes use the words "support" or "evidence" interchangeably because both are designed to help ground a speech's specific purpose. However, "evidence" tends to be associated specifically with persuasive speeches, so we opt to use the more general term "support" for most of this chapter. In this section, we are going to explore why speakers use support.

Why We Use Support

Speakers use support to help provide a foundation for their message. You can think of support as the legs on a table. Without the legs, the table becomes a slab of wood or glass lying on the ground; as such, it cannot fully serve the purpose of a table. In the same way, without support, a speech is nothing more than fluff. Audience members may ignore the speech's message, dismissing it as just so much hot air. In addition to being the foundation that a speech stands on, support also helps us clarify content, increase speaker credibility and accuracy, and make the speech more vivid, interesting and memorable.

To Clarify Content

Speakers often choose a piece of support because a previous writer or speaker has phrased something in a way that evokes a clear mental picture of the point they want to make. For example, suppose you're preparing a speech about hazing in college fraternities. You may read your school's code of student conduct to find out how your campus defines hazing. You could use this definition to make sure your audience understands what hazing is and what types of behaviors your campus identifies as hazing.

To Add Credibility and Accuracy

Another important reason to use support is because it adds to your credibility as a speaker. The less an audience perceives you as an expert on a given topic, the more important it is to use a range of support from authoritative sources. By doing so, you let your audience know that you've done your homework on the topic.

Inadequate support or support from questionable sources diminishes your credibility as a speaker, as does distorting the intent of a source to try to force it to support a point. For example, the famous 1798 publication by Thomas Malthus, "An Essay on the Principle of Population," has been used as support for various arguments far beyond what Malthus could have intended. Malthus's thesis was that as the human population increases at a greater rate than food production, societies will go to war over scarce food resources (Malthus, 1798). Some modern writers have suggested that, according to the Malthusian line of thinking, almost anything that leads to a food shortage could lead to nuclear war. For example, better health care leads to longer life spans, which leads to an increased need for food, leading to food shortages, which using this flawed line of reasoning, would lead to nuclear war. Clearly, this argument makes some giant leaps of logic that would be hard for an audience to accept.

For this reason, it is important to evaluate your support to ensure that it will not detract from your credibility as a speaker. Use the CRAAP method (currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose) found in Chapter 7 of this book to evaluate the quality of your sources.

To Add Vividness, Interest, and Make Memorable

In addition to clarifying content and enhancing credibility, support helps make a speech more vivid and interesting. **Vividness** refers to a speaker's ability to present information in a striking, exciting manner. The goal of vividness is to make your speech more memorable. For example, in a speech about the importance of wearing seat belts when in a motor vehicle, a student offered the following illustration about their efficacy in preventing serious injury or death: the impact from hitting a windshield at just twenty miles per hour without a seat belt would be equivalent to falling out of the window of their second-floor classroom and landing face-first on the pavement below. Because the students hearing the speech were in that second-floor classroom several times each week, they could easily visualize the speaker's analogy. Support helps make your speech more interesting and memorable to audience members.

References

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6.4: Exploring Types of Support

Now that we've explained why support is important, let's examine the six types of support that speakers often use within a speech: facts and statistics, definitions, examples, narratives, testimony, and analogies.

1. Facts and Statistics

A **fact** is a truth that is arrived at through the scientific process. Speakers often support a point or specific purpose by citing facts that their audience may not know. A typical way to introduce a fact orally is "Did you know that…?"

Many of the facts that speakers cite are based on statistics. **Statistics** is the mathematical subfield that gathers, analyzes, and makes inferences about collected data. Data can come in a wide range of forms—the number of people who buy a certain magazine, the average number of telephone calls made in a month, the incidence of a certain disease. Though few people realize it, much of our daily lives are governed by statistics. Everything from seat-belt laws, to the food we eat, to the amount of money public schools receive, to the medications you are prescribed are based on the collection and interpretation of numerical data.

It is important to realize that a public speaking textbook cannot begin to cover statistics in depth. If you plan to do statistical research yourself or gain an understanding of the intricacies of such research, we strongly recommend taking a basic class in statistics or quantitative research methods. These courses will better prepare you to understand the various statistics you will encounter.

However, even without a background in statistics, finding useful statistical information related to your topic is quite easy. Table 7.1 "Statistics-Oriented Websites" provides a list of some websites where you can find a range of statistical information that may be useful for your speeches.

TABLE 7.1 STATISTICS-ORIENTED WEBSITES

Website	URL	Type of Information
Bureau of Labor Statistics	bls.gov [www.bls.gov]	The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides links to a range of websites for labor issues related to a vast range of countries.
Bureau of Justice Statistics	bjs.gov [bjs.gov]	The Bureau of Justice Statistics provides information on crime statistics in the United States.
US Census Bureau	census.gov [www.census.gov]	The US Census Bureau provides a wide range of information about people living in the United States.
National Center for Health Statistics	cdc.gov [www.cdc.gov]	National Center for Health Statistics is a program conducted by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It provides information on a range of health issues in the United States.
Sense about Science Stats Check	senseaboutscienceusa.org [senseaboutscienceusa.org]	Sense about Science Stats Check is a nonprofit organization that helps people understand quantitative data. It also provides a range of data on its website.
Roper Center for Public Opinion	ropercenter.cornell.edu [ropercenter.cornell.edu]	Roper Center for Public Opinion provides data related to a range of issues in the United States.
Nielsen	nielsen.com [www.nielsen.com]	Nielsen provides data on consumer use of various media forms.

Website	URL	Type of Information
Gallup	gallup.com [www.gallup.com]	Gallup provides public opinion data on a range of social and political issues in the United States and around the world.
Adherents	adherents.com [www.adherents.com]	Adherents provides both domestic and international data related to religious affiliation.
Pew Research Center	• people-press.org [people-press.org]	The Pew Research Center provides public opinion data on a range of social and political issues in the United States and around the world.

Statistics are probably the most used—and misused—form of support in any type of speaking. People like numbers. People are impressed by numbers. However, most people do not know how to correctly interpret numbers. Unfortunately, there are many speakers who do not know how to interpret them either or who intentionally manipulate them to mislead their listeners. As the saying popularized by Mark Twain goes, “There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics” (Twain, 1924).

To avoid misusing statistics when you speak in public, do three things. First, be honest with yourself and your audience. If you are distorting a statistic or leaving out other statistics that contradict your point, you are not living up to the level of honesty your audience is entitled to expect. Second, run a few basic calculations to see if a statistic is believable. Sometimes a source may contain a mistake—for example, a decimal point may be in the wrong place or a verbal expression like “increased by 50 percent” may conflict with data showing an increase of 100 percent. Third, evaluate sources (even those in Table 7.1 “Statistics-Oriented Websites,” which are generally reputable).

2. Definitions

Imagine that you gave a speech about the use of the presidential veto and your audience did not know the meaning of the word “veto.” In order for your speech to be effective, you would need to define what a veto is and what it does. Making sure everyone is “on the same page” is a fundamental task of any communication. As speakers, we often need to clearly define what we are talking about to make sure that our audience understands our meaning. The goal of a definition is to help speakers communicate a word or idea in a manner that their audiences will understand. For the purposes of public speaking, there are four different types of definitions that may be used as support: lexical, persuasive, stipulative, and theoretical.

Definitions are important to provide clarity for your audience. Effective speakers strike a balance between using definitions where they are needed to increase audience understanding and leaving out definitions of terms that the audience is likely to know. For example, you may need to define what a “claw hammer” is when speaking to a group of Cub Scouts learning about basic tools, but you would appear foolish—or even condescending—if you defined it in a speech to a group of carpenters who use claw hammers every day. On the other hand, just assuming that others know the terms you are using can lead to ineffective communication as well. Medical doctors are often criticized for using technical terms while talking to their patients without taking time to define those terms. Patients may then walk away not really understanding what their health situation is or what needs to be done about it.

Lexical Definitions

A **lexical definition** is one that specifically states how a word is used within a specific language, or in other words, a word’s dictionary definition. For example, if you go to Dictionary.com and type in the word “speech,” here is the lexical definition you will receive:

Speech

noun

1. the faculty or power of speaking; oral communication; ability to express one’s thoughts and emotions by speech sounds and gesture:

   Losing her speech made her feel isolated from humanity

2. the act of speaking:

He expresses himself better in speech than in writing.

3. something that is spoken; an utterance, remark, or declaration:

We waited for some speech that would indicate her true feelings.

4. a form of communication in spoken language, made by a speaker before an audience for a given purpose:

a fiery speech.

5. single utterance of an actor in the course of a play, motion picture, etc.

6. the form of utterance characteristic of a particular people or region; a language or dialect. ("Speech")

Lexical definitions are useful when a word may be unfamiliar to an audience and you want to ensure that they have a basic understanding of the word. However, our ability to understand lexical definitions often hinges on our knowledge of other words that are used in the definition, so it is usually a good idea to follow a lexical definition with a clear explanation of what it means in your own words.

Persuasive Definitions

Persuasive definitions are designed to motivate an audience to think in a specific manner about the word or term. Political figures are often very good at defining terms in a way that are persuasive. Frank Luntz, a linguist and political strategist, is widely regarded as one of the most effective creators of persuasive definitions (Luntz, 2007). Luntz has the ability to take terms that people don't like and repackage them into persuasive definitions that give the original term a much more positive feel. Here are some of Luntz's more famous persuasive definitions:

Oil drilling → energy exploration

Estate tax → death tax

School vouchers → opportunity scholarships

Eavesdropping → electronic intercepts

Global warming → climate change

Luntz has essentially defined the terms in a new way that has a clear political bent and that may make the term more acceptable or distasteful to some audiences, especially those who do not question the lexical meaning of the new term. For example, "oil drilling" may have negative connotations among citizens who are concerned about the environmental impact of drilling, whereas "energy exploration" may have much more positive connotations among the same group. Or "estate tax" might sound like something that only affects wealthy people who have estates, but "death tax" makes this levy sound intrusive because it indicates that people are being taxed for dying.

Stipulative Definitions

A **stipulative definition** is assigned to a word or term by the person who invents it. In 1969, Laurence Peter and Raymond Hull wrote a book called The Peter Principle: Why Things Always Go Wrong. In this book, they defined the "Peter Principle" as "In a Hierarchy Every Employee Tends to Rise to His [sic] Level of Incompetence" (Peter & Hull, 1969). Because Peter and Hull coined the term "Peter Principle," it was up to them to define the term as they saw fit. You cannot argue with this definition; it simply is the definition that was stipulated by the authors of the book.

Theoretical Definitions

Theoretical definitions are used to describe all parts related to a particular type of idea or object. Admittedly, these definitions are frequently ambiguous and difficult to fully comprehend. For example, if you attempted to define the word "peace" in a manner that could be used to describe all aspects of peace, then you would be using a theoretical definition. These definitions are considered theoretical because the definitions attempt to create an all-encompassing theory of the word itself.

3. Examples

Another often-used type of support is examples. An example is a specific situation, problem, or story designed to help illustrate a principle, method, or phenomenon. Examples are useful because they can help make an abstract idea more concrete for an audience by providing a specific case. Let's examine four common types of examples used as support: positive, negative, nonexamples, and best examples.

Positive Examples

A **positive example** is used to clarify or clearly illustrate a principle, method, or phenomenon. A speaker discussing crisis management could talk about how a local politician handled herself when a local newspaper reported that her husband was having an affair or give an example of a professional baseball player who immediately came clean about his steroid use. These examples would provide a positive model for how a corporation in the first instance, and an individual in the second instance, should behave in crisis management. The purpose of a positive example is to show a desirable solution, decision, or course of action.

Negative Examples

Negative examples, by contrast, are used to illustrate what not to do. On the same theme of crisis management, a speaker could discuss the lack of communication from Union Carbide during the 1984 tragedy in Bhopal, India, or the many problems with how the US government responded to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The purpose of a negative example is to show an undesirable solution, decision, or course of action.

Nonexamples

A **nonexample** is used to explain what something is not. On the subject of crisis management, you might mention a press release for a new Adobe Acrobat software upgrade as an example of corporate communication that is not crisis management. The press release nonexample helps the audience differentiate between crisis management and other forms of corporate communication.

Best Examples

The final type of example is called the **best example** because it is held up as the "best" way someone should behave within a specific context. On the crisis management theme, a speaker could show a clip of a CEO speaking effectively during a press conference to model appropriate verbal and non-verbal behaviors when dealing with a crisis. While positive examples show appropriate ways to behave, best examples illustrate the best way to behave in a specific context.

What to Consider When Using Examples

Although examples can be very effective at helping an audience to understand abstract or unfamiliar concepts, they do have one major drawback: some audience members may dismiss them as unusual cases that do not represent what happens most of the time. For example, some opponents of wearing seat belts claim that not wearing your seat belt can save you from becoming trapped in your car if it catches on fire. Even if a speaker has a specific example of an accident where this was true, many audience members would see this example as a rare case and thus not view it as strong support.

Simply finding an example to use, then, is not enough. An effective speaker needs to consider how the audience will respond to the example and how the example fits with what else the audience knows, as discussed under the heading of accuracy earlier in this chapter.

4. Narratives

A fourth form of support are **narratives**, or stories that help an audience understand the speaker's message. Narratives are like examples except narratives are generally longer and take on the form of a story with a clear arc (beginning, middle, and end). Clella Jaffe explains that narratives are a fundamental part of public speaking that can be used for support in all three general purposes of speaking: informative, persuasive, and entertaining (Jaffe, 2010). Also, people like stories. In fact, narratives are so important that communication scholar Walter Fisher believes humans are innately storytelling animals, so appealing to people through stories is a great way to support one's speech (Fisher, 1987).

However, you have an ethical responsibility as a speaker to clearly identify whether the narrative you are sharing is real or hypothetical. In 1981, Washington Post reporter Janet Cooke was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for her story of an eight-year-old heroin addict (Cooke, 1980). After acknowledging that her story was a fake, she lost her job and the prize was rescinded (Green, 1981). Also, if you are sharing a real story, clarify whether or not it is yours: an account of an event where you were actually present, or someone else's that you heard second hand. In 2009, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal gave a nationally televised speech where he recounted a story of his interaction with a local sheriff who was getting help for Hurricane Katrina victims. Later, it was discovered that Jindal hadn't actually been present when the sheriff was getting help for Katrina victims; he had only heard the sheriff tell the story after it happened (Finch, 2009). Jindal had misrepresented someone else's narrative as his own.

Informative Narratives

Informative narratives provide information or explanations about a speaker's topic (Jaffe, 2010). Informative narratives can help audiences understand nature and natural phenomena, for example. Often the most complicated science and mathematical issues in our world can be understood through the use of story. While many people may not know all the mathematics behind gravity, most of us have grown up with the story of how Sir Isaac Newton developed the theory of gravity after he was sitting under a tree and hit on the head by a falling apple. Even if the story is not precisely accurate, it serves as a way to help people grasp the basic concept of gravity.

Persuasive Narratives

Persuasive narratives are stories used to persuade people to accept or reject a specific attitude, value, belief, or behavior. Religious texts are filled with persuasive narratives designed to teach followers various attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors. Parables or fables and fairy tales are designed to teach people basic lessons about life. For example, Aesop's fable "The Farmer and the Snake" warns people that that just because they help someone in need doesn't mean the other person will respond in kind ("The Farmer and the Snake").

Entertaining Narratives

Entertaining narratives are stories designed purely to delight an audience and transport them from their daily concerns. Some professional speakers make a very good career by telling their own stories of success or how they overcame life's adversities. Comedians such as Jeff Foxworthy tell stories that are ostensibly about their own lives in a manner designed to make the audience laugh. While entertaining narratives may be a lot of fun, people should use them sparingly as support for a more serious topic or for a traditional informative or persuasive speech.

5. Testimony

Another form of support you may employ during a speech is testimony. When we use the word "testimony" in this text, we are specifically referring to expert opinion or direct accounts of witnesses to provide support for your speech. Notice that within this definition, we refer to both expert and eyewitness testimony.

Expert Testimony

Expert testimony expresses the attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors recommended by someone who is an acknowledged expert on a topic. For example, imagine that you're going to give a speech on why physical education should be mandatory for all grades K–12 in public schools. During the course of your research, you come across The Surgeon General's Vision for a Fit and Healthy Nation (surgeongeneral.gov). You might decide to cite information from within the report written by US Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin about her strategies for combating the problem of childhood obesity within the United States. If so, you are using the words from Dr. Benjamin, as a noted expert on the subject, to support your speech's basic premise. Her expertise is being used to give credibility to your claims.

Eyewitness Testimony

Eyewitness testimony, on the other hand, is given by someone who was present at an event. Imagine that you are giving a speech on the effects of the 2010 "Deepwater Horizon" disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. Perhaps one of your friends happened to be on a flight that passed over the Gulf of Mexico and the pilot pointed out where the platform was. You could tell your listeners about your friend's testimony of what she saw as she was flying over the spill.

However, understand the limitations of eyewitness testimony as supporting evidence. Eyewitness testimony is someone's firsthand account of the event which may not always be reliable. Always evaluate the credibility of your witness and the recency of the testimony. Consider how you received the testimony. Did you ask the person for the testimony, or did he or she give you the information without being asked? Also, does the witness has anything to gain from his or her testimony that might make the account biased? Finally, consider how much time has passed between the event and when the eyewitness recalls what happened. Testimony given soon after the event provides immediate impressions based on the witness' subjective experience. For example, someone on the ground in Manhattan during 9/11 who saw the first plane fly into one of the World Trade Center's towers might report that a terrible accident had just taken place. Testimony given long after the event, on the other hand, might lack clear, immediate impressions and be shaped by the witness having put the event into a broader historical context. So that same witness to the first plane hitting the World Trade Center, twenty years later, might have forgotten some of the details of her experience, but would now realize that she was watching 9/11 unfold in front of her.

Overall, the more detail you can give about the witness and when the witness made his or her observation, the more useful that witness testimony will be when attempting to create a solid argument. However, never rely completely on eyewitness testimony because this form of support is not always reliable and may still be perceived as biased by a segment of your audience. Defense attorneys and prosecutors, for example, are beginning to realize that eyewitness testimony as a method of identifying suspects is faulty given the number of people behind bars in recent years who have been exonerated by DNA evidence.

6. Analogies

An analogy is a figure of speech that compares two ideas or objects, showing how they are similar in some way. Analogies, for public speaking purposes, can also be based in logic. The logical notion of analogies starts with the idea that two ideas or objects are similar, and because of this similarity, the two ideas or objects must be similar in other ways as well. There are two different types of analogies that speakers can employ: figurative and literal.

Figurative Analogies

Figurative analogies compare two ideas or objects from two different classes. For the purposes of understanding analogies, a "class" refers to a group that has common attributes, characteristics, qualities, or traits. For example, you can compare a new airplane to an eagle. In this case, airplanes and eagles clearly are not the same type of objects. While both may have the ability to fly, airplanes are made by humans and eagles exist in nature.

Figurative analogies are innately problematic because people often hear them and immediately dismiss them as far-fetched. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, some people compared having to abide by city and state masking requirements as like living in Nazi Germany. In fact, having to abide by state and city masking requirements is not like living through the Holocaust.

While figurative analogies may be very vivid and help a listener create a mental picture, they do not really help a listener determine the validity of the information being presented. Furthermore, speakers often overly rely on figurative analogies when they really don't have any other solid evidence. Overall, while figurative analogies may be useful, we recommend solidifying them with other, more tangible support.

Literal Analogies

Literal analogies, on the other hand, compare two objects or ideas that clearly belong to the same class. The goal of the literal analogy is to demonstrate that the two objects or ideas are similar; therefore, they should have further similarities that support your argument. For example, maybe you're giving a speech on a new fast-food brand that you think will be a great investment. You could easily compare that new fast-food brand to preexisting brands like McDonald's, Subway, or Taco Bell. If you can show that the new start-up brand functions similarly to other brands, you can use that logic to suggest that the new brand will also have the same kind of success as the existing brands.

When using literal analogies, make sure that the ideas are closely related and that the audience can see a reasonable connection between the two ideas or objects being compared. If your audience sees your new fast-food brand as very different from McDonald's or Subway, then they will not accept your analogy. You are basically asking your audience to confirm the logic of your comparison, so if they don't see the comparison as valid, it won't help to support your message.

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6.5: Using Support and Creating Arguments

Supporting one's ideas with a range of facts and statistics, definitions, examples, narratives, testimony, and analogies can make the difference between a boring speech your audience will soon forget and one that has a lasting effect on their lives.

Although the research process is designed to help you find effective support, you still need to think through how you will use the support you have accumulated. In this section, we will examine how to use support effectively in one's speech, first by examining the types of support one needs in a speech and then by seeing how support can be used to enhance one's argument.

Understanding Arguments

You may associate the word "argument" with a situation where two people are having a loud conflict. But in the context of speech, an **argument** consists of a thesis based on supporting premises and conclusions. An arguable thesis is not a statement of fact, although it should be supported by facts as well as reliable interpretations of facts.

A fact is a statement that can have either a yes or no answer, while an arguable proposition can have a range of responses that include yes and no.

Arguments are based on claims, evidence, and warrants. A **claim** is a statement that is supported with evidence, while a **warrant** is the inference that can be drawn from the claim and evidence. Unlike the claim and evidence, the warrant is usually inferred rather than stated: the speaker depends on the audience to use the claim and evidence to draw a **conclusion** (the warrant).

> **Claim:** Life without a car in Baton Rouge is difficult and dangerous.
>
> **Evidence:** Baton Rouge lacks pedestrian-friendly infrastructure such as sidewalks in all neighborhoods and crosswalks for crossing busy streets.
>
> **Warrant:** It's difficult and even dangerous to walk in Baton Rouge.
>
> **Claim:** Life without a car in Baton Rouge is difficult and dangerous.
>
> **Evidence:** The bus system is unreliable, and many bus stops aren't even covered.
>
> **Warrant:** Because public transportation is unreliable and inconvenient, most people need to have a car to live in Baton Rouge (Purdy and Buzbee.)

In this example, the claim and evidence support the warrants "walking in Baton Rouge is difficult and even dangerous" and "people need a car to live in the city because public transportation is unreliable and inconvenient."

However, some claims lack enough evidence for the audience to reach the implied warrant. Examine the following to determine whether or not the writer has provide enough evidence to support the warrant below each:

> 1. LSU should receive free tickets to all LSU home football games because we would have no football team without the university.
>
> > Warrant: Being enrolled at LSU is enough reason for students to receive this expensive commodity.
>
> 2. Baton Rouge is a dangerous place to live. According to FBI statistics, Baton Rouge had the 6th highest murder rate in the United States in 2019.
>
> > Warrant: The FBI statistics on murder rates are sufficient for determining whether or not a place is dangerous. Or FBI statistics from 2019 about the murder rate in Baton Rouge are an accurate predictor of how safe someone is in this city in the present day.
>
> 3. This year the United States will likely be hit by several powerful hurricanes. A team of scientists led by Dr. Phil Klotzbach at Colorado State University says that there is about a 65% chance of above-average tropical storm activity.
>
> > Warrant: A team of scientists led by Dr. Phil Klotzbach at Colorado State University can make accurate predictions about tropical storm activity in a given year.

#1: Given the value of LSU football tickets, is the Athletic Department's dependence on the university to exist enough reason that all LSU students should receive tickets to home games? True, without the university, the Tigers would have to become an NFL franchise, and you can't have a university without students, but is this sufficient justification to give every student what amounts to over $1,000 in free tickets every semester, or do we need more reasons for support?

#2: What is meant by “dangerous place to live”? Is one set of FBI statistics sufficient to make such a sweeping judgment about how safe Baton Rouge is? Do we need other types of statistics and facts?

#3: What are Dr. Phil Klotzbach’s credentials? What does someone in Colorado know about hurricanes? How do we know that Dr. Klotzbach and his team of scientists have the expertise to make such predictions?

Creating strong arguments is a fundamental part of public speaking. Remember that your argument is only as strong as your weakest claim.

Examining your claims in this way will help determine what level of support you need for each.

Sifting Through Your Support

When researching a topic, you’re going to find a range of different types of supporting evidence. You may find examples of all six types of support: facts and statistics, definitions, examples, narratives, testimony, and analogies. Sooner or later, you are going to have to make some decisions as to which pieces of support you will use and which you won’t. While there is no one way to select your support, here are some helpful suggestions.

Use a Variety of Support Types

One of the most important parts of using support is variety. Nothing will kill a speech faster than if you use the same type of support repeatedly. Also, you will need to find the “Goldilocks zone” for how much support you will need. Use as much as you need to make your point without going overboard, or the amount that’s “just right.” You might decide to begin with a couple of definitions and rely on a gripping piece of eyewitness testimony as your other major support. Or you might use a combination of facts, examples, and narratives. In another case, statistics and examples might be most effective. Audience members are likely to have different preferences for support; some may like statistics while others really find narratives compelling. By using a variety of forms of support, you are likely to appeal to a broader range of audience members and thus effectively adapt to your audience. Even if your audience members prefer a specific form of support, providing multiple types of support is important to keep them interested. To use an analogy, even people who love ice cream would get tired of it if they ate only ice cream every day for a week, so variety is important.

Choose Appropriate Forms of Support

Depending on the type of speech you are giving, your speech’s context, and your audience, different types of evidence may or may not be appropriate. While speeches using precise lexical definitions may be useful for the courtroom, they may not be useful in an after-dinner speech to entertain. At the same time, entertaining narratives may be great for a speech whose general purpose is to entertain but may decrease a speaker’s credibility when attempting to persuade an audience about a serious topic.

Check for Relevance

Another consideration about potential support is whether it is relevant. Each piece of evidence you select needs to support the specific purpose of your speech. You may find the coolest quotation, but if that quotation doesn’t really help your core argument in your speech, you need to leave it out. If you use irrelevant support sources, your audience will quickly catch on and you will lose credibility.

Also, consider your audience when selecting supporting materials. If you are giving a speech to an audience of fifty-year-olds, you may be able to begin with “Think back to where you were om 9/11,” but this would be meaningless with an audience of twenty-year-olds. Similarly, references to music download sites or the latest popular band may not be effective with audiences who are not interested in music.

Don’t Go Overboard

In addition to being relevant, supporting materials need to help you support your speech’s specific purpose without interfering with your speech. You may find three different sources that support your speech’s purpose in the same way. If that happens, you shouldn’t include all three forms of support. Instead, pick the form of support that would be most relatable to your audience and your topic. Remember, the goal is to support your speech, not to have the support become your speech.

Don’t Manipulate Your Support

Don’t manipulate your support to make it say what you want it to say in spite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. This practice is unethical as well as disrespectful to your audience. Below are some guidelines to make sure that you are not manipulating your

sources:

- Don’t overlook significant factors or individuals related to your topic.
- Don’t jump to conclusions that are not justified based on the supporting evidence you have.
- Do not use evidence to support faulty logic.
- Do not use out-of-date evidence that is no longer valid.
- Do not use evidence out of its original context.
- Do not knowingly use evidence from a source that is clearly biased.

Also, remember to clearly cite all your supporting evidence within your speech.

Using Support within Your Speech

In the previous sections of this chapter, we’ve talked about the various types of support you can use (facts and statistics, definitions, examples, narratives, testimonies, and analogies). In this section, we’ll go over how to incorporate evidence into your speech, as well as how to think through the support you need for a speech and also how to actually use support while speaking.

Forms of Speech Support

Let’s begin by examining the forms that support can take in a speech: direct quotations, paraphrases, summaries, numerical data, and visual aids.

Direct Quotations

A speaker directly quotes material by using the exact wording of another speaker or writer within the speech. While **direct quotations** are a useful form of support, use them sparingly within your speech, and incorporate them so that they flow seamlessly to and from your own authorial voice. Overuse of direct quotations in a speech can be confusing to the audience because the speaker so frequently transitions from their words to the exact words of someone else.

Use a direct quotation if

- the original author’s words are witty, engaging, distinct, or particularly vivid.
- you want to highlight a specific expert and his or her expertise within your speech.
- you are going to specifically analyze the exact wording of something.

Directly quote as little as possible of your source. Lengthy quotations can try the patience of audience members, and the connection between your support and your argument can get lost.

Paraphrases

Paraphrases reword a passage from the source in the speaker’s words. However, your rewording must be thorough. A paraphrase is more than just dropping a few words from the direct quotation or rearranging them. To write an effective paraphrase, you must understand the source’s ideas so well that you can explain them in your own words without looking back at the original.

Paraphrase when

- you can say it more concisely than the original speaker or author,
- the exact wording is overly complex for your audience to understand,
- you want to adapt an example, analogy, or narrative by another author to make its relevance to your own argument more evident.

Also, paraphrase information that is not likely to be questioned by your audience. If you think your audience may question your support, then relying on a direct quotation may be more effective.

Summaries

Whereas a paraphrase rephrases an original passage in your own words, a **summary** condenses a longer text in your own words. Effective summaries are usually just a few sentences, much shorter than the original. Summaries are helpful when you want to provide your audience with the overall idea of the original author’s entire work.

Summarize when

- you need another author's entire idea to understand the argument within your speech,
- when explaining possible counterarguments to the one posed within your speech,
- or when you need to cite a number of different sources effectively and efficiently to support a specific argument.

Numerical Data

Use numerical data to cite statistics, but make sure that your audience can accurately interpret the numbers in the same way you are doing. When incorporating numerical data into your speech, clearly state the numbers used and where they came from and explain what the numbers mean and how you think they should be interpreted. If the numbers are overly complicated or if you use a variety of numbers within a speech, consider making a graph or pie chart or other visual aid to enhance your audience's understanding of the **numerical support**.

Visual Aids

Visual aids are any drawn or visual representation of an object or process. For example, if you're giving a speech on how to swing a golf club, you could bring in a golf club and demonstrate exactly how to use it. Alternately, you could show a diagram illustrating the steps for an effective golf swing or play a short YouTube video that demonstrates how to swing a golf club.

Use visual aids when

- a visual reference is shorter and easier for your audience to understand than explaining an object or process, or
- you really want to emphasize the importance of the support.

Audiences recall information more readily when they both see and hear it.

Your visual aids should be easy to understand and using them should take less time than using words alone. Make sure everyone in your audience can easily see your visual aids, not just those in front. If listeners cannot see the visual aid, then it will not help them understand how it is supposed to help your speech's specific purpose.

Is Your Support Adequate?

Now that we've examined the ways to use support in your speech, how do you know if you have enough support?

Make a Reverse Outline

A **reverse outline** is a tool you can use to determine the adequacy of your speech's support by starting with your conclusion and logically working backward through your speech to determine if the support you provided is appropriate and comprehensive. Make an outline of your speech beginning with the conclusion then working your way backward to show how you get to the conclusion. By forcing yourself to think about logic in reverse, you're more likely to find missteps along the way. This technique is not only helpful for analyzing the overall flow of your speech, but it can also let you see if different sections of your speech lack individual support.

Support Your Claims

Make sure that every claim in your speech is supported. For example, if you state, "The majority of Americans want immigration reform," you need to make sure that you have a source that actually demonstrates this claim such as the results of a recent national poll on this topic conducted by reputable and unbiased polling organization. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, too often people make claims within a speech that they have no support for whatsoever. When you go through your speech, you need to make sure that every claim has adequate and appropriate supporting evidence.

Incorporating Support into Your Oral Presentation

After you have selected and evaluated your forms of support, incorporate it using this three-step process: setup, execution, and analysis.

Setup

The first step in using support within a speech is the **setup**, a sentence or phrase that explains to your audience the origin of your information. Depending on the source of your support, all the following information presented in the order listed below could be

useful: the author's name and credentials, the name of the source, its publication date, and the container where the source can be found. Note that if you found the information on a website, it is not sufficient to merely give your audience the URL.

1. The author's name and expertise on the subject matter (if appropriate). Some sources are written by authors who are not experts, so you really don't need to explain their expertise. In other cases, your audience will already know why the source is an expert, so you will not need to explain the author's credentials. For example, if you are giving a speech on current politics in the United States, you probably do not need to explain the expertise of Barack Obama or George Bush. However, if your audience is not immediately familiar with the author and you don't provide information on their expertise, they will question the validity of your support.
2. The source's title.
3. The date of the source. Provide as much information on the date as is provided on the copyright information page of the source.
4. If your source comes from a larger work, indicate the name of the container. For example, a single article (name of source) may come from a magazine, newspaper, book, or website (containers). Containers are larger works that hold smaller things.

Examples

> According to Melanie Smithfield in an article titled "Do It Right, or Do It Now," published in the June 18, 2009, issue of Time Magazine . . .
>
> According to Roland Smith, a legendary civil rights activist and former chair of the Civil Rights Defense League, in his 2001 book The Path of Peace . . .

Both examples provided the information that was necessary to understand where the source comes from and why it is credible. The more information you can provide the audiences about your support, the more information they have to evaluate the strength of your arguments.

Execution

The **execution** of support involves reading a quotation, paraphrasing a speaker or author's words, summarizing a speaker or author's ideas, providing data, or using other visual aids. Effective execution should seamlessly flow into the context of your speech. While you want your evidence to make an impact, you also don't want it to seem overly disjointed. One mistake that some novice public speakers make is that when they start providing evidence, their whole performance changes and the use of evidence looks and sounds awkward. Make sure you practice the execution of your evidence when you rehearse your speech.

Analysis

The final stage of using support effectively is the one which many speakers forget: **analysis** of the support. Too often speakers use support without ever explaining to an audience how it should be interpreted. While you don't want to tell our audience what to think, you do want to show them how you are interpreting the evidence to support your claim.

Below are three ways to ensure the audience will make the connection between your support and your argument:

> Summarize the support in your own words (unless you started with a summary).
>
> Specifically tell your audience how the support relates to the argument.
>
> Draw a sensible conclusion based on your support. We cannot leave an audience hanging, so drawing a conclusion helps complete the support package.

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6.6: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

In this chapter we highlighted the necessity of evidence and context in making claims, pointing out that unsupported assertions are common among individuals and politicians. We discussed organizations such as FactCheck.org, Politifact.com, and Snopes.com that verify claims and the importance of incorporating support into presentations to enhance arguments in speeches.

We outlined how to enhance speeches using diverse support like facts, narratives, and statistics, stressing ethical presentation and audience engagement. We provided techniques for using quotations, paraphrases, and summaries effectively, alongside numerical data and visual aids. A reverse outline was suggested for assessing support sufficiency, and a three-step process is introduced for incorporating support in speeches.

Finally, this chapter discusses the concept of "support" in public speaking, highlighting its importance in reinforcing a speech's central idea through credible evidence and engaging presentation. Effective support enhances clarity, interest, accuracy, and memorability, while poor support can damage credibility. Evaluating source quality is vital for ensuring effective communication and impact in a speech.

Exercises

1. Search a claim you have recently heard in the media through one of the fact checking organizations mentioned in this chapter (FactCheck.org, Politifact.com, Snopes.com) determine if the claim was true or false. Provide a summary of the information you gained from your search.

2. What is "support" and why is it important to provide support in your speech?

3. Name and explain the three reasons provided for using support in your speech:

4. Name and explain each of the types of support discussed in this chapter:

5. What are some suggestions your textbook provides for ways to use support in your speech?

6. What is a reverse outline and why might you consider using this tool when constructing your speech?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Researching Your Speech Topic

7.1: Learning Objectives
7.2: Research
7.3: Accessing Information Through a Library
7.4: Beginning the Research Process
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7.7: Citing Sources
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7.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Explain the difference between primary and secondary sources.
2. Understand basic library research.
3. Distinguish between reliable and unreliable information on the Internet.
4. Access and find reliable information on the Internet.
5. Describe how to establish research needs before beginning research.
6. Recognize information that should be cited.
7. Explain twelve strategies for avoiding plagiarism.

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7.2: Research

When preparing to write or speak about a topic, your first step is to gather information. You will need to do research to ensure that you provide your audience with sufficient background information and support your claims

Doing research involves more than finding a few books or articles on a topic; a researcher's job is to find useful, relevant, and reliable information, which can be challenging. This chapter will help by providing an introduction to research terminology and the research process.

Primary and Secondary Sources

You may hear sources described as either "primary" or "secondary," and understanding this distinction can help you assess what types of information are useful for your various needs.

A **primary source** is one that is original and first-hand or straight from the source; information that is unfiltered by interpretation or editing. This has different meanings depending on the disciplinary context, but generally refers to the product of someone's original work, such as the results of a scientist's study, or an author's novel. You may access published primary sources in introductory college courses like this one, and you will definitely do so as you progress in your discipline. Keep in mind that primary sources are generally factual rather than analysis or interpretation, although not in all cases.

In your research, you might more frequently use **secondary sources**, information that is not directly from the firsthand source; information that has been compiled, filtered, edited, or interpreted in some way, such as are articles, books, and websites that involve analysis or interpretation of primary sources. While a scientific study would be a primary source, a magazine article about the findings of that study would be considered a secondary source.

Whether you use a primary or a secondary source depends on our purpose, topic, audience, and context. If you engage in undergraduate research in your junior or senior year and present at a conference, you will be expected to have some primary research. However, for most of your college work, you will be looking for reliable secondary sources. One way to assess the quality of a secondary source is to look at its references or bibliography. A reliable source will cite other sources to support its claims. Likewise, a well-researched speech will provide support for its argument by using evidence obtained from reliable sources.

Most researchers begin their work by evaluating the current information that exists on their topic. They may look at a combination of primary and secondary sources during this process. Their goal is to find out what is currently known about a topic and where the research may be headed. Students completing a research-based assignment will begin much the same way.

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7.3: Accessing Information Through a Library

The library plays an important role for researchers, because materials in libraries have been selected for the information needs of their users. College and university libraries provide resources to support the academic programs of study at their institutions.

The Library Catalog

The library catalog is a good place to begin searching. Since it will allow you to search the library's collection of books, periodicals, and media, you will have access to a lot of material that broadly covers your topic, and the information you find will help you as you work to narrow the scope of your research.

Many libraries have a unique or branded name for their catalog and provide online search functionality. One helpful feature of the catalog's search tool is the ability to sort and refine search results by date, format, author, and other filter options.

Additionally, library catalogs allow users to link to electronic books, videos, and other resources directly. These resources can be quite helpful, since users do not need to come to the library building, nor are these resources available only during library hours.

Databases

You're already familiar with using search engines (like Google), but did you know that these tools only give you access to information that companies and people have shared for free? The content freely available online only represents a fraction of that which actually exists.

A lot of the information that isn't free is protected by paywalls. You may have tried to read an article online, but weren't able to see the full text because you were asked to pay. This can be frustrating when the content is useful for research! Fortunately, you have access to online databases through your library.

Library databases are available 24/7, and provide users with access to the full text of eBooks and articles from **periodicals**, works that are published on a regular, ongoing basis, such as magazines, academic journals, and newspapers. The content in library databases is available because libraries have paid to subscribe to the publications they offer. For the library user, this information is free—but you will have to search the library's databases to access it.

Note that if you are trying to use library databases remotely (not via a wired connection to the library's actual network), such as from home or on a business's free Wi-Fi network, you will probably be asked to log in to verify that you are an authorized user of the library's materials. Because the library has paid to access these subscription resources, they protect access by asking users to verify their status. Your library can help if you aren't sure how to log in or experience difficulty when trying to do so.

While databases index newspapers and popular magazines, college-level researchers especially benefit from their inclusion of articles published in academic journals. Almost all content in academic journals is **peer-reviewed**. The authors of journal articles are experts in their subject areas, and after having conducted research on their topic, write up the results in an article that they submit for publication to a scholarly journal (a periodical whose target audience is other experts in that disciplinary field).

Before the editor approves the publication of an article in their journal, they send it to other scholars who are experts in the subject area. The other scholars, peers of the original author, then read the articles and evaluate them according to the standards of that discipline. Only after an article has passed the peer review process can it be published in the academic journal.

Something you may have wondered is whether the terms "scholarly," "peer-reviewed," and "academic" have different meanings when used to describe articles or the journals in which they are published. The answer is no. These terms are used interchangeably.

Historically, academic journals were primarily available in print, but today most readers access them online. When looking at a search results page, it can be challenging to figure out which articles are from popular magazines and which are from scholarly journals. Fortunately, most databases have a filter that lets you limit your results by publication type. As you continue to use the search function in databases, you will notice that it's possible to put additional controls on the displayed results, allowing you to sort and refine.

Filtering your results is just one way to ensure that you find the information you need. Another option is to modify your search technique. The easiest way to do this is to put search phrases in quotation marks. If you're looking for information about attention deficit disorder, using "attention deficit disorder" ensures that the three words stay together in the order in which you have typed them. This can be very helpful to optimize the relevance of your search results. Without the quotation marks, the database will look for the words attention, deficit, and disorder. You can also combine search terms using Boolean operators (AND, OR, and NOT),

try changing the search parameters, using truncation (to find similar words with the same root; typing medica* will give you results including medical, medically, medication, medications, etc.), or searching with subject headings. An example of a search using some advanced techniques is shown in Figure 7.3.1. Figure 7.3.2 clarifies how different disciplines may categorize primary vs. secondary sources.

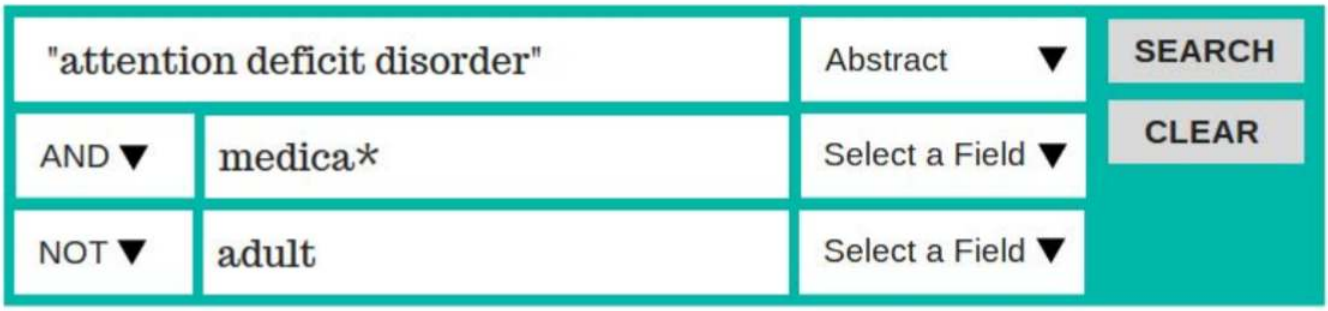


Figure 7.3.1: Example of a search with some advanced techniquesText searches starting from a phrase and then including secondary fields such as medical and adult. To search on medicine and medical simultaneously use a * at the end of medic*

Discipline	Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
Humanities	Creative works, diaries, letters, interviews, news reporting	Books, articles, textbooks
Sciences	Results of experiments, research, clinical trials	Books, articles, textbooks
Social Sciences	Census data, statistics, results of experiments of human behavior	Books, articles, textbooks

Figure 7.3.2: Secondary sources in all fields are books, textbooks and articles. Primary sources in humanities include creative works, diaries, interviews, letters, news reports. In science experiments, research and clinical trials. In social science statistics, census data, experiments with humans or animals

Other Library Services and Resources

A library's online search tools allow you to search their extensive holdings. Know that you can (and should) ask for help if you have problems or questions. Remember that librarians are research experts and can help you to find information, select a topic, refine your search, cite your sources, and much more!

Did you know?

Many libraries offer resource sharing services, which allow you to borrow items your library does not have available. The delivery can take a few days, so be sure to order items at least a week before you need them!

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7.4: Beginning the Research Process



Ask a Librarian

If you hear the word “research” and get a little queasy inside, you’re hardly alone. Many people dread the idea of having to research something, whether for a speech or a paper. Now is the time to talk to a librarian at a public or an academic library. Librarians are experts at locating reliable sources of information on any topic and they can help you use tools to locate sources quickly. Libraries have access to materials that you cannot find by just Googling something on the **world wide web**.

For any project that requires research, visiting with a librarian should be your first step because good research takes time. Too, research is not a one-and-done process. Expect to do preliminary research about your topic, along with later research after you discover what you don’t know.

You can also consult a librarian if you don’t have a clear idea of your topic. If you have a copy of your assignment, the librarian can help you brainstorm some topics that might work so that you can begin your preliminary research.

If you are feeling uncertain about your topic or ability to research it, schedule a one-on-one consultation with a reference librarian. During a consultation, the librarian can give you more time and attention than you would normally receive at the reference desk.

Finally, while librarians can help you find reliable information about your topic, you should not expect them to do your research for you. They will show you the types of sources that are available and assist you in using the library’s **databases** and catalogue to locate items in the building as well electronic sources, and even explain which sources are more authoritative than others, but you will have to gather the sources for yourself and read them to determine what you will use in your project.

Create a Research Log

Nothing is more disheartening than when you find yourself at 1:00 a.m. asking, “Haven’t I already read this?” To avoid this heartbreaking scenario, make a **research log** to keep track of what you’ve located and read thus far. Keeping a research log can be as simple as writing what you have located and read so far into a notebook. You can also make a digital log using your laptop or even your phone if you have Word processing software on it.

Pro tip: to make sure that you can access digital information even if your laptop or phone gets stolen or crashes, upload it to a cloud where you can access the information on any device. Anyone with a Gmail account has access to Google Drive, where you can upload and store multiple files for free.

Research Log Best Practices

Put the full bibliographic citation of the source into your log so that you have all of the necessary information to retrieve the source if you didn’t download it or find the hard copy of whatever you checked out of the library.

Once you have read the source, or skimmed it, write a brief **summary** of the source, focusing on anything important to your research project.

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- **6.2: Beginning the Research Process** by Sara Kim, Douglas Marshall, June Pulliam, Victoria VanNest, and James Yeargain is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Original source: https://louis.pressbooks.pub/publicspeaking.

7.5: Developing a Research Strategy



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

Allotting Time

First and foremost, when starting a new project, no matter how big or small, it is important to seriously consider how much time that project is going to take. In most public speaking courses, you may have two or three weeks between speeches in a semester course or one to two weeks in a quarter course. But from the moment your instructor gives you the assigned speech, the proverbial clock is ticking, and with each passing day, you are losing precious time in your speech preparation process. As a college student you probably have many things vying for your time in life: school, family, jobs, friends, etc. That's why it's important to really think through how much time it's going to take you to complete your preparation in terms of both research and speech preparation as well as begin your assignment the day you receive it.

Research Time

Researching your speech will take approximately a third of your preparation time whether you are conducting primary research or relying on secondary sources. To complicate matters, research is never just a one-and-done process. As you develop your speech, you will 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. Therefore, always allow extra time in your schedule for targeted research. Also take into account the time necessary to meet with a research librarian (which you should definitely do). Set up an appointment with a research librarian well ahead of the time that you think you will have your questions organized or be ready to discuss your topic. Remember that librarians have schedules as well, and you are less likely to get an appointment if you wait until the last minute to put in your request.

Determining Your Needs

Once you have a general idea of your assignment and topic, you can start to ask yourself a series of simple questions:

- What do I know about my topic?
- Do I have any clear gaps in my knowledge of my topic?
- Do I need to conduct primary research for my speech?
- What type of secondary research do I need?
- Do I need research related to facts, theories, or applications?

The clearer you are about the type of research you need at the onset of the research process, the easier it will be to locate specific information.

Start with Background Information

It's not unusual for students to try to jump right into the meat of a topic, only to find out that there is a lot of technical language they just don't understand. For this reason, you may want to start your research with popular sources written for the general public. Generally, these lower-level sources are great for background information on a topic and are helpful when trying to learn the basic vocabulary of a subject area. You will learn more about popular sources in the "Finding Reliable Sources of Information" segment.

Finding Reliable Sources of Information

Once you have a general idea about the basic needs you have for your research, it's time to start tracking down your secondary sources. Thankfully, we live in a world that is swimming with information. Back in the decades when the authors of this textbook first started researching, we all had to go to a library and search through a physical card catalog to find books. If you wanted to research a topic in magazine or journal articles, you had to look up key terms in a giant book, printed annually, known as an index of periodicals. Researchers could literally spend hours in the library and find just one or two sources that were applicable to their topic.

Today information is quite literally at our fingertips. In fact, we have the opposite problem from a couple of decades ago—we have too much information at our fingertips. As a result, we now must be more skeptical about our sources of information.

Popular Information Sources

Popular (or non-academic) information sources are written so that they can be understood by the general public. Most popular sources are written at a sixth- to eighth-grade reading level, so that they can be read by someone without a high school diploma. However, the information often contained in these sources is often quite limited because it must be conveyed in such simple terms for its target audience.

Books

A book is a full-length manuscript consisting of chapters. Books can be written by single or multiple authors, as well as be edited collections of essays by different authors. They are available as either hard or digital copy, and some libraries have both types in their collections.

If you use your library's databases to find a book, you have access to the books of other libraries as well via interlibrary loan. An **interlibrary loan** is a process where librarians are able to search other libraries to locate the book a researcher is trying to find. If another library has that book, then the library asks to borrow it for a short period of time. Depending on how easy a book is to find, your library could receive it in a couple of days or a couple of weeks. Keep in mind that interlibrary loans take time, so do not expect to get a book at the last minute. The more lead time you provide a librarian to find a book you are looking for, the greater the likelihood that the book will be sent through the mail to your library on time.

Furthermore, in today's world, we have one of the greatest online card catalogs ever created—and it wasn't created for libraries at all! Retail bookseller sites like Amazon.com can be a great source for finding books that may be applicable to your topic, and the best part is, you don't actually need to purchase the book because your library may actually own a copy of a book or be able to request it for you via interlibrary loan. If you find a book that you think may be appropriate, plug that book's title into your school's electronic library catalog. If your library owns the book, you can go to the library and pick it up today.

Finally, some books are partially or entirely available for free via the world wide web as digitized content via on-line libraries. Some online libraries we recommend are Project Gutenberg (gutenberg.org), Google Books (books.google.com), Read Print (readprint.com), Open Library (openlibrary.org), and Get Free e-Books (getfreeebooks.com). This is a short list of just a handful of the libraries that are now offering free e-content.

General-Interest Periodicals

General-interest periodicals are magazines and newsletters published regularly. Some popular magazines in this category include The New Yorker, The Atlantic, and Smithsonian. These magazines are considered "general interest" because most people in the United States could pick up a copy of these magazines and find them interesting and topical.

Special-Interest Periodicals

Special-interest periodicals are magazines and newsletters that are published for a narrower audience. Some more widely known special-interest periodicals are Sports Illustrated, Bloomberg's Business Week, GQ, Vogue, Popular Science, National Geographic, The Economist, and Scientific American. But for every major magazine, there are a great many other lesser-known magazines like

American Coin Op Magazine, Varmint Hunter, Fangoria, Shark Diver Magazine, Pet Product News International, Water Garden News, to name just a few.

Newspapers, Blogs, and Newsgathering Agencies

Newspapers and blogs are other major sources of popular information. A few blogs (e.g., T*he Huffington Post, Talkingpoints Memo, The Daily Beast, Salon*) function similarly to traditional newspapers. Furthermore, in the past few years we've lost many traditional newspapers around the United States; cities that used to have four or five daily papers may now only have one or two.

Major newspapers in the United States include *The New York Times*, *the Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Houston Chronicle*, and *USAToday*, and major international English-language newspapers include The Guardian [London], The Independent [London], and The Irish Times. Most colleges and universities subscribe to a number of these newspapers in paper form or have access to them electronically. Furthermore, LexisNexis, a database many colleges and universities subscribe to, has access to full text newspaper articles from these newspapers and many more around the world.

In addition to traditional newspapers, blogs are becoming a mainstay of information in today's society. In fact, since the dawn of the twenty-first century many major news stories have been broken by professional bloggers rather than traditional newspaper reporters (Ochman, 2007). Although anyone can create a blog, there are many reputable blog sites that are run by professional journalists. As such, blogs can be a great source of information. However, as with all information on the Internet, you often have to wade through a lot of junk to find useful, accurate information.

Finally, news-gathering organizations can also be reliable sources of popular information. News-gathering organizations may or may not be associated with a publication or network. For example, AP (Associated Press) and Reuters are wire services that sell content to newspapers and television stations worldwide from their network of reporters. Other reliable newsgathering sources include BBC News (United Kingdom), CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) News, PBS (Public Broadcasting System—United States), and Al Jazeera World News (analysis from the Middle East and worldwide).

Encyclopedias

Encyclopedias provide short, very general information about a topic and are available in both print and electronic formats, and their content can range from eclectic and general (e.g., *Encyclopædia Britannica, Wikipedia*) to the very specific (e.g., *Encyclopedia of 20th Century Architecture*, *The Encyclopedia of the Zombie: The Walking Dead in Popular Culture* and *Myth, Listen to Punk Rock!: Exploring a Musical Genre*). It is important to keep in mind that general encyclopedias are designed to give only brief, fairly superficial summaries of a topic area. Thus, they may be useful for finding out what something is if it is referenced in another source, but they are generally not a useful source for your actual speech. In fact, many instructors do not allow students to use encyclopedias as sources for their speeches for this very reason. More specialized encyclopedias, however, often provide more detailed summaries of topics and include references.

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

Websites

Websites are the last major source of nonacademic information. Unfortunately, you can spend hours and hours searching for information and never quite find what you're looking for if you don't devise an Internet search strategy. Try Googling your topic or key terms and see what the search engine suggests. Sometimes Google can suggest a more specific focus for your search. Next, if you find a web page with what looks like useful information, learn about the site. Go to it's "about" section (and be suspicious of websites without an about section) or even try doing a separate Google search about the website and/or its author to learn more. Finally, don't be misled by domain name endings. Just because a site ends in a .org doesn't mean that the site was made by a legitimate organization because anyone can purchase these domain name endings. Sites ending in .gov or .edu, on the other hand, are reliable, since only U. S. based government sector agencies and organizations (including state and local governments) and educational institutions are eligible to purchase them.

Scholarly (or Peer-Reviewed Sources)

Scholarly, or **peer-reviewed sources**, are the gold standard of reliable information, so many professors will require that you use some of these type of sources in your assignments. **Scholarly sources** are written by experts in their field, usually professors in a specific discipline. Scholarly sources contain the original research of these experts, which has been vetted by their peers, other experts in their field, who ensure that the research is based on the most recent and reliable scholarship in that discipline. Scholarly or peer-reviewed sources are usually found in academic **journals** and books published by university presses as well as some other publishers.

Below are some types of scholarly sources. To search for scholarly sources in your library's catalogue or databases, set a limiter that will confine your results to peer-reviewed sources including academic journals.

Scholarly Books

Scholarly books are books are primarily written by academics for other academics who use this information to conduct their own research. Scholarly books are works of non-fiction that are published by university presses (Louisiana State University Press, Harvard University Press, University Press of Mississippi, for example) as well as a handful of other major publishers who specialize in scholarly books.

Some of these non-university presses specializing in academic books include:

SAGE Press
Routledge
Jossey-Bass
Pfeiffer
The American Psychological Association
The National Communication Association
Palgrave MacMillian
Scarecrow Press
McFarland
Polity Press
Alfred A. Knopf
Wiley Blackwell
Basic Books
Clarendon Press
John Wiley and Sons
Harper and Row
Pergamon Press
Random House
Springer

However, these books can be useful for non-academics as well because they contain original research and are thoroughly reviewed by other experts in the field prior to publication. To find information of interest in a scholarly book, try reading its table of contents to determine if a specific chapter focuses on your topic, or looking through the index in back for keywords related to your topic.

Scholarly Articles

Shorter scholarly work is published as articles in academic journals. Because every academic subfield has its own journals, you should never have a problem finding the best and most recent research on a topic.

Dissertations and Theses

Dissertations and theses are manuscripts written by PhD and master's degree candidates. These manuscripts are also peer-reviewed sources because they must be approved by a panel of soon-to-be peers in the author's field in order for them to graduate.

Reading Scholarly Sources

Because scholarly sources are written for experts in the author's particular field, they use technical jargon to communicate precisely. Therefore, these sources can be more challenging to read than popular sources. Too, much research is conducted by

quantitative researchers who rely on statistics to examine phenomena. As a result, reading scholarly sources takes more time and can be frustrating if you don't have the basic knowledge to understand a complex technical field.

However, with a little patience, you too can read scholarly work if you follow the steps below.

Learn to Skim

If you sit down and try to completely read every article or book you find, it will take you a very long time to get through all the information. Instead, first skim the source.

Read the introduction (and abstract if you are using an article from an academic journal). Introductions and abstracts will give you a good idea of the source's primary findings. If the first few paragraphs or the abstract don't sound like they're applicable to your topic, then the source is probably of no use to you. Be sure to make an entry in your research log about this discovery to prevent you from having to skim this source all over again.

If your source is a book, also look at the chapter **headings** in the table of contents. Chapter titles are more descriptive than fanciful so they will give you a good idea about what is included in each. Reading the chapter titles could lead you directly to the part of the book that contains the information most relevant to your project.

Next, skim through the subheadings in the article or book chapter. **Subheadings** break down the articles and chapters by major ideas. Subheadings are usually in bold or italic type. The subheadings can lead you directly to the part of the article or book chapter most relevant to your research. If you read the headings and subheadings and nothing jumps out as relevant, that's another indication that there may not be anything useful in that source.

If a subheading seems relevant to your topic, read the first sentence of every paragraph in that segment. The first sentence of each paragraph is the **topic sentence**, which is basically a paragraph's thesis statement: well-written topic sentences tell the reader what the entire paragraph is about. Skimming the topic sentences can give you a better overview of the segment's contents as well as bring you an exact place in the segment where you will find the information that you are looking for.

Also look for tables, charts, graphs, and figures, elements of some articles and books that put data into a format that allows the reader to understand how the information compares to other datasets.

Write down any words or phrases that you do not understand and Google them later. This is how you build your vocabulary so that you will have less trouble reading subsequent scholarly sources on the topic.

Lastly, take good notes while you're skimming. Whenever you find relevant information in a source, note the location and type of that information in your research log so that you can return to the source later.

Read Bibliographies/Reference Pages

After you've finished reading scholarly (and even some non-scholarly sources), look at the bibliography or reference page at the end to see who that author cited. Often the sources cited by others can lead you to even better sources than the ones you found initially.

Ask for Help

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Reference librarians are there to help you locate resources.

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7.6: Research on the Internet

Many of the techniques you use to improve your library searches can help you online too. Keeping phrases together with quotation marks works on many sites, and you can use the minus sign (-) to filter out search terms you'd prefer not be included. Date range filters and other limiters are available too, helping you narrow your search down even further.

Finding information online is relatively simple, so the challenge researchers face is determining what information is useful and whether it's credible. A quick assessment is easy, and here are a few questions to guide you:

- Is the information current relative to your needs? Information in a rapidly-changing field like science or medicine can quickly become outdated. Even social science research is time-sensitive. Laws and demographics can change quickly, and you'll want to be sure the information you're using is up-to-date.
- Does the information address your topic? You may not find any single source that directly addresses all facets of your approach to a topic. You can, however, use information from multiple sources to support different parts of your work.
- Who is the source of information? The advice of an expert in a subject may be more valuable than the opinion of a layperson. On the other hand, a salesperson may know a lot about their product, but their perspective is informed by their goal of making a sale. With this in mind, you may ask yourself why was this information created?

The trustworthiness of information you find on the Internet can be harder yet to discern. While a source may have a current date listed, seem to offer relevant information, and claim to be an expert, it's important to go beyond the information they give about themselves and verify that you can believe that they are honestly representing themselves and the information they offer.

Some advice on how to effectively evaluate online information is offered by Washington State University Professor Michael Caulfield (2017), suggests four steps from his online textbook Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers:

1. Check for previous work: Look around to see if someone else has already fact-checked the claim or provided a synthesis of research. Dubious claims can quickly be debunked with a Google search. Some websites that are dedicated to fact-checking include FactCheck.org, Politifact, and Snopes. The first two are focused on political claims, while the third addresses stories from various sources.
2. 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. You can achieve this by identifying where the information originated. If an article is describing a scientific study, tracking down the original study may reveal that its significant findings weren't accurately represented.
3. Read laterally: Once you get to the source of a claim, read what other people say about the source (publication, author, etc.). The truth is in the network. While some sources may claim to be experts in their subject areas, it may turn out that other experts in the field consider that source questionable.
4. 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. If you feel that you are overwhelmed by the amount of information, or can't tell if sources are actually still relevant to your topic, it might be time to start over, or seek assistance.

There are many "tests" or "sets of criteria" that you can find in textbooks and on websites for deciding if a website is reliable. Words and concepts such as currency, authority, accessing only certain domain names (.org or .edu as opposed to .com), and inclusion of a bibliography or references section are common. Another is writing style: does the writing style show bias (such as use of name-calling or loaded language) or poor grammar and editing? These are all good signs that your site may have an agenda beyond fair presentation of facts. However, your site may seem to pass muster on first sight but not really provide what you need. That is why we have included the advice from Dr. Caulfield here. For more information on this topic, check out:

Hapgood.us

Chronicle.com

Papers.ssrn.com

Methods for Evaluating Sources Online

Library Clinician from University of Chicago, Kaitlyn Van Kampen (2025) suggest the SIFT and CRAAP methods for evaluating sources in her guide for evaluating sources:

The SIFT Method



The SIFT method is an evaluation strategy developed by digital literacy expert, Mike Caulfield, to help determine whether online content can be trusted for credible or reliable sources of information. All SIFT information on this page is adapted from his materials with a CC BY 4.0 license.

Determining if resources are credible is challenging. Use the SIFT method to help you analyze information, especially news or other online media.

S - Stop

Before you read or share an article or video, STOP!

Be aware of your emotional response to the headline or information in the article. Headlines are often meant to get clicks, and will do so by causing the reader to have a strong emotional response.

Before sharing, consider:

What you already know about the topic.

What you know about the source. Do you know it's reputation?

Before moving forward or sharing, use the other three moves: **I**nvestigate the Source, **F**ind Better Coverage, and **T**race Claims, Quotes, and Media back to the Original Context.

I - Investigate the Source

The next step before sharing is to Investigate the Source.

Take a moment to look up the author and source publishing the information.

What can you find about the author/website creators?

What is their mission? Do they have vested interests? Would their assessment be biased?

Do they have authority in the area?

Use **lateral reading**. Go beyond the 'About Us' section on the organization's website and see what other, trusted sources say about the source. You can use Google or Wikipedia to investigate the source.

Hovering(opens in new window) is another technique to learn more about who is sharing information, especially on social media platforms such as Twitter.

The Stanford Experiment

Watch the following videos to learn how to spot misinformation online:





F - Find Better Coverage

The next step is to Find Better Coverage or other sources that may or may not support the original claim.

Again, use lateral reading to see if you can find other sources corroborating the same information or disputing it.

What coverage is available on the topic?

Keep track of trusted news sources.

Many times, fact checkers have already looked into the claims. These fact-checkers are often nonpartisan, nonprofit websites that try to increase public knowledge and understanding by fact checking claims to see if they are based on fact or if they are biased/not supported by evidence.

FactCheck.org

Snopes.com

Washington Post Fact Checker

PolitiFact

T - Trace Claims, Quotes, and Media to their Original Context

The final step is to Trace Claims, Quotes, and Media to their Original Context.

When an article references a quote from an expert, or results of a research study, it is good practice to attempt to locate the original source of the information. Click through the links to follow the claims to the original source of information. Open up the original reporting sources listed in a bibliography if present

Was the claim, quote, or media fairly represented?

Does the extracted information support the original claims in the research?

Is information being cherry-picked to support an agenda or a bias?

Is information being taken out of context?

Remember, headlines, blog posts, or tweets may sensationalize facts to get more attention or clicks. Re-reporting may omit, misinterpret, or select certain facts to support biased claims. If the claim is taken from a source who took it from another source, important facts and contextual information can be left out. Make sure to read the claims in the original context in which they were presented.

When in doubt, contact an expert – like a librarian!.

The CRAAP Test

The CRAAP Test is an evaluation method that was designed by librarian Sarah Blakeslee at the Meriam Library California State Universiy, Chico. CRAAP stands for Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy and Purpose. This provides you with a method and list of questions to evaluate the nature and value of the information that you find.

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- Evaluating Information – Applying the CRAAP Test(opens in new window) (Document from Meriam Library - California State University, Chico)

C - Currency

The timeliness of the information:

When was the information published or posted?
Has the information been revised or updated?
Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?
Are the links functional?

R - Relevance

The importance of the information for your needs:

Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
Who is the intended audience?
Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?
Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research paper?

A - Authority

The source of the information:

Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?

.ac.uk = Academic institutions in the UK
.com = Commercial sites
.edu = Educational institutions
.gov = Government
.nhs.uk = Health information services in the UK
.org = Non-profit organizations
.mil = Military
.net = Network.

A - Accuracy

The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content:

Where does the information come from?
Is the information supported by evidence?
Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
Are there spelling, grammar or typographical errors?

P - Purpose

The reason the information exists:

What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain or persuade?
Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?
Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional or personal biases?

Resources

Caulfield, M. (2017, January 8). *Updated Resources for 2021*. Pressbooks.pub; Self-published. pressbooks.pub

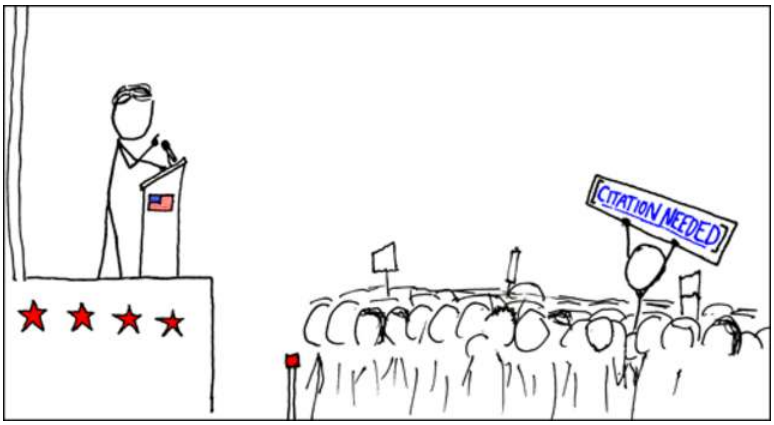
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7.7: Citing Sources



"File:Webcomic xkcd - Wikipedian protester.png"(opens in new window) by Randall Munroe is licensed under CC BY 2.5(opens in new window)

Most public speaking teachers will require you to turn in either a bibliography or a reference page with your speeches. In this section, we're going to explore how to properly cite your sources for a Modern Language Association (MLA) list of works cited or an American Psychological Association (APA) reference list. We're also going to discuss plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Why Citing Is Important

Citing enables readers to see where you found information used within a speech, article, or book. Citing your sources is one way that you demonstrate your credibility and integrity to your audience. When you cite your sources, you are showing your audience that your ideas are based in the most up to date ideas and best practices within your subject area as well as differentiating between your own insights and the intellectual property of others. Failing to cite your information properly, or at all, is considered plagiarism, which is representing someone's words or ideas as your own. Because plagiarism is a type of academic dishonesty, educational institutions have strict prohibitions against it.

APA versus MLA Source Citations

While there are numerous citation styles to choose from, the two most common style choices for public speaking are APA (American Psychological Association) and MLA (Modern Language Association). Scholars in the social sciences (e.g., psychology, human communication, business) tend to use **APA style**, while scholars in the humanities (e.g., English, philosophy, rhetoric) are more likely to use **MLA style**. The two styles are quite different from each other, so learning them does take time. Your instructor will tell you which citation style to use for citing your sources.

Purdue University's Online Writing Lab has a useful chart that explains the differences between APA and MLA Citation Style for different types of sources.

Citing Sources in a Speech

In this section, we'll discuss how to incorporate and cite outside sources in a speech. Citing sources within a speech is a three-step process: setting up the citation, incorporating the cited information, and explaining the citation. All three parts of this process are necessary to signal to your audience that you are going to support your claim with ideas or words that are not your own as well as explain how those ideas relate to your claim. Putting source material into your speech without framing it is "**drive-by quoting**," a practice that disorients your audience by not giving them everything they need to understand how the source is relevant to your own claims.

Setting up the Citation

First, you want to set up your audience for the citation. The setup is one or two sentences that put your source into context and signal to the audience that you are about to transition from your own ideas to someone else's.

For example:

Workplace bullying is becoming an increasing problem in the United States, and employers are reluctant to take steps to address this problem.

This statement introduces the basic topic and provides a context for the outside material you will use to support this observation.

Incorporating the Cited Information

The set up is followed by the cited information, which you can directly quote, paraphrase, or summarize. Directly quoting a source is to take a passage from it verbatim and enclose it in quotation marks to indicate that these words are not your own. Paraphrasing and summarizing are ways of restating the source's ideas in your own words. A **paraphrase** is approximately the same length as the original passage, while a summary is a shorter version of the original passage. Because paraphrases and summaries are written in your own words, you do not enclose them in quotations.

Important! While paraphrases and summaries of sources are written in your own words, you must still cite the original author because you are using someone else's ideas.

Direct Quotation: Workplace bullying is becoming an increasing problem in the United States, and employers are reluctant to take steps to address this problem. In their 2009 report "Bullying: Getting Away with It," the Workplace Bullying Institute found that "doing nothing to the bully (ensuring impunity) was the most common employer tactic (54%)."

Paraphrase: Workplace bullying is becoming an increasing problem in the United States, and employers are reluctant to take steps to address this problem. According to a 2009 study by the Workplace Bullying Institute entitled "Bullying: Getting Away with It," 54 percent of employers took no action against bullies after workers reported a problem.

In both of these cases, the source information is first introduced by citing the author—in this case, the Workplace Bullying Institute. We then provided the title of study. You could also provide the name of the article, book, podcast, movie, or other source.

Let's look at another example of direct quotations and paraphrases, this time using a person, rather than an institution, as the author.

Direct Quotation: In her book The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know, Mary George, senior reference librarian at Princeton University's library, defines insight as something that "occurs at an unpredictable point in the research process and leads to the formulation of a thesis statement and argument. Also called an 'Aha' moment or focus."

Paraphrase: In her book The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know, Mary George, senior reference librarian at Princeton University's library, tells us that insight is likely to come unexpectedly during the research process; it will be an "aha!" moment when we suddenly have a clear vision of the point we want to make.

Notice that the same basic pattern for citing sources was followed in both cases.

Explaining the Citation

One of the biggest mistakes of novice public speakers (and research writers) is incorporating cited material without explaining how it supports their claim, or "hit and run" quoting. The cited material does not speak for itself. It's your job as writer and speaker to explain how the quotation or paraphrase supports your claim. Don't force your audience draw their own conclusions: help them make the connections you want them to make.

In the examples below, the material that explains the significance of the paraphrase or quote is in **bold type.**

Bullying Example Direct Quote: Workplace bullying is becoming an increasing problem in the United States, and employers are reluctant to take steps to address this problem. In their 2009 report "Bullying: Getting Away with It," the Workplace Bullying Institute found that "doing nothing to the bully (ensuring impunity) was the most common employer tactic (54%)." **Clearly, organizations need to be held accountable for investigating bullying allegations. If organizations will not voluntarily improve their handling of this problem, the legal system may be required to step in and enforce sanctions for bullying, much as it has done with sexual harassment.**

Bullying Example Paraphrase: Workplace bullying is becoming an increasing problem in the United States, and employers are reluctant to take steps to address this problem. According to a 2009 study by the Workplace Bullying Institute entitled "Bullying: Getting Away with It," 54 percent of employers took no action against bullies after workers reported a problem. **Clearly, organizations need to be held accountable for investigating bullying allegations. If organizations will not voluntarily improve their handling of this problem, the legal system may be required to step in and enforce sanctions for bullying, much as it has done with sexual harassment.**

Aha! Example Direct Quote: In her book The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know, Mary George, senior reference librarian at Princeton University's library, defines insight as something that "occurs at an unpredictable point in the research process and leads to the formulation of a thesis statement and argument. Also called an 'Aha' moment or focus." **As many of us know, reaching that "aha!" moment does not always come quickly, but there are definitely some strategies one can take to help speed up this process.**

Aha! Example Paraphrase: In her book The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know, Mary George, senior reference librarian at Princeton University's library, tells us that insight is likely to come unexpectedly during the research process; it will be an "aha!" moment when we suddenly have a clear vision of the point we want to make. **As many of us know, reaching that "aha!" moment does not always come quickly, but there are definitely some strategies one can take to help speed up this process.**

Notice how in both of our explanations we took the source's information and then added to the information to direct it for our specific purpose. In the bullying example, we then propose that businesses should either adopt workplace bullying guidelines or face legal intervention. In the the "aha!" example, we turn the quotation into a section on helping people find their thesis or topic. In both cases, we were able to use the information to support our claims.

Using Sources Ethically

The last section of this chapter is about using sources in an ethical manner. Whether you are using primary or secondary research, there are five basic ethical issues you need to consider.

Strategies to Avoid Plagiarism

1. First, and foremost, if the idea isn't yours, you need to cite where the information came from during your speech. Having the citation listed on a bibliography or reference page is only half of the correct citation. You must provide correct citations for all your sources within the speech as well.
2. Do your own work and use your own words. One of the goals of a public speaking class is to develop skills that you'll use in the world outside academia. When you are in the workplace and the "real world," you'll be expected to think for yourself, so you might as well start learning this skill now.
3. Allow yourself enough time to research the assignment so that you will have enough time to cite your sources. One of the most commonly cited excuses students give for plagiarism is that they didn't have enough time to do the research. In this chapter, we've stressed the necessity of giving yourself plenty of time. The more complete your research strategy is from the very beginning, the more successful your research endeavors will be in the long run. Remember, not having adequate time to prepare is no excuse for plagiarism.
4. Keep track of your sources by taking careful notes while you do your research. A common mistake that people can make is that they forget where information came from when they start creating the speech itself. Chances are you're going to look at dozens of sources when preparing your speech, and it is very easy to suddenly find yourself believing that a piece of information is "common knowledge" and not citing that information within a speech. This problem can be avoided by taking careful notes as you conduct your research, either with a pen and notebook or a Word document or spreadsheet. Write down the source of the information along with any key ideas or direct quotes that you might want to use. When you keep track of your sources, you're less likely to inadvertently lose sources and not cite them correctly.
5. Make sure to clearly differentiate your voice in the speech from the voice of specific authors of the sources you quote. The easiest way to do this is to set up a direct quotation or a paraphrase that includes the author and title of the source. Remember, audience members cannot see where the quotation marks are located within your speech text, so you need to clearly articulate with words and vocal tone when you are using someone else's ideas within your speech.
6. Learn how to cite sources correctly both in the body of your paper and in your List of Works Cited (Reference Page). Most public speaking teachers will require that you turn in either a bibliography or reference page on the day you deliver a speech. Many students make the mistake of thinking that the bibliography or reference page is all they need to cite information, and then they don't cite any of the material within the speech itself. A bibliography or reference page enables a reader or listener to find those sources after the fact, but you must also correctly cite those sources within the speech itself; otherwise, you are plagiarizing.
7. Quote accurately and sparingly. Paraphrase and summarize whenever possible. A public speech should be based on factual information and references, but it shouldn't be a string of direct quotations stitched together. Experts recommend that no more than 10 percent of a paper or speech be direct quotations (Menager-Beeley & Paulos, 2009). When selecting direct quotations, always ask yourself if the material could be paraphrased in a manner that would make it clearer for your

audience. If the author wrote a sentence in a way that is just perfect, and you don't want to tamper with it, then by all means directly quote the sentence. But if you're just quoting because it's easier than putting the ideas into your own words, this is not a legitimate reason for including direct quotations.

8. Paraphrase carefully. Modifying an author's words in this way is not simply a matter of replacing some of the words with synonyms. Instead, as Howard and Taggart explain in Research Matters, "paraphrasing force[s] you to understand your sources and to capture their meaning accurately in original words and sentences" (Howard & Taggart, 2010). Incorrect paraphrasing is one of the most common forms of inadvertent plagiarism by students. First and foremost, paraphrasing is putting the author's argument, intent, or ideas into your own words.
9. Do not patchwrite (patchspeak). Menager-Beeley and Paulos define patchwriting as "mixing several references together and arranging paraphrases and quotations to constitute much of the paper. In essence, the student has assembled others' work with a bit of embroidery here and there but with little original thinking or expression" (Menager-Beeley & Paulos, 2009). Just as students can patchwrite, they can also engage in patchspeaking. In patchspeaking, students rely completely on taking quotations and paraphrases and weaving them together in a manner that is devoid of the student's original thinking.
10. Summarize, don't auto-summarize. Some students have learned that most word processing programs have an auto-summary function. The auto-summary function will take a ten-page document and summarize the information into a short paragraph. When someone uses the auto-summary function, the words that remain in the summary are still those of the original author, so this is not an ethical form of paraphrasing. Also, auto summaries generated by word processing programs aren't always accurate summaries. Writing an accurate summary is a complex task best performed by a human brain.
11. Do not represent someone else's work as your own by reworking another student's speech or buying or downloading one from a speech mill. Presenting someone else's work as your own is also plagiarism as well as academic fraud. Penalties for academic fraud can be as severe as suspension or expulsion from your institution.

Don't Mislead Your Audience

If you know a source is clearly biased, and you don't spell this out for your audience, then you are purposefully trying to mislead or manipulate your audience. Instead, if the information may be biased, tell your audience that the information may be biased and allow your audience to decide whether to accept or disregard the information.

Give Author Credentials

You should always provide the author's credentials. In a world where anyone can say anything and have it published on the Internet or even publish it in a book, we have to be skeptical of the information we see and hear. For this reason, it's very important to provide your audience with background about the credentials of the authors you cite.

Use Primary Research Ethically

Lastly, if you are using primary research within your speech, you need to use it ethically as well. For example, if you tell your survey participants that the research is anonymous or confidential, then you need to make sure that you maintain their anonymity or confidentiality when you present those results. Furthermore, you also need to be respectful if someone says something is "off the record" during an interview. We must always maintain the privacy and confidentiality of participants during primary research, unless we have their express permission to reveal their names or other identifying information.

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7.8: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

This chapter emphasizes the importance of gathering reliable information through research for effective communication. It distinguishes between primary sources (original works) and secondary sources (analytical or interpretative). The selection of sources depends on the topic, audience, and context.We explored techniques for improving online searches, such as using quotation marks and minus signs, while emphasizing the importance of evaluating information credibility. Essential evaluation methods include the SIFT framework and the CRAAP Test, which focus on factors like currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose.

We highlighted the importance of libraries for researchers, emphasizing their curated resources and comprehensive access to academic materials through library catalogs and databases. Unlike free search engines, library resources require logins for remote use and include peer-reviewed articles in academic journals. Users can improve searches using specific techniques, and librarians are available for support.There are benefits of consulting a librarian for research assistance, including locating reliable sources and topic brainstorming. While librarians offer guidance, they do not conduct research. We suggested keeping a research log to track readings and citations, advocating for digital or handwritten formats, and summarizing each source. The use of cloud storage is recommended to prevent data loss.

Exercises

Speaking Ethically

Jonathan sat staring at his computer screen. The previous two days had been the most disastrous weekend of his entire life. First, his girlfriend broke up with him on Friday and informed him that she was dating his best friend behind his back. Then he got a phone call from his mother informing him that his childhood dog had been hit by a car. And if that wasn't enough, his car died on the way to work, and since it was his third unexcused absence from work, he was fired.

In the midst of all these crises, Jonathan was supposed to be preparing his persuasive speech for his public speaking class. Admittedly, Jonathan had had the two weeks prior to work on the speech, but he had not gotten around to it and thought he could pull it together over the weekend. Now at 1:00 a.m. on Monday morning, he finally got a chance to sit down at his computer to prepare the speech he was giving in nine and a half hours.

His topic was prison reform. He searched through a number of websites and finally found one that seemed really relevant. As he read through the first paragraph, he thought to himself, *this is exactly what I want to say*. After two paragraphs the information just stopped, and the website asked him to pay $29.95 for the rest of the speech. Without even realizing it, Jonathan had found a speech mill website. Jonathan found himself reaching for his wallet thinking, *well it says what I want it to say, so why not?*

1. If you were a student in Jonathan's class and he confided in you that he had used a speech mill for his speech, how would you react?
2. If you were Jonathan, what ethical choices could you have made?
3. Is it ever ethical to use a speech written by a speech mill?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Organizing and Outlining Your Speech

8.1: Learning Objectives
8.2: Why We Need Organization in Speeches
8.3: Patterns of Organization
8.4: Connective Statements
8.5: Outlining
8.6: Conclusion and Exercises

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8.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Explain why organization is necessary and valuable to public speaking;
2. Differentiate the different types of organizational patterns;
3. Choose an organizational pattern that is most logical to the speech's specific purpose;
4. Construct an outline for an extemporaneous speech;
5. Create connective statements that will help the audience understand the logic and structure of a speech.

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8.2: Why We Need Organization in Speeches

Have you had this experience? You have an instructor who is easy to take notes from because they help you know the main ideas and give you cues as to what is most important to write down and study for the test. And then you might have an instructor who tells interesting stories, says provocative things, and leads engaging discussions, but you have a really hard time following where the instruction is going. Which then makes it difficult to remember class discussions or even know what to study for the exam. If so, you already know that structure makes a difference for your own listening and learning. In this chapter we will examine why that is true and how you can translate that type of structure to your own speeches

Significant psychological and communication research has been done about how an audience needs and desires clear organization in a speech as they listen. First, as we listen, we have limits as to how many categories of information we can keep in mind. You have probably heard that this number of items or categories is seven, or as one source says, “seven plus or minus two” (Miller, 1956; Gabriel and Mayzner, 1963; Cowan, Chen, & Rouder, 2004). In public speaking, to be on the safe side, the “minus two” is advised: in other words, you should avoid having more than five main points in a speech, and that would only be for a speech of greater length where you could actually support, explain, or provide sufficient evidence for five points. For most speeches that you would give in class, where you have about 5-7 minutes, three points is probably safe territory, although there could be exceptions, of course. It is also acceptable for short speeches to just have two main points, **if doing so supports your specific purpose**. That last phrase is bolded for emphasis because ultimately, your organization is going to depend on your specific purpose.

Second, the categories of information should be distinct, different, and clear. You might think about organization in public speaking as having three steps. These steps are grouping, labeling, and ordering (putting into a good order). We will return to the order of parts and labeling sections of the speech later in the chapter. Before you can label your main points clearly or put them in the right order, you have to group your information.

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). Yun, Costantini, and Billingsley (2012) also found a side benefit to learning to be an organized public speaker: your writing skills will improve, specifically your organization and sentence structure. This was no surprise to one of the authors, whose students often comment that they were able to organize their essays and papers for other classes much better after learning good organization principles for speaking.

Grouping

Here we might use the analogy of having a yard sale at your home, something you might have done or helped a family member to do. The first step, before putting up signs or pricing items, is to go through your closets and garage and creating “piles” of items: what you want to sell, what should probably just be discarded, what you want to keep but store elsewhere, what you might want to give away. Then you take the “sell” pile and separate it into categories such as children’s items, tools, kitchen items, furniture, etc. This second phase of sorting items is so you can put them outside on your lawn or driveway in a way people expect to see items and would be more likely to buy. You would probably not sort items by color or size, although you could. It’s just that your customers are not looking for “blue” items or “big” items as much as they are looking for kitchen items, baby clothes, or furniture.

One of the authors frequently does the following exercise in class. She has all the students take some object from their pocket, purse, or backpack and place it on a table at the front of the room. (It’s interesting what gets put on the table!). Then she has the students gather around and look at the items and “group them”–put them into categories, with each group having at least two items and all items being put in some group. Afterward, she gets the different grouping schema and discusses them. Of course, most of the groups are “correct,” even if just based on color. However, she then asks, “If you had to communicate to a classmate who is absent what is on the table, which schema or grouping pattern would you use?” The point is that grouping can be done on the basis of many characteristics or patterns, but some are clearer and better for communicating. By the way, the “functionality” pattern usually wins.

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; Whitman & Timmis, 1975; Daniels & Whitman, 1981). How does this work in practice? When you are doing your research, you 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. That is exactly what you do when you group anything, such as the items at a yard sale, where you group according to

customer interest and purpose of the items. Finally, if a piece of information you found doesn't fit into a group as you do your research, it may just not belong in the speech. It's what we would call "extraneous."

A good example of this principle is if you are doing a demonstration speech. It may or may not be required in your class but is the kind of speech you may be called upon to do in your future work. For example, a nurse may be teaching patients how to do self-care for diabetes, or a computer trainer may be showing how to use software. The temptation is to treat the procedure as a list of steps, which may number as many as twenty or thirty steps.

There are very few times we can remember a list of twenty or thirty items. Yes, you learned the alphabet of 26 letters when you were a child, or all the state capitals, but you have probably forgotten how long it took. Plus, you probably learned a song to help with the alphabet, and you also did not understand the point of the alphabet; it was just something you did with other children or to please your parents. In the case of the state capitals, you probably used flashcards or memory aids.

Adult learning and listening is different. We need information "chunked" or grouped into manageable categories. So, instead of listing twenty or thirty discrete steps in the process you are demonstrating or explaining, you would want to group the steps into three to five logical categories to help the audience's reception and retention of the message, using the separate minor steps as "subpoints."

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8.3: Patterns of Organization

At this point, then, you should see how much your audience needs organization. You also know that as you do research, you will group together similar pieces of information from different sources in your research. As you group your research information, you will want to make sure that your content is adhering to your specific purpose statement and will look for ways that your information can be grouped together into categories.

At this point we will address the next step of organization, ordering, and return to labeling later. However, in actually composing your speech, you would want to be sure that you name or label your groups of ideas and content clearly for yourself and then even more clearly for your audience. Labeling is an iterative process, which means you may "tweak" how you label your main points for clarity as you progress in the speech.

Interestingly, there are some standard ways of organizing these categories, which are called "patterns of organization." In each of the examples below, you will see how the specific purpose gives shape to the organization of the speech and how each one exemplifies one of the six main organizational patterns. In each example, only the three to five main sections or "points" (Roman numerals) are given, without the other essential parts of the outline.

Please note that these are simple, basic outlines for example purposes, and your instructor will, of course, expect much more content from the outlines you submit for class.

Chronological

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

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

The example above uses what is termed the **chronological pattern of organization**. Chronological always refers to time order. Since the specific purpose is about stages, it is necessary to put the four stages in the right order. It would make no sense to put the fourth stage second and the third stage first. However, chronological time can be long or short. If you were giving a speech about the history of the Civil Rights Movement, that period would cover several decades; if you were giving a speech about the process of changing the oil in a car, that process takes less than an hour. The process described in the speech example above would also be long-term, that is, one taking several months or years. The commonality is the order of the information.

In addition, chronological speeches that refer to processes can be given for two reasons. First, they can be for understanding. The speech about recovery is to explain what happens in the addiction recovery process, but the actual process may never really happen to the audience members. That understanding may also lead them to more empathy for someone in recovery. Second, chronological or process speeches can be for action and instruction. For a speech about changing the oil in a car, your purpose is that the audience could actually change the oil in their cars after listening to the speech.

One of the problems with chronological speeches is, as mentioned before, that you would not want just a list of activities. 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:

1. The movement saw African-Americans struggling for legal recognition before the Brown v. Board of Education decision.
2. The movement was galvanized and motivated by the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
3. 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 more than two decades, but that could be overwhelming for the audience. In this outline, the audience is focused on the three events that pushed it forward, rather than the persons involved in the movement. You could give a speech with a focus on people, but it would be different and probably less chronological and more topical (see below).

We should say here that, realistically, the example given above is still too broad. It would be useful, perhaps, for an audience with almost no knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement, but too basic and not really informative for other audiences. Just one of the Roman numeral points would probably be a more specific focus.

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.

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

In this example, the content is moving from northern to southern Italy, as the word "regional" would indicate. Here is a good place to note that grouping or "chunking" in a speech helps simplicity, and to meet the principle of KISS (Keep It Simple, Speaker). 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, and while the regions would be distinct for a "foodie" or connoisseur of Italian cooking, for a beginner or general audience, three is a good place to start. You could at the end of the speech note that more in-depth study would show the twenty regions, but that in your speech you have used three regions to show the similarities of the twenty regions rather than the small differences.

For a more localized example:

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

1. The East Wing includes the entrance ways and offices for the First Lady.
2. The most well-known part of the White House is the West Wing
3. The residential part of the White House is on the second floor.

(The emphasis here is the movement a tour would go through.)

For an even more localized example:

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

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

The key to spatial organization is to be logical in progression rather than jumping around, as in this example:

1. The Native Americans of Middle Georgia were primarily the Creek nation.
2. The Native Americans of North Georgia were of the Cherokee tribe nation.
3. The Native Americans of South Georgia were mostly of the Hitchiti and Oconee tribes.

It makes more sense to start at the top (north) of the state and move down (south) or start at the bottom and move up rather than randomly discuss unconnected areas.



Topical/Parts of the Whole

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

Specific Purpose: To explain to my freshmen students the concept of SMART goals.

1. SMART goals are specific and clear.
2. SMART goals are measurable.
3. SMART goals are attainable or achievable.
4. SMART goals are relevant and worth doing.
5. SMART goals are time-bound and doable within a time period.

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

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

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

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

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

First, you might look at the example about the chambers of the heart and say, “But couldn’t that be chronological, too, since that’s the order of the blood flow procedure?” Yes, it could. There will be times when a specific purpose could work with two different organizational patterns. In this case, it’s just a matter of emphasis. This speech is emphasizing the anatomy of the heart; if the speech’s specific purpose were “To explain to my classmates the flow of blood through the chambers of the heart,” the organizational pattern would be chronological but very similar. However, since the blood goes to the lungs to be oxygenated before coming back to the left atrium, that might alter the pattern some.

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

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

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

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

Cause/Effect Pattern

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

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

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

It should be noted, however, that a specific purpose like this example is very broad and probably not practical for your class speeches; it would be better to focus on just causes or effects, or even just one type of cause (such as genetic causes of schizophrenia) or one type of effect (relational or social). These two examples show a speech that deals with causes only and effects only, respectively.



Specific Purpose: To explain to my fellow Biology 1107 students the origin of the Ebola epidemic in Africa in 2014.

1. The outbreak began in March 2014 in Guinea with the death of one-year-old child who played in a tree with infected bats.
2. The virus next spread to Sierra Leone and Liberia.
3. In Fall of 2014 it spread to the U.S. and Europe by travelers from Liberia.

Specific Purpose: To describe to my classmates the effects of a diagnosis of diabetes on a child's life.

1. A diabetes diagnosis will affect the child's diet.
2. A diabetes diagnosis will affect the child's physical activity.
3. A diabetes diagnosis will affect the child's overall health.

Problem-Solution Pattern

The problem-solution pattern will be explored in more depth in the chapter on Persuasive Speaking because that is where it is used the most. Then, we will see that there are variations on it. The principle behind problem-solution pattern is that if you explain a problem to an audience, you should not leave them hanging without solutions. Problems are discussed for understanding and to do something about them.

Additionally, when you want to persuade someone to act, the first reason is usually that something is wrong! Even if you wanted your friends to go out to get some dinner, and they have recently eaten, you will probably be less successful because there is no problem for them—they are not hungry. Then you would have to come up with a new problem, such as you will miss their presence, which they may or may not see as a problem for them.

In another real-life example, let's say you want the members of the school board to provide more funds for music at the three local high schools in your county. What is missing because music or arts are not funded? What is the problem?

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

1. There is a problem with eliminating extracurricular music programs in high schools.
   A. Students who do not have extracurricular music in their lives have lower SAT scores.
   B. Schools that do not have extracurricular music programs have more gang violence and juvenile delinquency.
2. The solution is to advocate for an increase of $200,000 in the budget to sustain extracurricular music in our high schools.
   A. $120,000 would go to bands.
   B. $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.

Problem-Cause-Solution Pattern

A variation of the problem-solution pattern, and one that sometimes requires more in-depth exploration of an issue, is the "problem-cause-solution" pattern. If you were giving a speech on future extinction of certain animal species, it would be

insufficient to just explain that numbers of species are about to become extinct. Your second point would logically have to explain the cause behind this happening. Is it due to climate change, some type of pollution, encroachment on habitats, disease, or some other reason? In many cases, you can't really solve a problem without first identifying what caused the problem. This is similar to the organizational pattern called Monroe's Motivated Sequence (German, Gronbeck, Ehninger & Monroe, 2012), which will be fully explained in Chapter 16. The Monroe's Motivated Sequence requires a discussion of cause to create a logical speech.

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

1. There is a problem in this country with young drivers getting into serious automobile accidents leading to many preventable deaths.
2. One of the primary causes of this is younger drivers' inability to remain focused and make good decisions due to incomplete brain development.
3. One solution that will help reduce the number of young drivers involved in accidents would be to advocate to raise the age for obtaining a diver's license to 18.

Some Additional Principles of Organization

It is possible that you may use more than one of these organizational patterns within a single speech. For example, the main points of your speech could be one organizational pattern and the subpoints a different one. In the spatial example above about the Native American nations of Georgia, the subpoints might be chronological (emphasizing their development over time), or they could be topical (explaining aspects of their culture).

You should also note that in all of the examples to this point (which have been kept simple for the purpose of explanation), each main point is relatively equal in emphasis; therefore, the time spent on each should be equal as well. While you are not obliged to spend exactly the same amount of time on each main point, the time spent (and the importance of the main point) should be about the same. You would not want your first Main Point to be 30 seconds long, the second one to be 90 seconds, and the third 3 minutes. For example:

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

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

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

To give another example, let's say you want to give a commemorative (or tribute) speech about a local veteran whom you admire.

1. James Owens is an admirable person because he earned the Silver Star in the Korean War.
2. James Owens is an admirable person because he served our community as a councilman for 25 years.
3. James Owens is an admirable person because he rescued five puppies who were abandoned in his backyard.

Although Main Point 3 is a good thing to do, it's really not equal to Main Points 1 and 2 in importance or in the amount of time you would need to spend on it.

Earlier in the chapter, we said that organizing a speech involves grouping, labeling, and ordering. Let's address labeling here. You will also notice that in most of the examples so far, the main points are phrased using a similar sentence structure. For example, "The first chamber in the blood flow is…" "The second chamber in the blood flow is…" This simple repetition of sentence structure is called **parallelism**, a technique useful for speakers and helpful for the audience in remembering information. It is not absolutely necessary to use it and will not always be relevant, but parallelism should be used when appropriate and effective.

In relation to the way each main point is written, notice that they are full grammatical sentences, although sometimes short and simple. For purposes of preparation, this is a good habit, and your instructor will probably require you to write your main points in full sentences. Your instructor may also expect you to write your subpoints in complete sentences as well, but they will discuss that with you during your course.

Finally, in the way you phrase the main points, be sure they are adequate labeled and clearly explain your content. Students are often tempted to write main points as directions to themselves, "Talking about the health department" or "Mention the solution."

This is not helpful for you, nor will your instructor be able to tell what you mean by those phrases. “The health department provides many services for low-income residents” says something we can all understand.

References

German, K. M., Gronbeck, B. E., Ehninger, D., & Monroe, A. H. (2012). Principles of public speaking (18th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

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8.4: Connective Statements

At this point, you may be thinking that preparing for public speaking does not always follow a completely linear process. In writing the specific purpose statement, you might already have a predetermined structure, and if so, the central idea or thesis sentence flows simply from the specific purpose statement and structure. In other instances, the process may not be as direct and you will need to think more deeply about the best way to organize your speech and write your central idea. Some of the examples shown above, such as the one about the chambers of the heart, fall into the "easy-to-follow" category, but others, such as the development of the Civil Rights movement, would be less easy to follow.

Also at this point, we have worked on the core of the speech: the purpose, the main idea or thesis, and the key main points, also referred to as "Roman numerals" because traditional outline format uses I. through V. for them. You will notice that we have not addressed the introduction or the conclusion. You will find that information in Chapter 9. That information is in a separate chapter and placed later because it is important and needs special emphasis, not because it is unimportant. Basically, you cannot write an introduction if you do not know what you are introducing. For that reason, even if you are tempted to write your introduction first, you should probably wait until the "core" or "body" of your speech is fairly solid in your mind.

However, there is one aspect beyond the introduction and conclusion that you should prepare and not leave to chance or "ad lib" during the speech. (In fact, you really should not leave anything to chance or "ad lib" in this stage of your development as a public speaker.) That aspect is the connective statements, the subject of the next section.

Connectives or "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 that add to the planned redundancy, and they are methods for helping the audience listen, retain information, and follow your structure. In fact, it is one thing to have a well-organized speech. It is another for the audience to be able to "consume" or understand that organization.

Connectives in general 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?
- 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," "internal previews" or "bridging statements." 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.

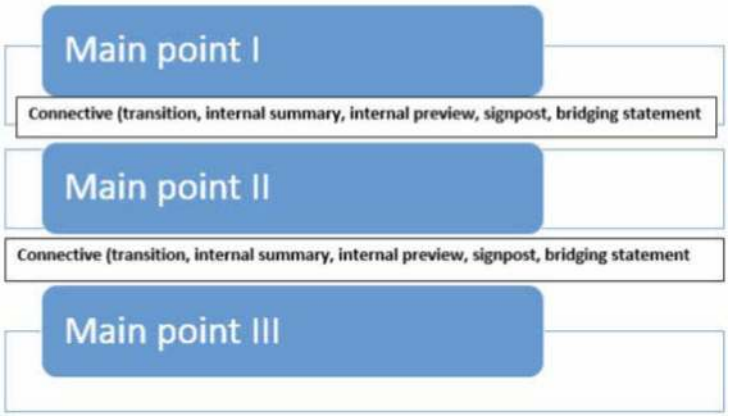


Figure 8.4.1: Visual of Connectives

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.

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

At a 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.

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



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

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

There is no standard format for connectives. In any speech there would be multiple ways to help the audience move with you, understand your logic, keep their attention, and remind them of where they have been and where they are going. However, there are a few pieces of advice to keep in mind about connectives.

First, connectives are for connecting. They are not for providing evidence. Save statistics, stories, examples, or new factual information for the supporting points of the main ideas of the speech. Use the connectives for the purposes listed above (review, psychological emphasis, etc.) not to provide new examples, facts, or support.

Second, remember that connectives in writing can be relatively short—a word or phrase. In public speaking, connectives need to be a sentence or two. When you first start preparing and practicing connectives, you may feel that you are being too obvious with them and they are "clunky." Some connectives may seem to be hitting the audience over the head with them like a hammer. While it is possible to overdo connectives, and we have heard speakers do so, it is less likely than you would think. The audience will appreciate them, and as you listen to your classmates' speeches, you will become aware of when they are present and when they are absent. Lack of connectives results in hard-to-follow speeches where the information seems to come up unexpectedly or the speaker seems to jump to something new without warning or clarification.

The third piece of advice is that your instructor may want you to include connectives on your outlines in some way to help you start thinking about them. More experienced public speakers have developed the ability to think of transitions, internal previews and summaries, and signposts on the spot, but that skill takes many years to develop.

Fourth, you will also want to vary your connectives and not use the same one all the time. A popular transitional method is the question, such as:

- *"Now that you know what was in the first chamber of the King Tut's tomb, you are probably asking, what is in the second tomb? I am glad you asked."*

While this method can occasionally be clever, usually it is not; it is just annoying. The audience didn't ask, so you don't want to put words in their mouths. Or this:

- *"The first, outer layer of the skin is the epidermis, the protection for what lies beneath. But what does lie beneath the epidermis?"*

You should also want to avoid the word "so" too much or repeatedly.

Finally, up to this point we have only discussed connectives between the main points. In reality, you will want to think in terms of connectives between any list of subpoints. For example, going back to the example Problem-Solution speech about music in the high schools, you would want a shorter connecting phrase between Subpoint A and B under Main Point 1.

- *"Not only do students without band or choir have lower standardized college test scores, they get involved in more illicit activities."*

Admittedly, preparing connectives between subpoints is more difficult, but you also want to avoid jumping to the next idea without warning.

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8.5: Outlining

For the purposes of this class, 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. This is also most likely the outline that you will be required to turn in to your instructor on the days you give your speeches or in some cases, several days before you give the speech in class. Each instructor of public speaking has a slightly different method for approaching outlining. The examples given here are variations, so please attend to the exact specifications that your instructor may require.

Some instructors require students to label parts of the introduction, for example with “Attention getter” and “Credibility,” and some like the introduction to have Roman numeral points. Some may want the central idea statement underlined. Some versions of outlines consider the introduction Main Point I, and the conclusion the last main point. Some will expect all units to be full sentences, and some will require full sentences in the main points only. However, there are some parts of an extemporaneous speech outline that are always present: the introduction, the central idea/thesis statement, and preview of main points, the speech body with clearly labeled units, the connectives, and the conclusion.

You may wonder, “What’s the deal with outlines in speech class? Why can’t I just write out my speech in essay form?” There are good reasons for your instructor’s insistence on an outline, and your instructor may respond negatively if you hand in an essay instead of an outline.

In Chapter 12, which is on delivery, we look at the concept of extemporaneous speaking versus impromptu, manuscript, and memorized speeches. Most public speaking instructors in the United States focus their classes on extemporaneous speaking. Extemporaneous speaking requires a well-prepared outline. The outline requires you to clearly designate each part of the speech and use a system where the BIG IDEAS are distinct from the supporting or “smaller ideas.” Usually this is down with indentation to the left and certain symbols for each unit. If you have to edit the speech for time or for a particular audience, it’s much easier to subtract or add when you know the relative importance of the idea.

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 it just as the blueprint guides the building of the house. You do not live on a blueprint, but in a house built by a blueprint.

Speaking Outlines

It should be clear by now that the preparation outline is something you are moving away from as you practice your speech and get ready for the delivery. As mentioned before and will be mentioned later, you must give yourself adequate time to practice the delivery of your speech—which is why procrastination is one of a public speaker’s biggest enemies. As you practice, you will be able to summarize the full preparation outline down to more usable notes. You should create a set of abbreviated notes for the actual delivery. The more materials you take up with you to the lectern, the more you will be tempted to look at them rather than have eye contact with the audience, and that will affect your grade as well as your connection with the audience.

Your speaking notes should be in far fewer words than the preparation, in key phrases, and in larger letters than the preparation outline. Your speaking outline should provide cues to yourself to “slow down,” “pause,” or “change slide.” You may want to use 3X5, 4X6 or 5X7 cards (we prefer 3x5 cards because they are the easiest to hold while speaking) but again, keep them to a minimum. Your authors have seen many students get their stack of cards out of order and confuse themselves and the audience. Except for any quotations that you want to say exactly as the original, you will avoid long chunks of text. An example of speaking notes on cards is found in Figure 8.5.1. These three note cards would be relevant to the informative speech outline on haunted places in Gettysburg found at the end of Chapter 12.

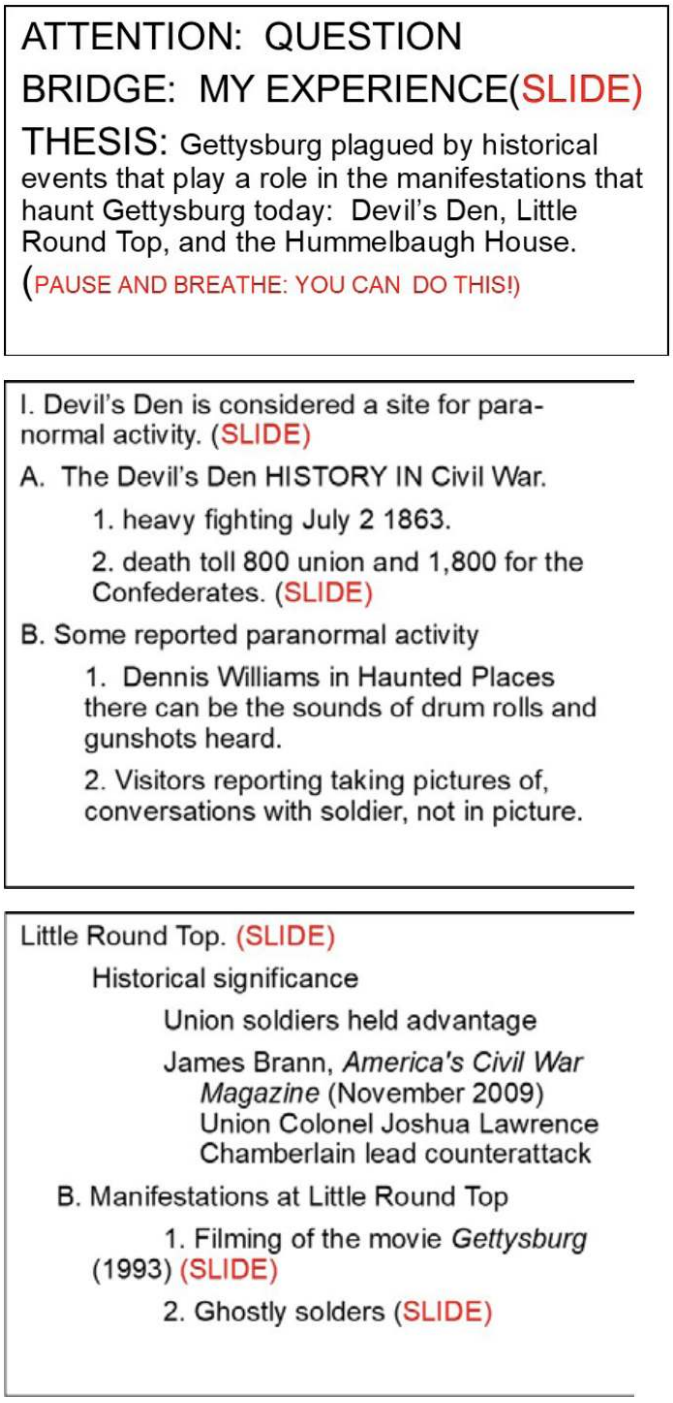


Figure 8.5.1: - Speaking Notes Example

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8.6: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

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

This chapter emphasized the significance of clear organization in public speaking for audience comprehension, suggesting that limiting main points to three to five enhances retention and "chunking" information to facilitate effective communication. We also referenced studies showing the impact of verbal organizational skills on learning and how public speaking classes improve writing abilities, highlighting the interconnectedness of communication forms and learning outcomes.

We explored the significance of organizing speech content for effective audience engagement, detailing various organizational patterns like chronological, spatial, topical, cause/effect, problem-solution, and problem-cause-solution. This underscores the need for clarity, simplicity, and coherence in structuring main points, using examples to illustrate how to categorize and present information logically.

We discussed the non-linear process of preparing for public speaking, emphasizing the importance of core components such as the purpose statement and central idea. And, highlighted the role of connectives—internal summaries, previews, transitions, and signposts—in clarifying speech structure without adding new information. Additionally, we stressed the need for variety in connectives to keep the audience engaged.

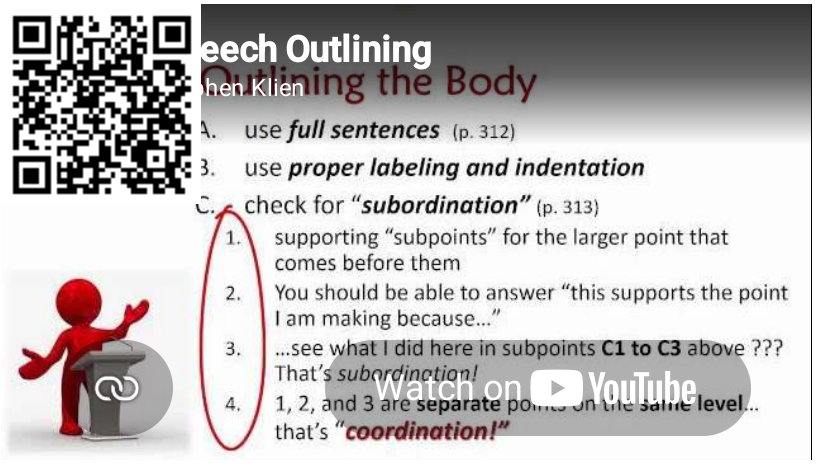
We explained two types of outlines for public speaking: preparation outlines, which are detailed and help organize thoughts, and speaking outlines, which are simplified for delivery. Practicing with both types is crucial for effective presentation and audience engagement. Outlines are essential tools in the speech preparation and delivery process.

Something to Think About

Listen to a speech by a professional speaker, such as a TED Talk, and see if you can detect their structure and use of transitions. Then talk about how they help (or don't) your understanding and retention of what they say.

Need help with getting started?

This video will guide you step-by-step through the process of creating an outline:



Case study

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

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

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

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Introductions and Conclusions Matter- How to Begin and End A Speech Effectively

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9.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, students will be able to:

1. List and explain the five basic functions of an introduction.
2. Understand how to use three factors of credibility in an introduction.
3. Understand the different tools speakers can use to gain their audience's attention.
4. Examine the three steps of an effective conclusion: restatement of the thesis, review of the main points, and concluding device.
5. Differentiate among Miller's (1946) concluding devices.

In a 2012 APA article, James Uleman, a psychology professor and researcher, stated, "'You don't get a second chance to make a first impression'" (Rowh, p. 32). As public speakers, we have an opportunity to make a solid first impression by crafting a compelling introduction. Ending a speech with a solid conclusion solidifies that good first impression we strive for.



Figure 8.1.1: Silicon Valley Leadership Group - CC BY NC-2.0

In this chapter, we discuss the most effective ways to make a positive impression on our audience through introductions and conclusions. A compelling introduction engages the audience and offers them a good reason to listen. A compelling conclusion reminds the audience of the relevance of the message. In addition to discussing the why it's important to have compelling introductions and conclusions, we offer various strategies to make introductions and conclusions as poignant as possible. In this chapter there are opportunities to analyze introductions and conclusions in order to assess their effectiveness.

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9.2: Five Functions of The Introduction



Figure 8.2.1: Brian Indrelunas – enter at your own risk – CC BY-NC 2.0.

The introduction for a speech is generally only 10 to 15 percent of the entire time the speaker will spend speaking. This means that if a speech is to be five minutes long, the introduction should be no more than forty-five seconds. If a speech is to be ten minutes long, then the introduction should be no more than a minute and a half. Unfortunately, that 10 to 15 percent of a speech can either make an audience interested in what we have to say or cause them to tune out before we've started. Overall, a good introduction should serve five functions, goals, and/or purposes. Let's examine each of these.

1: Gain Audience Attention and Interest

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

2: Introduce Your Topic and State Your Thesis

The second major function of an introduction is to introduce your topic to the audience. We all have sat through speeches, church sermons, class lectures and wondered what the speaker, preacher, and/or teacher was actually talking about. An introduction is important because it helps the speaker to be mindfully aware of explaining the topic of the speech to the audience. If the speaker doesn't know what their topic is and cannot convey that topic to the audience, then we've got really big problems! Robert Cavett, the founder of the National Speaker's Association, used the analogy of a preacher giving a sermon when he noted, "When it's foggy in the pulpit, it's cloudy in the pews."

As we discussed in Chapter 3 "Developing Your Topic", the specific purpose is the one idea we want our audience to remember when we are finished with our speech. The specific purpose is the rudder that guides your research, organization, and development of main points. The more clearly focused our purpose is, the easier our task will be in developing our speech. Whereas, a thesis statement is included in the speech and helps the audience by letting them know "in a nutshell" what a speaker is going to talk about. A good thesis statement will fulfill four basic functions: express specific purpose, provide a way to organize main points, make research more effective, and enhance delivery. In addition, a clear thesis provides the audience with a single, simple idea to remember even if they daydream during the body of our speech.

3. Establish Speaker Credibility

One of the most researched areas within the field of communication has been Aristotle's concept of *ethos* or credibility. First, and foremost, the concept of credibility must be understood as a perception of receivers. Essentially, the audience determines whether or not a speaker is credible, but a speaker has many opportunities to influence the audience's perception. Even if we think we are the most competent, caring, and trustworthy individuals, the audience has to believe it. As public speakers, we need to make sure that we explain to our audiences why we are credible speakers on a given topic.

James C. McCroskey and Jason J. Teven (1999) have conducted extensive research on credibility and have determined that an individual's credibility is composed of three factors: competence, trustworthiness, and caring/goodwill. **Competence** is the degree

to which a speaker is perceived to be knowledgeable or expert in a given subject by an audience member. Some individuals are given expert status because of positions they hold in society. For example, Dr. Vivek Murthy, the US Surgeon General during the Biden Administration, is expected to be competent in matters related to health and wellness as a result of being the United States' top physician.



Figure 8.2.2: Dr. Vivek Murthy - Public Domain

But what if we do not possess a fancy title that lends itself to established competence? We need to explain to the audience why we are competent to speak on our various topics. Keep in mind that even well-known speakers are not perceived as universally credible. US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy may be seen as competent on health and wellness issues, but may not be seen as a competent speaker on trends in Latin American music or different ways to cook summer squash. Like well-known speakers, we need to establish our credibility on each topic we address, so establishing our competence about the energy efficiency of furnace systems during an informative speech does not automatically mean we will be seen as competent on the topic of organ donation for a persuasive speech.

The second factor of credibility noted by McCroskey and Teven is **trustworthiness**, or the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as honest. Nothing will turn an audience against a speaker faster than if the audience believes the speaker is lying. When an audience does not perceive a speaker as trustworthy, the information coming out of the speaker's mouth is automatically perceived as deceitful. The speaker could be 100 percent honest, but the audience will still find the information suspect. For example, in the summer of 2009, many Democratic members of Congress attempted to hold public town-hall meetings about health care. For a range of reasons, many of the people who attended these town-hall meetings refused to let their elected officials actually speak because the audiences were convinced that the members of Congress were lying.

In these situations, where a speaker is in front of a very hostile audience, there is little a speaker can do to reestablish that sense of trustworthiness. These public town-hall meetings became screaming matches between the riled-up audiences and the congressional representatives. Some police departments actually ended up having to escort the representatives from the buildings because they feared for their safety.These incidents serve to underscore how important speaker trustworthiness is across speaking contexts.

Caring/goodwill is the final factor of credibility noted by McCroskey and Teven. Caring/goodwill refers to the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as caring about the audience member. As noted by Wrench, McCroskey, and Richmond (2008), "If a receiver does not believe that a source has the best intentions in mind for the receiver, the receiver will not see the source as credible. Simply put, we are going to listen to people who we think truly care for us and are looking out for our welfare" (p. 33-34). As a speaker, then, we need to establish that our information is being presented because we care about our audience and are not just trying to manipulate them. We should note that research has indicated that caring/goodwill is the most important factor of credibility. This means that if an audience believes that a speaker truly cares about the audience's best interests, the audience may overlook some competence and trust issues.

4. Provides Audience Reasons to Listen

The fourth major function of an introduction is to establish a connection between the speaker and the audience, and one of the most effective means of establishing a connection with the audience, is to provide them with reasons why they should listen to the speech. The idea of establishing a connection is an extension of the notion of caring/goodwill. In the chapters on Language and Speech Delivery, we spend more time discussing how to establish a good relationship with the audience. However, this relationship starts the moment a speaker steps to the front of the room and begins speaking.

Instead of assuming the audience will make their own connections to the speech material, effective speakers should explicitly state how the information might be useful to the audience. Tell them directly how they might use the information themselves. Build a bridge to the audience by explicitly connecting the topic to their possible needs.

5. Previews Main Ideas

The last major function of an introduction is to preview the main ideas that will be covered in the body of the speech. A preview establishes the direction the speech will take. We sometimes call this process signposting because we're establishing signs for audience members to look for while we are speaking. In the most basic speech format, speakers generally have three to five major points they plan on making. During the preview, a speaker outlines what these three to five points will be, which demonstrates to the audience that the speaker is organized.

A study by Baker (1965) found that individuals who were unorganized while speaking were perceived as less credible than those individuals who were organized. Having a solid preview of the information contained within one's speech and then following that preview will definitely help a speaker's credibility. It also helps the audience keep track of where the speaker is in the speech if they momentarily daydream or get distracted.

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9.3: The Attention-Getter- The First Step of an Introduction

Carefully Consider the Importance of Your Attention-Getter

As we now know, a good introduction will capture an audience's attention, while a bad introduction can turn an audience against a speaker. An attention-getter is the device a speaker uses at the beginning of a speech to capture an audience's interest and make them interested in the speech's topic. Typically, there are four things to consider in choosing a specific attention-getting device:

1. Appropriateness or relevance to audience
2. Purpose of speech
3. Topic
4. Occasion

First, when selecting an attention-getting device, make sure that the strategy is actually appropriate and relevant to the specific audience. Different audiences will have different backgrounds and knowledge, so use audience analysis to determine whether specific information would be appropriate for a specific audience. For example, if giving a speech on family units to a group of individuals over the age of sixty-five, starting a speech with a reference to the television show *Gossip Girl* may not be the best idea because the television show may not be relevant to that audience.

Second, consider the basic purpose of the speech. As discussed earlier in this text, there are three basic purposes for giving a speech: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. When selecting an attention-getter, make sure to select one that corresponds with the basic purpose. If the goal is to entertain an audience, then starting a speech with a quotation about how many people are dying in Africa each day from malnutrition may not be the best way to get the audience's attention. Remember, one of the basic goals of an introduction is to prepare the audience for the speech. If the attention-getter differs drastically in tone from the rest of the speech, the disjointedness may cause the audience to become confused or tuned out.

The third consideration when picking an attention-getting device is the speech topic. Ideally, an attention-getting device should have a relevant connection to the speech. Imagine if a speaker pulled money out of his pocket, yelled "Free money!" and threw dollar bills at the audience in the beginning of a speech about the economy. While this may clearly get the audience's attention, this isn't really a good way to prepare an audience for a speech about bull and bear markets. Not every attention-getter is appropriate for a given topic.

The last consideration when picking an attention-getting device involves the speech occasion. Different occasions will necessitate different tones, or particular styles or manners of speaking. For example, a persuasive speech about death and dying shouldn't be happy and hilarious. An informative speech on the benefits of laughing shouldn't be dull, dreary, and depressing. When selecting an attention-getter, make sure that the attention-getter sets the tone for the speech.

Now that we've explored the four major considerations for selecting an attention-getter, let's look at a range of different attention-getters to employ. Miller (1946) discovered that speakers tend to use one of eleven attention-getting devices when starting a speech. The rest of this section is going to examine some of these eleven attention-getting devices.

Quotation

Another way to capture an audience's attention is to use the words of another person that relate directly to the speech topic. When researching for the speech, books and articles can provide those compelling quotations to begin a speech with. There are also a number of sources that compile useful quotations from noted individuals. Probably the most famous quotation book of all time is *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* (bartleby.com(opens in new window) now in its seventeenth edition. Here are some other websites that contain useful databases of quotations for almost any topic:

- quotationspage.com(opens in new window)
- bartleby.com(opens in new window)
- moviequotes.com(opens in new window)
- quoteland.com(opens in new window)

Quotations are a great way to start a speech, so let's look at an example that could be used for a speech on deception:

Oliver Goldsmith, a sixteenth-century writer, poet, and physician, once noted that "the true use of speech is not so much to express our wants as to conceal them."

Reference to Current Events

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

On January 10, 2007, Scott Anthony Gomez Jr. and a fellow inmate escaped from a Pueblo, Colorado, jail. During their escape the duo attempted to rappel from the roof of the jail using a makeshift ladder of bed sheets. During Gomez's attempt to scale the building, he slipped, fell forty feet, and injured his back. After being quickly apprehended, Gomez filed a lawsuit against the jail for making it too easy for him to escape.

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

Historical Reference

We can also capture our listeners' attention by referring to a historical event related to our topics. Obviously, this strategy is closely related to the previous one, except that instead of a recent news event we are reaching further back in history to find a relevant reference. For example, if we are giving a speech on the Iraq War that began in 2003, we could refer back to the Vietnam War as way of making a comparison:

During the 1960s and 1970s, the United States intervened in the civil strife between North and South Vietnam. The result was a long-running war of attrition in which many American lives were lost and the country of Vietnam suffered tremendous damage and destruction. Today, we see a similar war being waged in Iraq. American lives are being lost, and stability has not yet returned to the region.

In this example, the speaker is evoking the audience's memories of the Vietnam War to raise awareness of similarities to the war in Iraq.

Anecdote

Another device we can use to start a speech is to tell an anecdote related to the speech's topic. An anecdote is a brief account or story of an interesting or humorous event. Notice the emphasis here is on the word "brief." A common mistake speakers make when telling an anecdote is to make the anecdote too long. Remember, the entire introduction should only be 10 to 15 percent of a speech, so an attention-getter must be very short.

One type of anecdote is a real story that emphasizes a speech's basic message. For example, here is an anecdote a speaker could use to begin a speech on how disconnected people are from the real world because of technology:

In July 2009, a high school girl named Alexa Longueira 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 manhole (Whitney, 2009).

A second type of anecdote is a parable or fable. A parable or fable is an allegorical anecdote designed to teach general life lessons. The most widely known parables for most Americans are those given in the Bible and the best-known fables are Aesop's Fables (aesopfables.com(opens in new window). For the same speech on how disconnected people are with the real world because of technology, the speaker could have used the Fable of The Boy and the Filberts:

The ancient Greek writer Aesop told a fable about a boy who put his hand into a pitcher of filberts. The boy grabbed as many of the delicious nuts as he possibly could. But when he tried to pull them out, his hand wouldn't fit through the neck of the pitcher because he was grasping so many filberts. Instead of dropping some of them so that his hand would fit, he burst into tears and cried about his predicament. The moral of the story? "Don't try to do too much at once" (Aesop, 1881).

After recounting this anecdote, the speaker could easily relate the fable to the notion that the technology in our society leads us to try to do too many things at once.

While parables and fables are short and entertaining, their application to any speech topic should be clear. We'll talk about this idea in more detail later in this chapter when we discuss how to link an attention-getter explicitly to a topic.

Startling Statement

The next strategy we can use to start a speech is to surprise our audience with startling information about our 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 the topic. For example, if we are giving a speech about oil conservation, we could start by saying, "A Boeing 747 airliner holds 57,285 gallons of fuel." We 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, we could start a speech on the gambling industry by saying, "There are no clocks in any casinos in Las Vegas." We could start a speech on the Harlem Globetrotters by saying, "In 2000, Pope John Paul II became the most famous honorary member of the Harlem Globetrotters." All four of these examples came from a great website for strange facts (strangefacts.com(opens in new window)).

Although startling statements are fun, it is important to use them ethically. First, make sure that the startling statement is factual. The Internet is full of startling statements and claims that are simply not factual, so we have an ethical duty to ascertain its truth before we use it. Second, make sure that the startling statement is relevant to the speech and not just thrown in for shock value. We've all heard startling claims made in the media that are clearly made for purposes of shock or fear mongering. As speakers, we have an ethical obligation to avoid playing on people's emotions in this way.

Question

Another strategy for getting our audience's attention is to ask them a question. There are two types of questions commonly used as attention-getters: response questions and rhetorical questions. A response question is a question that the audience is expected to answer in some manner. For example, we could ask our audience, "Please raise your hand if you have ever thought about backpacking in Europe" or "Have you ever voted for the Electoral College? If so, stand up." In both of these cases, we are asking our audience to respond. A rhetorical question, on the other hand, is a question to which no actual reply is expected. For example, a speaker talking about the importance of HIV testing could start by asking the audience, "I have two questions that I'd like you to think about. How many students on this campus have had sexual intercourse? Of those who have had sex, how many have been tested for HIV?" In this case, the speaker does not expect the audience to give an estimate of the numbers of students that fit into each category but rather to think about the questions as the speech goes on.

Humor

Humor is another effective method for gaining an audience's attention. Humor is an amazing tool when used properly. We cannot begin to explain all the amazing facets of humor within this text, but we can say that humor is a great way of focusing an audience on what we are saying. However, humor is a double-edged sword. If we do not wield the sword carefully, we can turn our audiences against us very quickly. When using humor, we really need to know our audience and understand what they will find humorous. One of the biggest mistakes a speaker can make is to use some form of humor that the audience either doesn't find funny or finds offensive. Think about how incompetent the character of Michael Scott seems on the television program *The Office*, in large part because of his ineffective use of humor. We always recommend testing out humor of any kind on a sample of potential audience members prior to actually using it during a speech. For more guidelines on effective use of humor see Appendix B.



Figure 8.3.3: Thinkmedialabs – Audience laughing – CC BY-NC 2.0.

Now that we've offered warnings about the perils of using humor, let's talk about how to use humor as an attention-getter. Humor can be incorporated into several of the attention-getting devices already mentioned. We could use a humorous anecdote, quotation, or current event. As with other attention-getting devices, we need to make sure our humor is relevant to our topic, as one of the biggest mistakes some novices make when using humor is to add humor that really doesn't support the overall goal of the speech. So when looking for humorous attention-getters, we want to make sure that the humor is non-offensive to our audiences and

relevant to our speeches. For example, here's a humorous quotation from Nicolas Chamfort, a French author during the sixteenth century, "The only thing that stops God from sending another flood is that the first one was useless." While this quotation could be great for some audiences, other audiences may find this humorous quotation offensive (e.g., religious audiences). The Chamfort quotation could be great for a speech on the ills of modern society, but probably not for a speech on the state of modern religious conflict. We want to make sure that the leap from our attention-getters to our topics isn't too complicated for our audiences, or the attention-getter will backfire.

Personal Reference

Another attention getting device to consider is referencing a relevant personal story. Some of the best speeches are ones that come from personal knowledge and experience.

When using a personal example, don't get carried away with the focus on other aspects of life. The speech topic is the purpose of the attention-getter, not the other way around. Another pitfall in using a personal example is that it may be too personal for a speaker to maintain composure. For example, a student once started a speech about her grandmother by stating, "My grandmother died of cancer at 3:30 this morning." The student then proceeded to cry nonstop for ten minutes. While this is an extreme example, we strongly recommend that you avoid any material that could get you overly choked up while speaking. When speakers have an emotional breakdown during their speech, audience members stop listening to the message and become very uncomfortable.

Reference to Occasion

The last device we mention for starting a speech is to refer directly to the speaking occasion. This attention-getter is only useful if the speech is being delivered for a specific occasion. Many toasts, for example, start with the following statement: "Today we are here to honor X." In this case, the "X" could be a retirement, a marriage, a graduation, or any number of other special occasions. Because of its specific nature, this attention-getter is the least likely to be used for speeches being delivered for college courses.

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9.4: Putting It Together- Steps to Complete Your Introduction



Figiure 8.4.1: Erin Brown-John – puzzle – CC BY-NC 2.0.

Once we have captured our audience's attention, it's important to make the rest of our introduction interesting, and use it to lay out the rest of the speech. In this section, we are going to explore the five remaining parts of an effective introduction: linking to the topic, reasons to listen, stating credibility, thesis statement, and preview.

Give the Audience a Reason to Listen

Once we have linked an attention-getter to the topic of a speech, we need to explain why ther topic is important. We call this the "why should I care?" part of the speech because it tells our audience why the topic is directly important to them. Sometimes we can include the significance of our topics in the same sentence as our links to the topic, but other times we may need to spell out in one or two sentences why our specific topic is important.

People in today's world are very busy, and they do not like their time wasted. Nothing is worse than having to sit through a speech that is irrelevant. Imagine sitting through a speech about a new software package that no one owns and will never hear of again. How would we react to the speaker? Most of us would be pretty annoyed at having had our time wasted in this way. Obviously, this particular speaker didn't do a great job of analyzing her, his, or their audience if the audience isn't going to use the software package—but even when speaking on a topic that is highly relevant to the audience, speakers often totally forget to explain how and why it is important.

Appearing Credible

The next part of a speech is not so much a specific "part" as an important characteristic that needs to be pervasive throughout the introduction and the entire speech. As a speaker, we want to be seen as credible (competent, trustworthy, and caring/having goodwill). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, credibility is ultimately a perception that is made by the audience. While the audience determines whether they perceive us as competent, trustworthy, and caring/having goodwill, there are some strategies we can employ to make ourselves appear more credible.

First, to appear competent, we can either clearly explain to our audiences why we are competent about a given subject or demonstrate our competence by showing that we have thoroughly researched a topic by including relevant references within the introduction. The first method of demonstrating competence—saying it directly—is only effective if we are actually a competent person on a given subject. If an undergraduate student is delivering a speech about the importance of string theory in physics, unless they are a prodigy of some kind, they are probably not a recognized expert on the subject. Conversely, if another student's number one hobby in life is collecting memorabilia about the Three Stooges, then they may be an expert about the Three Stooges. However, they would need to explain to their audience their passion for collecting Three Stooges memorabilia and how this has made them an expert on the topic.

The second characteristic of credibility, trustworthiness, is a little more complicated than competence, for it ultimately relies on audience perceptions. One way to increase the likelihood that a speaker will be perceived as trustworthy is to use reputable sources. If quoting Dr. John Smith, then explain who Dr. John Smith is so the audience will see the quotation as being more trustworthy. As speakers, we can easily manipulate our sources into appearing more credible than they actually are, which would be unethical. When we are honest about our sources with our audience, they will trust us and our information more so than when we are ambiguous. The worst thing we can do is to out-and-out lie about information during a speech. Not only is lying highly unethical, but if we are caught lying, our audience will deem us untrustworthy and perceive everything we are saying as untrustworthy. Many speakers have attempted to lie to an audience because it will serve their own purposes or even because they believe their message is in their audience's best interest, but lying is one of the fastest ways to turn off an audience and get them to distrust both the speaker and the message.

The third characteristic of credibility to establish during the introduction is the sense of caring/goodwill. While some unethical speakers can attempt to manipulate an audience's perception that the speaker cares, ethical speakers truly do care about their audiences and have their audience's best interests in mind while speaking. Often speakers must speak in front of audiences that may be hostile toward the speaker's message. In these cases, it is very important for the speaker to explain that they really do believe their message is in the audience's best interest. One way to show that we have our audience's best interests in mind is to acknowledge disagreement from the start:

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

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

State Your Thesis

A thesis statement is a short, declarative sentence that states the purpose, intent, or main idea of a speech. A strong, clear thesis statement is very valuable within an introduction because it lays out the basic goal of the entire speech. We strongly believe that it is worthwhile to invest some time in framing and writing a good thesis statement. We suggest writing the thesis statement before we even begin conducting research for a speech. Even though it will be necessary to rewrite the thesis later, having a clear idea of purpose, intent, or main idea before beginning the research process will help focus on the most appropriate material. To help us understand thesis statements, we will first explore their basic functions and then discuss how to write a thesis statement.

Provide a Way to Organize Main Points

A thesis statement helps the audience get ready to listen to the arrangement of points that follow. Many speakers say that if they can create a strong thesis sentence, the rest of the speech tends to develop with relative ease. On the other hand, when the thesis statement is not very clear, creating a speech is an uphill battle.

When the thesis statement is sufficiently clear and decisive, it's clear where the speech will go.

Let's say we have a fairly strong thesis statement, and that we've already brainstormed a list of information that we know about the topic. Chances are our list is too long and has no focus. Using our thesis statement, we can select only the information that (1) is directly related to the thesis and (2) can be arranged in a sequence that will make sense to the audience and will support the thesis. In essence, a strong thesis statement helps us keep useful information and weed out less useful information.

Make Your Research More Effective

If we begin our research with only a general topic in mind, we run the risk of spending hours reading mountains of excellent literature about our topic. However, mountains of literature do not always make coherent speeches. We may have little or no idea of how to tie our research all together, or even whether we should tie it together. If, on the other hand, we conduct our research with a clear thesis statement in mind, we will be better able to zero in only on material that directly relates to our chosen thesis statement. Let's look at an example that illustrates this point:

- *Many traffic accidents involve drivers older than fifty-five.*

While this statement may be true, we could find industrial, medical, insurance literature that can drone on *ad infinitum* about the details of all such accidents in just one year. Instead, focusing our thesis statement will help us narrow the scope of information we will be searching for while gathering information. Here's an example of a more focused thesis statement:

- *Three factors contribute to most accidents involving drivers over seventy years of age: failing eyesight, slower reflexes, and rapidly changing traffic conditions.*

This framing is somewhat better. This thesis statement at least provides three possible main points and some keywords for your electronic catalog search. However, if we want our audience to understand the context of older people at the wheel, consider something like:

- *Mature drivers over seventy years of age must cope with more challenging driving conditions than existed only one generation ago: more traffic moving at higher speeds, the increased imperative for quick driving decisions, and rapidly changing ramp and*

cloverleaf systems. Because of these challenges, I want my audience to believe that drivers over the age of seventy should be required to pass a driving test every five years.

This framing of the thesis provides some interesting choices. First, several terms need to be defined, and these definitions might function surprisingly well in setting the tone of the speech. Definitions of words like “generation,” “quick driving decisions,” and “cloverleaf systems” could jolt our audiences out of assumptions they have taken for granted as truth.

Second, the framing of the thesis provides us with a way to describe the specific changes as they have occurred between, say, 1970 and 2010. How much, and in what ways, have the volume and speed of traffic changed? Why are quick decisions more critical now? What is a “cloverleaf,” and how does any driver deal cognitively with exiting in the direction seemingly opposite to the desired one? Questions like this, suggested by our own thesis statement, can lead to a strong, memorable speech.

Enhance Your Delivery

With a good clear thesis statement, our speech becomes clear to our listeners. When we stand in front of our audience presenting our introductions, we can vocally emphasize the essence of our speech, expressed as our thesis statement. Many speakers pause for a half second, lower their vocal pitch slightly, slow down a little, and deliberately present the thesis statement, the one sentence that encapsulates its purpose. When this is done effectively, the purpose, intent, or main idea of a speech is driven home for an audience.

How to Write a Thesis Statement

Now that we’ve looked at why a thesis statement is crucial in a speech, let’s switch gears and talk about how we go about writing a solid thesis statement.

Choose a Topic

As discussed in a previous chapter, choosing a topic is the first step in writing a speech. Once you have a general topic, you are ready to go to the second step of creating a thesis statement.

Narrow the Topic

One of the hardest parts of writing a thesis statement is narrowing a speech from a broad topic to one that can be easily covered during a five- to ten-minute speech. While five to ten minutes may sound like a long time to new public speakers, the time flies by very quickly when speaking. We can easily run out of time if our topics are too broad.

Put the Topic into a Sentence

Once we've narrowed our topics to something that is reasonably manageable given the constraints placed on our speeches, we can then formalize those topics as a complete sentence. Once we have a clear topic sentence, we can start tweaking the thesis statement to help set up the purpose of our speech.

Add the Argument, Viewpoint, or Opinion

This function only applies when giving a speech to persuade. If our topic is informative, our jobs are to make sure that the thesis statement is nonargumentative and focuses on facts. On the other hand, if our topic is persuasive, we want to make sure that our argument, viewpoint, or opinion is clearly indicated within the thesis statement.

Use the Thesis Checklist

Once we have written a first draft of our thesis statement, we are probably going to end up revising our thesis statements a number of times prior to delivering our actual speeches. A thesis statement is something that is constantly tweaked until the speech is given. As our speech develops, often our thesis will need to be rewritten to whatever direction the speech itself has taken. We often start with a speech going in one direction, and find out through our research that we should have gone in a different direction. When we think we finally have a thesis statement that is good to go for our speeches, we will take a second and make sure it adheres to the criteria shown in Table 8.4.1 “Thesis Checklist”

Table 8.4.1 Thesis Checklist

Thesis checklist

Instructions: For each of the following questions, check either “yes” or “no.”		Yes	No
1.	Does your thesis clearly reflect the topic of your speech?		
2.	Can you adequately cover the topic indicated in your thesis within the time you have for your speech?		
3.	Is your thesis statement simple?		
4.	Is your thesis statement direct?		
5.	Does your thesis statement gain an audience’s interest?		
6.	Is your thesis statement easy to understand?		
Persuasive Speeches			
7.	Does your thesis statement introduce a clear argument?		
8.	Does your thesis statement clearly indicate what your audience should do, how your audience should think, or how your audience should feel?		
Scoring: For a strong thesis statement, all your answers should have been “yes.”			

Preview of Speech

The final part of an introduction contains a preview of the major points to be covered within the speech. We've all seen signs that have three cities listed on them with the mileage to reach each city. This mileage sign is an indication of what is to come. A preview works the same way. A preview foreshadows what the main body points will be in the speech. For example, to preview a speech on bullying in the workplace, one could say, “To understand the nature of bullying in the modern workplace, I will first define what workplace bullying is and the types of bullying, I will then discuss the common characteristics of both workplace bullies and their targets, and lastly, I will explore some possible solutions to workplace bullying.” In this case, each of the phrases mentioned in the preview would be a single distinct point made in the speech itself. In other words, the first major body point in this speech would examine what workplace bullying is and the types of bullying; the second major body point in this speech would discuss the common characteristics of both workplace bullies and their targets; and lastly, the third body point in this speech would explore some possible solutions to workplace bullying.

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9.5: Analyzing an Introduction



Figure 8.5.1 Nilufer Godgieva – Writing Forever – CC BY-NC 2.0.

Thus far, this chapter has focused on how to create a clear introduction. We discussed why introductions are important and the six important functions of effective introductions. In this section we're going to examine an actual introduction to a speech. Before we start analyzing the introduction, please read the introduction paragraph that follows.

Smart Dust: Introduction

I. In 2002, the famed science fiction writer Michael Crichton released his book *Prey*, which was about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue.

A. The nanomachines were solar-powered, self-sufficient, and intelligent.

B. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it overtook and killed its prey in its need for new resources.

II. The technology for this level of sophistication in nanotechnology is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction

III. In 2000, three of my former professors of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley, Professors Kahn, Katz, and Pister, hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks* that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS: sensors, robots, or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration.

IV. By 2004, *Fortune Magazine* listed "smart dust" as the first in their "Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On."

V. Thus far researchers have hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and as a defense against bioterrorism.

VI. Today I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works, we will then examine some military applications of smart dust, and we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.

Now that you've had a chance to read the introduction to the speech on smart dust, read it over a second time and look for the five parts of the speech introduction as discussed earlier in this chapter.

1. Which part of the paragraph is the attention getter?
2. Which part of the paragraph reveals the topic?
3. Which part of the paragraph states the speaker's credibility?
4. Which part of the paragraph demonstrates the importance of the topic to the audience?
5. Which part of the paragraph previews the main points?

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9.6: Why Conclusions Matter

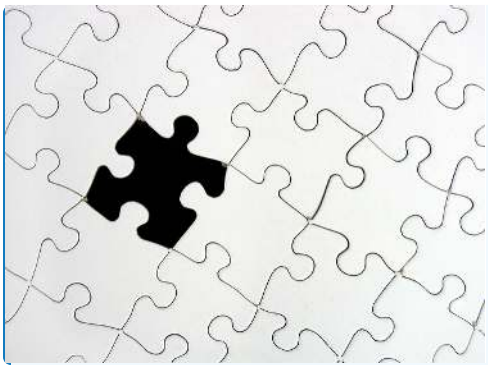


Figure 8.6.1 Willi Heidelbach – Puzzle2 – CC BY 2.0.

As public speaking professors and authors, we have seen many students give otherwise good speeches that seem to fall apart at the end. We've seen students end their three main points by saying things such as "OK, I'm done"; "Thank God that's over!"; or "Thanks. Now what? Do I just sit down?" It's understandable to feel relief at the end of a speech, but remember that as a speaker, our conclusions are the last chance we have to drive home our ideas. When a speaker opts to end the speech with an ineffective conclusion—or no conclusion at all—the speech loses the energy that's been created, and the audience is left confused and disappointed. Instead of falling prey to emotional exhaustion, we need to stay energetic as we approach the end of our speeches, and plan ahead so that our conclusions will be an effective one.

Of course, a good conclusion will not rescue a poorly prepared speech. Thinking again of the chapters in a novel, if one bypasses all the content in the middle, the ending often isn't very meaningful or helpful. So to take advantage of the advice in this chapter, keep in mind the importance of developing a speech with an effective introduction and an effective body; these are fundamental to conclude effectively. Just as a good introduction helps bring an audience member into the world of your speech, and a good speech body holds the audience in that world, a good conclusion helps bring that audience member back to the reality outside of your speech.

In this section, we're going to examine the functions fulfilled by the conclusion of a speech. A strong conclusion serves to signal the end of the speech and to help your listeners remember your speech.

Signals the End

The first thing a good conclusion can do is to signal the end of a speech. When a speaker just suddenly stops speaking, the audience is left confused and disappointed. Instead, we want to make sure that audiences are left knowledgeable and satisfied with our speeches. In Section 8.7 "Steps of a Conclusion", we'll explain in great detail about how to ensure that you signal the end of your speech in a manner that is both effective and powerful.

Aids Audience's Memory of a Speech

The second reason for a good conclusion stems out of some very interesting research reported by the German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus back in 1885 in his book *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology*. Ebbinghaus proposed that humans remember information in a linear fashion, which he called the serial position effect. He found an individual's ability to remember information in a list (e.g., a grocery list, a chores list, or a to-do list) depends on the location of an item on the list. Specifically, he found that items toward the top of the list and items toward the bottom of the list tended to have the highest recall rates. The serial position effect basically finds that information at the beginning of a list (primacy) and information at the end of the list (recency) are easier to recall than information in the middle of the list.

So what does this have to do with conclusions? A lot! Ray Ehrensberger wanted to test Ebbinghaus' serial position effect in public speaking. Ehrensberger (1945) created an experiment that rearranged the ordering of a speech to determine the recall of information. Ehrensberger's study reaffirmed the importance of primacy and recency when listening to speeches. In fact, Ehrensberger found that the information delivered during the conclusion (recency) had the highest level of recall overall.

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9.7: Steps of a Conclusion



Figure 8.7.1 Matthew Culnane – Steps – CC BY-SA 2.0.

In Section 8.6 “Why Conclusions Matter”, we discussed the importance a conclusion has on a speech. In this section, we’re going to examine the three steps in building an effective conclusion.

Restatement of the Thesis

Restating a thesis statement is the first step in a powerful conclusion. As we explained earlier in this chapter, a thesis statement is a short, declarative sentence that states the purpose, intent, or main idea of a speech. When we restate the thesis statement at the conclusion of our speech, we’re attempting to reemphasize what the overarching main idea of the speech has been. Suppose our thesis statement was, “I will analyze Barack Obama’s use of lyricism in his July 2008 speech, ‘A World That Stands as One.’” We could restate the thesis in this fashion at the conclusion of our speech: “In the past few minutes, I have analyzed Barack Obama’s use of lyricism in his July 2008 speech, ‘A World That Stands as One.’” Notice the shift in tense: the statement has gone from the future tense (this is what I will speak about) to the past tense (this is what I have spoken about). Restating the thesis in a conclusion reminds the audience of the major purpose or goal of the speech, helping them remember it better.

Review of Main Points

After restating the speech’s thesis, the second step in a powerful conclusion is to review the main points from of the speech. One of the biggest differences between written and oral communication is the necessity of repetition in oral communication. When we preview our main points in the introduction, effectively discuss and make transitions to our main points during the body of the speech, and finally, review the main points in the conclusion, we increase the likelihood that the audience will retain our main points after the speech is over.

In the introduction of a speech, we deliver a *preview* of our main body points, and in the conclusion we deliver a *review*. Let’s look at a sample preview:

- *In order to understand the field of gender and communication, I will first differentiate between the terms biological sex and gender. I will then explain the history of gender research in communication. Lastly, I will examine a series of important findings related to gender and communication.*

In this preview, we have three clear main points. Let’s see how we can review them at the conclusion of our speech:

1. *Today, we have differentiated between the terms biological sex and gender, examined the history of gender research in communication, and analyzed a series of research findings on the topic.*
2. *In the past few minutes, I have explained the difference between the terms “biological sex” and “gender,” discussed the rise of gender research in the field of communication, and examined a series of groundbreaking studies in the field.*

Notice that both of these conclusions review the main points originally set forth. Both variations are equally effective reviews of the main points, but we might like the linguistic turn of one over the other. Remember, while there is a lot of science to help us understand public speaking, there's also a lot of art as well, so choose the wording that will be most effective for the audience.

Concluding Device

The final part of a powerful conclusion is the concluding device. A concluding device is essentially the final thought we want our audience members to have when we stop speaking. It also provides a definitive sense of closure to a speech. One of the authors of this text often makes an analogy between a gymnastics dismount and the concluding device in a speech. Just as a gymnast dismounting the parallel bars or balance beam wants to stick the landing and avoid taking two or three steps, a speaker wants to "stick" the ending of the presentation by ending with a concluding device instead of with, "Well, umm, I guess I'm done." Miller (1946) observed that speakers tend to use one of ten concluding devices when ending a speech. The rest of this section is going to examine several of these ten concluding devices.

Conclude with a Challenge

The first way that Miller found that some speakers end their speeches is with a challenge. A challenge is a call to engage in some kind of activity that requires a contest or special effort. In a speech on the necessity of fund-raising, a speaker could conclude by challenging the audience to raise 10 percent more than their original projections. In a speech on eating more vegetables, challenge the audience to increase their current intake of vegetables by two portions daily. In both of these challenges, audience members are being asked to go out of their way to do something different that involves effort on their part.

Concluding with a challenge is ideal for a persuasive speech, as persuasive speeches require the speaker to attempt to change the attitudes, beliefs, or actions of it's audience. If we ask our audience to do something different, we are challenging them. Challenges are best left for persuasive speeches, rather than informative speeches.

Conclude with a Quotation

A second way to conclude a speech is by reciting a quotation relevant to the speech topic. When using a quotation, think about whether the goal is to end on a persuasive note or an informative note. Some quotations will have a clear call to action, while other quotations summarize or provoke thought. For example, let's say we are delivering an informative speech about dissident writers in the former Soviet Union. We could end by citing this quotation from Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1964): "A great writer is, so to speak, a second government in his country. And for that reason no regime has ever loved great writers." Notice that this quotation underscores the idea of writers as dissidents, but it doesn't ask listeners to put forth effort to engage in any specific thought process or behavior. If, on the other hand, we were delivering a persuasive speech urging our audience to participate in a very risky political demonstration, we might use this quotation from Martin Luther King Jr. (1963): "If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live." In this case, the quotation leaves the audience with the message that great risks are worth taking, that they make our lives worthwhile, and that the right thing to do is to go ahead and take that great risk.

Conclude with a Summary

When a speaker ends with a summary, they are simply elongating the review of the main points. While this may not be the most exciting concluding device, it can be useful for information that was highly technical or complex or for speeches lasting longer than thirty minutes. Typically, for short speeches (like those in our class), this summary device should be avoided.

Conclude by Visualizing the Future

The purpose of a conclusion that refers to the future is to help the audience imagine the future that is possible. If we are giving a speech on the development of video games for learning, we could conclude by depicting the classroom of the future where video games are perceived as true learning tools and how those tools could be utilized. More often, speakers use visualization of the future to depict how society would be, or how individual listeners' lives would be different, if the speaker's persuasive attempt worked. For example, if a speaker proposes that a solution to illiteracy is hiring more reading specialists in public schools, the speaker could ask her or his audience to imagine a world without illiteracy. In this use of visualization, the goal is to persuade people to adopt the speaker's point of view. By showing that the speaker's vision of the future is a positive one, the conclusion should help to persuade the audience to help create this future.

Conclude with an Appeal for Action

Probably the most common persuasive concluding device is the appeal for action or the call to action. In essence, the appeal for action occurs when a speaker asks her or his audience to engage in a specific behavior or change in thinking. When a speaker concludes by asking the audience "to do" or "to think" in a specific manner, the speaker wants to see an actual change. Whether the speaker appeals for people to eat more fruit, buy a car, vote for a candidate, oppose the death penalty, or sing more in the shower, the speaker is asking the audience to engage in action.

One specific type of appeal for action is the immediate call to action. Whereas some appeals ask for people to engage in behavior in the future, the immediate call to action asks people to engage in behavior right now. If a speaker wants to see a new traffic light placed at a dangerous intersection, he or she may conclude by asking all the audience members to sign a digital petition right then and there, using a computer the speaker has made available (petitiononline.com(opens in new window)). Here are some more examples of immediate calls to action:

- In a speech on eating more vegetables, pass out raw veggies and dip at the conclusion of the speech.
- In a speech on petitioning a lawmaker for a new law, provide audience members with a prewritten e-mail they can send to the lawmaker.
- In a speech on the importance of using hand sanitizer, hand out little bottles of hand sanitizer and show audience members how to correctly apply the sanitizer.
- In a speech asking for donations for a charity, send a box around the room asking for donations.

These are just a handful of different examples we've actually seen students use in our classrooms to elicit an immediate change in behavior. These immediate calls to action may not lead to long-term change, but they can be very effective at increasing the likelihood that an audience will change behavior in the short term.

Conclude by Inspiration

By definition, the word inspire means to affect or arouse someone. Both affect and arouse have strong emotional connotations. The ultimate goal of an inspiration concluding device is similar to an "appeal for action" but the ultimate goal is more lofty or ambiguous; the goal is to stir someone's emotions in a specific manner. Maybe a speaker is giving an informative speech on the prevalence of domestic violence in our society today. That speaker could end the speech by reading Paulette Kelly's powerful poem "I Got Flowers Today." "I Got Flowers Today" is a poem that evokes strong emotions because it's about an abuse victim who received flowers from her abuser every time she was victimized. The poem ends by saying, "I got flowers today… / Today was a special day—it was the day of my funeral / Last night he killed me" (Kelly, 1994).

Conclude with Advice

The next concluding device is one that should be used primarily by speakers who are recognized as expert authorities on a given subject. Advice is essentially a speaker's opinion about what should or should not be done. The problem with opinions is that everyone has one, and one person's opinion is not necessarily any more correct than another's. There needs to be a really good reason your opinion—and therefore your advice—should matter to your audience. If, for example, a speaker is an expert in nuclear physics, she might conclude a speech on energy by giving advice about the benefits of nuclear energy.

Conclude with a Question

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

Informative versus Persuasive Conclusions

Some of the devices listed above are more appropriate for informative speeches and some are more appropriate for persuasive speeches. To help choose appropriate conclusions for informative, persuasive, or entertaining speeches, we've created a table (Table 8.7.1 "Speech Purpose and Concluding Devices") to help quickly identify appropriate concluding devices.

Table 8.7.1 Your Speech Purpose and Concluding Devices

Types of Concluding Devices	General Purposes of Speeches		
	Informative	*Persuasive*	
Challenge		x	x
Quotation	x	x	x
Summary	x	x	x
Visualizing the Future	x	x	x
Appeal		x	x
Inspirational	x	x	x
Advice		x	x
Question	x	x	x

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9.8: Analyzing a Conclusion



Figure 9.8.1: Theilr – blank dossier – CC BY-SA 2.0.

So far this chapter has focused on how to go about creating a compelling introduction and a clear conclusion. We discussed why conclusions are important, the three steps of effective conclusions, and different ways to conclude a speech. In this section, we're going to examine an actual conclusion to a speech. Please read the sample conclusion paragraph for the smart dust speech.

Smart Dust: Conclusion

I. Today, we've explored how smart dust may impact all of our lives in the near future by examining what smart dust is, how smart dust could be utilized by the US military, and how smart dust could impact all of our lives sooner rather than later.

II. While smart dust is quickly transforming from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that the full potential of smart dust will probably not occur until 2025.

III. While smart dust is definitely coming, swarms of smart dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton's 2002 novel, Prey, aren't reality.

IV. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries to consider.

A. Even Dr. Kris Pister's Smart Dust Project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy.

B. Pister responds to these critiques by saying, "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effects.

V. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy.

Identify the three parts of a conclusion in the previous chapter. After analyzing this conclusion, take a look at Table 9.8.1 "Smart Dust Conclusion", which shows how the speech was broken down into the various parts of a conclusion.

Table 9.8.1 Smart Dust Conclusion

Parts of a Conclusion	**Analysis**
Today we've explored how smart dust may impact all of our lives in the near future by	*Restate Thesis*
	The first part of the conclusion is a restatement of the thesis statement.
examining what smart dust is, how smart dust could be utilized by the US military, and how smart dust could impact all of our lives in the near future.	*Review Main Points*
	Following the thesis statement, the speech briefly reiterates the three main points discussed in the speech.
While smart dust is quickly transferring from science fiction to	*Concluding Device*

Parts of a Conclusion	Analysis
science fact, experts agree that the full potential of smart dust will probably not occur until 2025. While smart dust is definitely in our near future, swarms of smart dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton's 2002 novel, *Prey*, isn't reality. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries to consider. Even Dr. Kris Pister's Smart Dust Project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy. Pister responds to these critiques by saying, "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."	In this concluding device, we see not only a referral to the attention getter (Michael Crichton's book *Prey*), we also see a visualizing of some future oriented factors people need to consider related to smart dust, which is then followed by a direct quotation. Notice that in an informative speech this type of conclusion is appropriate because we are trying to inform people about smart dust, but would you want to end a persuasive speech in this fashion? Definitely not! However, you could create an entire persuasive speech advocating for smart dust (its many applications are more important than the loss of privacy) or against smart dust (privacy is more important than its many applications).

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9.9: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

In summary, it is important to keep in mind that introductions are only 10–15 percent of one's speech, so speakers need to make sure they think through the entire introduction to ensure that they will capture an audience. A speaker's perceived credibility is a combination of competence, trustworthiness, and caring/goodwill. Research has shown that caring/goodwill is probably the most important factor of credibility because audiences want to know that a speaker has their best interests at heart. At the same time, speakers should strive to be both competent and honest while speaking.

Begin your introduction with an attention-gainer, which can include references to the audience, quotations, references to current events, historical references, anecdotes, startling statements, questions, humor, personal references, and references to the occasion. Next, work to establish the relevance of your speech topic and show the audience why they should listen to the speech and why you have credibility as a speaker. Then, clearly state your thesis, which is is essential to provide structure for the speaker and clarity for an audience. Last, include an effective preview that identifies the specific main points that will be present in the speech body.

A strong conclusion is very important because it's a speaker's final chance to really explain the importance their message and allows the speaker to both signal the end of the speech and help the audience to remember the main ideas. As such, speakers need to thoroughly examine how they will conclude their speeches with power. The serial position effect is the idea that people remember ideas that are stated either first (primacy) or last (recency) in a list the most. It is important to speech conclusions because restating main ideas helps to take advantage of the recency effect and helps the audience remember. An effective conclusion contains three basic parts: a restatement of the speech's thesis; a review of the main points discussed within the speech; and a concluding device that helps create a lasting image in audiences' minds. Miller (1946) found that speakers tend to use one of ten concluding devices. All of these devices are not appropriate for all speeches, so speakers need to determine which concluding device would have the strongest, most powerful effect for a given audience, purpose, and occasion.

Exercises

1. What are the five basic functions of an introduction? Discuss with your classmates which purpose you think is the most important. Why?
2. Why is establishing a relationship with one's audience important? How do you plan on establishing a relationship with your audience during your next speech?
3. Of the three factors of credibility, which do you think is going to be hardest to establish with your peers during your next speech? Why? What can you do to enhance your peers' perception of your credibility?
4. Make a list of the attention-getting devices you might use to give a speech on the importance of recycling. Which do you think would be most effective? Why?
5. You've been asked to deliver a speech on the use of advertising in children's media. Out of the list of ten different possible attention-getting devices discussed in the chapter, how could you use four of them to start your speech?
6. Make a list of the attention-getting devices you might use to give a speech on the importance of recycling. Which do you think would be most effective? Why?
7. Create a thesis statement for a speech related to the topic of collegiate athletics. Make sure that your thesis statement is narrow enough to be adequately covered in a five- to six-minute speech.
8. Discuss with a partner three possible body points you could utilize for the speech on the topic of volunteerism.
9. Fill out the introduction worksheet to help work through your introduction for your next speech. Please make sure that you answer all the questions clearly and concisely.
10. Think about a recent speech you heard either in class or elsewhere. Did the speaker have a strong conclusion? List the elements of the conclusion that were particularly effective and ineffective. Identify two ways you could have made the speaker's conclusion stronger.
11. After listening to a speech or class lecture, close your eyes and say aloud the main points you remember from the presentation. Does your memory follow what you would expect according to the serial position effect?
12. Take the last speech you gave in class and rework the speech's conclusion to reflect the three parts of a conclusion. Now do the same thing with the speech you are currently working on for class.
13. Think about the speech you are currently working on in class. Write out concluding statements using three of the devices discussed in this chapter. Which of the devices would be most useful for your speech? Why?

Speaking Ethically

Imagine that you are preparing a speech on the benefits of a new drug, and you find a direct quotation that clearly establishes your argument. Unfortunately, you soon realize that the source of your quotation is actually a lobbyist who works for the pharmaceutical company that manufactures the drug. You really want to use this quotation as your attention-getter, but you realize that the source is clearly biased. Which of the following options do you think is the most ethical? Why?

1. Disregard the quotation and find another way to start your speech.
2. Use the quotation, but acknowledge that the source comes from a paid lobbyist of the pharmaceutical company who manufactures the drug.
3. Use the quotation and just give the name of the source. If your audience is interested in your topic, they'll do their own research and make informed decisions for themselves.

Introduction Worksheet

Directions: Use this worksheet to map out the introduction to your next speech.

1. What is your general purpose? (circle one)

Guide for creating your introduction

To inform	To persuade	To entertain

2. What is your thesis?

_____

_____

_____

3. Which attention-getting device do you plan on using?

_____

_____

_____

4. Why should your audience listen to your speech?

_____

_____

_____

5. How will you establish your credibility during speech?
    1. Competence

    _____

    _____

    _____

    2. Trustworthiness

    _____

    _____

    _____

    3. Caring/goodwill

    _____

    _____

    _____

4. What is your thesis statement?

_____

_____

_____

6. What are your three main body points?
    1. Body point 1

    _____

    _____

    _____

    2. Body point 2

    _____

    _____

    _____

    3. Body point 3

    _____

    _____

    _____

    4. Write a preview of your three main body points.

    _____

    _____

    _____

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Informative Speaking

10.1: Learning Objectives
10.2: What is an Informative Speech?
10.3: Types of Informative Speeches
10.4: Guidelines for Informative Speech Topic Selection and Preparation
10.5: Conclusion and Exercises

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10.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Recognize opinion versus factual information.
2. Recognize the different types of informative speeches.
3. Distinguish the best organizational approach for types of informative speeches.
4. Employ proven guidelines for preparing an informative speech.
5. Construct an informative speech.

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10.2: What is an Informative Speech?

An **informative speech** can first be defined as a speech based entirely and exclusively on facts. 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 driving directions, explaining the specials of the day as a server, or describing the plot of a movie to friends, people engage in forms of informative speaking daily. Secondly, an informative speech does not attempt to convince the audience that one thing is better than another. It does not advocate a course of action.

Consider the following two statements:

> 2 + 2 = 4
>
> George Washington was the first President of the United States.

In each case, the statement made is what can be described as irrefutable, meaning a statement or claim that cannot be argued. In the first example, even small children are taught that having two apples and then getting two more apples will result in having four apples. This statement is irrefutable in that no one in the world will (or should!) argue this: It is a fact.

Similarly, with the statement "George Washington was the first President of the United States," this again is an irrefutable fact. If you asked one hundred history professors and read one hundred history textbooks, the professors and textbooks would all say the same thing: Washington was the first president. No expert, reliable source, or person with any common sense would argue about this.

(Someone at this point might say, "No, John Hanson was the first president." However, he was president under the Articles of Confederation for a short period—November 5, 1781, to November 3, 1782—not under our present Constitution. This example shows the importance of stating your facts clearly and precisely and being able to cite their origins.)

Informative Speech is Not a Persuasive Speech

Informative speech is fundamentally different from a persuasive speech in that it does not incorporate opinion as its basis. This can be the tricky part of developing an informative speech, because some opinion statements sometimes sound like facts (since they are generally agreed upon by many people), but are really opinion. For example, in an informative speech on George Washington, you might say, "George Washington was one of the greatest presidents in the history of the United States." While this statement may be agreed upon by most people, it is possible for some people to disagree and argue the opposite point of view. The statement "George Washington was one of the greatest presidents in the history of the United States" is not irrefutable, meaning someone could argue this claim. If, however, you present the opinion as an opinion from a source, that is acceptable: it is a fact that someone (hopefully someone with expertise) holds the opinion. You do not want your central idea, your main points, and the majority of your supporting material to be opinion or argument in an informative speech.

Unlike in persuasive speeches, in an informative speech, you should never take sides on an issue nor should you "spin" the issue in order to influence the opinions of the listeners. Even if you are informing the audience about differences in views on controversial topics, you should simply and clearly describe and explain the issues. This is not to say, however, that the audience's needs and interests have nothing to do with the informative speech. We come back to the WIIFM principle ("What's in it for me?) because even though an informative speech is fact-based, it still needs to relate to people's lives in order to maintain their attention.

Why Informative Speech is Important

The question may arise here, "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. Remember, public speaking is not a good way to "dump data" on the audience, but to make information meaningful.

Finally, 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.

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10.3: Types of Informative Speeches

While topics that are suitable for informative speeches are nearly limitless, they can generally be pared down into five broad categories. Understanding the type of informative speeches can help you to figure out the best way to organize, research, and prepare for it.

Type 1: History

A common approach to selecting an informative speech topic is to discuss the history or development of something. With so much of human knowledge available via the Internet, finding information about the origins and evolution of almost anything is much easier than it has ever been (with the disclaimer that there are quite a few websites out there with false information). With that in mind, some of the areas that a historical informative speech could cover are below.

Objects

History of objects such as the baseball or the saxophone can be presented in your informative speech. Someone at some point in history was the first to develop what is considered modern baseball. An informative speech speaker could give a speech on the history of baseball: Who was it? What was it originally made of? How did it evolve into the baseball that is used by Major League Baseball today?

Places

You can also give an informative speech on the history of physical places such as the Eiffel tower or the Disney World. The Disney World of today is different from the Disney World of the early 1970s; the design has developed over the last fifty plus years. Stories on the first things built in the Disney World, first theme parks, and how it expanded and built in other parts of the world can all be interesting historical elements to share with your audience.

Ideas

It is also possible to provide facts on an ideas such as democracy or freedom of speech. For example, while no one can definitively point to a specific date or individual who first developed the concept of democracy, it is known to have been conceived in ancient Greece (Raaflaub, Ober, & Wallace, 2007). By looking at the civilizations and cultures that adopted forms of democracy throughout history, it is possible to provide an audience with a better understanding of how the idea has been shaped into what it has become today.

Type 2: Biography

A biography is similar to a history, but in this case the subject is specifically a person, whether living or deceased. For the purposes of this class, biographies should focus on people of some note or fame, since doing research on people who are not at least mildly well-known could be difficult. But again, as with histories, there are specific and irrefutable facts that can help provide an overview of someone's life, such as dates that President Lincoln was born (February 12, 1809) and died (April 15, 1865) and the years he was in office as president (1861-1865).

This might be a good place to address research and support. The basic dates of Abraham Lincoln's life could be found in multiple sources and you would not have to cite the source in that case. But it you use the work of a specific historian to explain how Lincoln was able to win the presidency in the tumultuous years before the Civil War, that would need a citation of that author and the publication.

Type 3: Processes

Process speeches provide information on steps to accomplish a specific task, goal, or process. For example, speakers can talk about how to bake chocolate chip cookies, how to throw a baseball, how a nuclear reactor works, and how a bill works its way through Congress.

Process speeches are sometimes referred to as demonstration or "how to" speeches because they often entail demonstrating or performing something. These speeches provide step by step instructions on completing a specific task (e..g, how to bake chocolate chip cookies in 10 steps). However, not all process speeches tell the audience how to perform something but rather, only explain the procedures so audience can gain understanding on how things work (e.g., how a bill goes through Congress).

Type 4: Ideas and Concepts

Sometimes an informative speech is designed to explain an idea or concept. What does democracy mean? What is justice? In speeches on ideas and concepts, speakers should first define the idea or concept and then provide specific examples to make your concept concrete, real, and "tangile" to your audience.

Type 5: Categories or Divisions

Sometimes an informative speech topic doesn't lend itself to a specific type of approach, and in those cases the topics tend to fall into a "general" category of informative speeches. For example, if a student wanted to give an informative speech on the four "C's" of diamonds (cut, carat, color, and clarity), they certainly wouldn't approach it as if they were providing the history of diamonds, nor would they necessarily be informing anyone on "how to" shop for or buy diamonds or how diamonds are mined. The approach in this case would simply be to inform an audience on the four "C's" and what they mean. Other examples of this type of informative speech would be positions in playing volleyball or the customs to know when traveling in China.

As stated above, identifying the type of informative speech being given can help in several ways (conducting research, writing the introduction and conclusion), but perhaps the biggest benefit is that the type of informative speech being given will help determine, to some degree, the organizational pattern that will need to be used (see Chapter 8). For example, a How To speech must be in chronological order. There really isn't a way (or reason) to present a How To speech other than how the process is done in a time sequence. That is to say, for a speech on how to bake chocolate chip cookies, getting the ingredients (Main Point 1) must come before mixing the ingredients (Main Point 2), which must come before baking them (Main Point 3). Putting them in any other order will only confuse the audience.

Similarly, most Histories and Biographies will be organized chronologically, but not always. It makes sense to explain the history of the baseball from when it was first developed to where it is today, but certain approaches to Histories and Biographies can make that irrelevant. For an informative speech on Benjamin Franklin, a student might choose as his or her three main points: 1) His time as a printer, 2) His time as an inventor, 3) His time as a diplomat. These main points are not in strict chronological order because Franklin was a printer, inventor, and diplomat at the same time during periods of his whole life. However, this example would still be one way to inform an audience about him without using the chronological organizational pattern.

As for general informative speeches, since the topics that can be included in this category are very diverse and cover a range of subject matter, the way they are organized will be varied as well. However, if the topic is "types of" something or "kinds of" something, the organizational pattern would be topical; if it were the layout of a location, such as the White House, it would be spatial.

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10.4: Guidelines for Informative Speech Topic Selection and Preparation

Pick a Focused Topic- Don't Be Too Broad

In preparing an informative speech, one of the most common misconceptions students have is that they must be comprehensive in covering their topic, which isn't realistic. Let's say a student selects a topic and proposes the following specific purpose statement: "To inform my audience about the Civil War." The Civil War was, conservatively speaking, four years long, resulted in over 750,000 casualties, and arguably changed the course of human history. So to think that it is possible to cover all of that in five to seven minutes is unrealistic. Also, a typical college library has hundreds of books dealing with the Civil War.

A revised specific purpose for this speech might be something like "To inform my audience about the Gettysburg Address." This topic is much more compact (the Gettysburg Address is only a few minutes long), and doing research will now be exponentially easier—although you will still find hundreds of sources on it.

Instead of looking through all the books in your campus library on the Civil War, searching through the library's databases and catalog for material on the Gettysburg Address will yield a much more manageable number of books and articles. It may sound counterintuitive, but selecting a speech topic that is very specifically focused will make the research and writing phases of the informative speech much easier.

Another example is, a student who wants to deliver an informative speech on Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was 56 years old when he died, so to think that it is possible to cover his entire life's story in 5 to 7 minutes is un-realistic. The better option is to select three aspects of his life and focus on those as a way to provide an overall picture of who he was. So a proposed speech on Lincoln might have the specific purpose: "To inform my audience about Abraham Lincoln's administration of the Civil War." This is still a huge topic in that massive books have been written about it, but it could be addressed in three or four main points such as:

1. The Civil War began in the aftermath of Lincoln's Election and Inauguration
2. Finding the right military leaders for the Union was his major challenge at the beginning.
3. The Emancipation Proclamation changed the nature of the War.
4. Lincoln adopted a policy that led to the North's victory.

Regardless of the topic, you will never be able to cover everything that is known about your topic, so don't try. Select the things that will best help the audience gain a general understanding of the topic, that will interest them, and that they hopefully will find valuable.''

For additional tips for selecting the right informative speech topics and preparing the speech, watch the following videos:





Avoid Faux or Fake Informative Speech Topics

Sometimes students think that because something sounds like an informative speech topic, it is one. This happens a lot with political issues that are usually partisan in nature. Some students may feel that the speech topic "To inform my audience why William Henry Harrison was a bad president" sounds factual, but really this is an opinion.

Similarly, a number of topics that include conspiracy and paranormal subject matter are usually mistaken for good informative topics as well.

It is not uncommon for a student to propose the topic "To inform my audience about the existence of extraterrestrials," thinking it is a good topic. After all, there is plenty of evidence to support the claim, right? There are pictures of unidentified objects in the sky that people claim are from outer space, there are people who claim to have seen extraterrestrials, and most powerful of all, there are people who say that they have been abducted by aliens and taken into space.

The problem here, as you have probably already guessed, is that these facts are not irrefutable. Not every single person who sees something unknown in the sky will agree it is an alien spacecraft, and there can be little doubt that not everyone who claims to have been abducted by a UFO is telling the truth. This isn't to say that you can't still do an informative speech on alien sites. For example, two viable options are "To inform my audience about the SETI Project" or "To inform my audience of the origin of the Area 51 conspiracy." However, these types of speeches can quickly devolve into opinion if you aren't careful, which would then make them persuasive speeches. Even if you start by trying to be objective, unless you can present each side equally, it will end up becoming a persuasive speech. Additionally, when a speaker picks such a topic, it is often because of a latent desire to persuade the audience about them.

Be Accurate, Clear, and Interesting

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, incomplete, or unclear, it will be of limited usefulness to the audience.

Part of being accurate is making sure that your information is current. Even if you know a great deal about your topic or wrote a good paper on the topic in a high school course, you will need to verify the accuracy and completeness of what you know, especially if it 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 its long-term effects. So even with a topic that seems to be unchanging, carefully check the information to be sure it's accurate and up to date.

What defines "interesting?" In approaching the informative speech, you should keep in mind the good overall principle that the audience is asking, "what's in it for me?" The audience is either consciously or unconsciously wondering "What in this topic for me? How can I use this information? Of what value is this speech content to me? Why should I listen to it?" One reason this textbook uses examples of the Civil War is that the authors' college is located by several Civil War sites and even a major battlefield. Students see reminders of the Civil War on a regular basis.

You might consider it one of the jobs of the introduction to directly or indirectly answer these questions. 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. For example, why should we know about Abraham Lincoln's administration of the Civil War? Obviously, because it had significant, long-term consequences to Americans, and you should articulate that in terms the audience can understand.

Keep in Mind Audience Diversity

Finally, remember that not everyone in your audience is the same, so an informative speech should be prepared with audience diversity in mind. If the information in a speech is too complex or too simplistic, it will not hold the interest of the listeners. Determining the right level of complexity can be hard. Audience analysis is one important way to do this. Do the members of your audience belong to different age groups? Did they all go to public schools in the United States, or are some of them international students? Are they all students majoring in the same subject, or is there a mixture of majors? Never assume that just because an audience is made up of students, they all share a knowledge set. Do enough research and try to include examples and supporting material that will resonate with your diverse audience.

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10.5: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

A variety of different topic categories are available for informative speaking. One way to develop your topic is to focus on areas that might be confusing to the audience. If the audience is likely to be confused about language or a concept, an elucidating explanation might be helpful. If a process is complex, a quasi-scientific explanation may help. If the audience already has an erroneous implicit idea of how something works then a transformative explanation might be needed.

Review Questions and Exercises

1. Choose a topic such as “American Education in the Twenty-First Century.” Write a new title for that speech for each of the following audiences: financial managers, first-year college students, parents of high school students, nuns employed in Roman Catholic schools, psychotherapists, and teamsters. Write a specific purpose for the speech for each of these audiences.
2. Think about three potential topics you could use for an informative speech. Identify where the audience might experience confusion with concepts, processes, or preexisting implicit theories. Select one of the topics and outline how you would develop the topic to address the audience’s potential confusion.
3. Watch the following speech and explain why this is an informative speech, and not a persuasive speech.
4. Create a possible purpose statement for this speech.
5. Create a possible thesis statement/central idea for this speech.

Sample Informative Speech by Pamela Meyer



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Using Language Well

11.1: Learning Objectives
11.2: Communication vs. Language
11.3: Constructing Clear and Vivid Messages
11.4: Using Stylized Language
11.5: Language and Ethics
11.6: Avoiding Language Pitfalls
11.7: Conclusion and Exercises

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11.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Understand the power of language to define our world and our relationship to the world
2. Choose language that positively impacts the ability to inform and persuade
3. Choose language to create a clear and vivid message
4. Use language that is ethical and accurate
5. Use language to enhance speaker credibility

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11.2: Communication vs. Language

Language is one of the most influential and powerful aspects of our daily lives and yet very few people pay attention to it in their interpersonal and public communication. *The power of language cannot be overemphasized— language constructs, reflects, and maintains our social realities, or what we believe to be "true" with regard to the world around us.* What we "know is true" about a person, place, thing, idea, or any other aspect of our daily lives very much depends on what experiences we have had (or not), what information we have (or have not) come across, and what words people have used (or not used) when communicating about our world.

Language can also have an impact on how we feel about this reality. How we define words and how we feel about those words is highly subjective. In fact, cognitive psychologist Lera Boroditsky showed a key to a group of Spanish- speakers and to a group of German- speakers. The researchers then asked the participants to describe the key they had been shown. Because the Spanish word for "key" is gendered as feminine, Spanish speakers defined the key using words such as lovely, tiny, and magic. The German word for "key" is gendered masculine, however, and German speakers defined the key using adjectives like hard, jagged, and awkward (Spivey, McRae, Joansse, 2012). This study suggests that the words we use to define something can have an impact on how we perceive what those words represent.

Because language is such a powerful, yet unexamined, part of our lives, this chapter focuses on how language functions and how competent speakers harness the power of language.

To understand the power of language, we need to differentiate between communication and language. Communication occurs when we try to transfer what is in our minds to the minds of our audience. Whether speaking to inform, persuade, or entertain, the main goal of a speaker is to effectively communicate their thoughts to audience members. Most chapters in this text help you determine how best to communicate information through considerations such as organizational structure, audience analysis, delivery, and the like.

Language, on the other hand, is the means by which we communicate—a system of symbols we use to form messages. We learn language as a child in order to read, write, and speak. Once we have mastered enough language we can communicate with relative ease, yet growing up we rarely learn much about language choices and what they mean for our communication.

Language Creates Social Reality

Our social realities are constructed through language; and therefore, people with different experiences in, and understandings of, the world can define the same things in very different ways. Language is culturally transmitted—we learn how to define our world first from our families and then our later definitions of the world are influenced by friends and institutions such as the media, education, and religion. If we grow up in a sexist culture, we are likely to hold sexist attitudes. Similarly, if we grow up in a culture that defines the environment as our first priority in making any decisions, we're likely to grow with environmentally friendly attitudes. Language, then, is not neutral. As a culture, as groups of people, and as individuals, we decide what words we're going to use to define one thing or another.

For public speakers, these facts are important for three primary reasons. First, the careful use of language can make the difference between you giving a remarkable speech and one that is utterly forgettable. Second, you must remember that audience members may not share the same language for the definition of the very same ideas, realities, or even specific items. Finally, the language that you use in public (and even private) communication says something about you—about how you define and therefore perceive the world. If you are not careful with your language you may unintentionally communicate something negative about yourself simply because of a careless use of language. You should think very carefully about your audience's and your own language when you prepare to speak publicly. You can master all of the other elements in this textbook, but without an effective use of language those other mastered skills will not mean much to your audience. The suggestions in this chapter will help you communicate as effectively as possible using appropriate and expressive. You'll also learn about language to avoid so that your language leaves the audience with a positive impression of you.

The Differences Language Choices can Make

When I discuss the importance of language choice with my students, I generally begin with two different paragraphs based on a section from Reverend Jesse Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" speech. The first paragraph I read them is a section of Reverend Jackson's speech that I have rewritten. The second paragraph is the actual text from Reverend Jackson's speech. Let's start with my version first:

- *America should dream. Choose people over building bombs. Destroy the weapons and don't hurt the people. Think about a new system of values. Think about lawyers more interested in the law than promotions. Consider doctors more interested in helping people get better than in making money. Imagine preachers and priests who will preach and not just solicit money.*

This paragraph is clear and simple. It gets the point across to the audience. But compare my version of his paragraph to Reverend Jackson's (1984) actual words:

- *Young America dream. Choose the human race over the nuclear race. Bury the weapons and don't burn the people. Dream of a new value system. Dream of lawyers more concerned about justice than a judgeship. Dream of doctors more concerned about public health than personal wealth. Dream of preachers and priests who will prophecy and not just profiteer.*

The significant difference between these two versions of the paragraph can be explained simply as the difference between carefully choosing one group of words over another group of words. My version of the speech is fine, but it is utterly forgettable. Reverend Jackson's exact wording, however, is stunning. The audience probably remembered his speech and the chills that went down their spines when they heard it long after it was over. This example, I hope, exemplifies the difference language choice can make. Using language in a way that makes you and your speech memorable, however, takes work. Few people come by this talent naturally, so give yourself plenty of time to rework your first draft to fine tune and perfect your language choice. Using some of the strategies discussed below will help you in this process.

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11.3: Constructing Clear and Vivid Messages

Use Simple Language

When asked to write a speech or a paper, many of us pull out the thesaurus (or call it up on our computer) when we want to replace a common word with one that we believe is more elevated or intellectual. There are certainly times when using a thesaurus is a good thing, but if you're pulling that big book out to turn a simple idea into one that *sounds* more complex, put it back on the shelf. Good speakers use simple language for two primary reasons.

First, audiences can sense a fake. When you turn in your term paper with words that aren't typically used by people in everyday conversation and those words are simply replacing the common words we all use, your instructor knows what you've done. Part of having strong credibility as a speaker is convincing your audience of your sincerity, both in terms of your ideas and your character. When you elevate your language simply for the sake of using big words when small words will do, audiences may perceive you as insincere, and that perception might also transfer onto your message. In addition, the audience's attention can drift to questions about your character and veracity, making it less likely that they are paying attention to your message.

Second, using a long word when a short one will do inhibits your ability to communicate clearly. Your goal as a speaker should be to be as clear as you possibly can. Using language that makes it more difficult for your audience to understand your message can negatively impact your ability to get a clear message across to your audience. If your audience can't understand your vocabulary, they can't understand your message.

If you're paying attention to the language strategies discussed in this chapter, you'll find that you won't need to pull out that thesaurus to impress your audience—your command of language will make that positive impression for you. In addition, when you use language that your audience expects to hear and is used to hearing you may find that the audience perceives you as more sincere than someone who uses elevated language and sounds pretentious. Remember: It is rarely the case that you should use a long word when a short one will do.

Use Concrete and Precise Language

How many times a week do you say something to someone only to have them misunderstand? You believe that you were very clear and the person you were talking to thought that she understood you perfectly, and yet you both ended up with a problem we often deem "miscommunication." You said you'd "call later" and your friend got angry because you didn't. By "later" you probably meant one time frame while your friend defined that time frame very differently. Often in these cases both people are right. You were perfectly clear and your friend did understand you perfectly—so how did the miscommunication happen?

One of the primary reasons we miscommunicate is because language is an abstract phenomenon. Meanings exist in people's understandings, not the words we use. Therefore, if you're telling a story about "a dog" you could be talking about a German Shepherd while the person you're talking with is envisioning a Chihuahua. If you do not use concrete language, you risk at least sending a weaker or different message than you intended. When speaking, you want to use the concrete term "German Shepard" over the more abstract term "dog."

When you are writing your speech, look for words that you might need to define more clearly. Instead of talking about "bad weather," tell the audience that it was raining or that hail the size of golf balls was coming down. "Bad weather" means different things to different people. In discussing the aftermath of a natural disaster, rather than saying "a lot of people were affected" say, "25,000 citizens, 1 in every 5, were affected by this disaster." "A lot" means different things to different people. *Most words* mean different things to different people, so use concrete language over abstract words to better your chances of communicating your message as intended.

You also want to make sure that you're precise. Someone might call a sweater "green" while someone else calls it "teal." Even though those are just differences in perception not purposeful or mindless communication meant to be inaccurate, not being clear about exactly which color you're talking about can lead to confusion. It is best to remember to be as precise as possible when choosing words. Don't say something was "big"—tell us its weight or height, and to be sure you're communicating clearly compare that weigh or height to something we understand. So, instead of saying "The piles of garbage I saw in the local dump were really big" say "The piles of garbage I saw in the local dump weighed about 10,000 pounds, which is equivalent to the weight of the average female elephant." The more precise you are the less likely it is that your audience will misinterpret your message.

Another way to avoid language that obstructs communication is to avoid the use of **jargon**. Jargon is the "specialized language of a group or profession" (Hamiliton, 2008). It is appropriate to use jargon when you know that your audience understands the terms

you are using. For example, if you are a computer science major and you are presenting to a group of similarly trained computer science majors, using jargon will help establish your credibility with that audience. Using terms even as basic as “RAM” and “binary code” with a general audience, however, will likely not go over well—you risk confusing the audience rather than informing or persuading them. Even people who can use computers may not know how they work or the technical terms associated with them. So you must be careful to only use jargon when you know your audience will understand it. If you must use jargon while speaking to a general audience, be sure to define your terms and err on the side of over-clarification.

Finally, another way to avoid confusion is to avoid using slang when it is not appropriate. **Slang** is language that some people might understand but that is not considered acceptable in formal or polite conversation. Slang may be a poor choice for a speaker because some members of your audience may not be familiar with the slang term(s) you use. Slang is often based in a very specific audience, defined by age, region, subculture and the like. If you are speaking to an audience that you know will understand and respond positively, you may choose to include that language in your speech.

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11.4: Using Stylized Language

Stylized language is language that communicates your meaning clearly, vividly and with flair. Stylized language doesn't just make you sound better; it also helps make your speeches more memorable. Speakers who are thoughtful about using language strategies in their speeches are more memorable as speakers and therefore so too are their messages more unforgettable as well.

Metaphors and Similes

One strategy that promotes vivid language is the use of metaphors. **Metaphors** are comparisons made by speaking of one thing in terms of another. **Similes** are similar to metaphors in how they function; however, similes make comparisons by using the word "like" or "as," whereas metaphors do not. The power of a metaphor is in its ability to create an image that is linked to emotion in the mind of the audience. It is one thing to talk about racial injustice, it is quite another for the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to note that people have been "…battered by storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality." Throughout his "I Have a Dream" speech the Reverend Dr. King uses the metaphor of the checking account to make his point (King, Jr., 1963).

In the same speech the Reverend Dr. King also makes use of similes, which also compare two things but do so using "like" or "as." In discussing his goals for the Civil Rights movement in his "I Have a Dream" speech, the Reverend Dr. exclaims: "No, no we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Similes also help make your message clearer by using ideas that are more concrete for your audience. For example, to give the audience an idea of what a winter day looked like you could note that the "snow looked as solid as pearls." To communicate sweltering heat you could say that "the tar on the road looked like satin." A simile most of us are familiar with is the notion of the United States being "like a melting pot" with regard to its diversity. We also often note that a friend or colleague that stays out of conflicts between friends is "like Switzerland." In each of these instances similes have been used to more clearly and vividly communicate a message (King, Jr., 1963).

Alliteration

Remember challenging yourself or a friend to repeat a tongue twister "five times fast?" Perhaps it was "Sally sold seashells by the seashore" or "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." Tongue twisters are difficult to say but very easy to remember. Why? Alliteration. **Alliteration** is the repetition of the initial sounds of words.

Alliteration is a useful tool for helping people remember your message, and it's as simple as taking a few minutes to see if there are ways to reword your speech so that you can add some alliteration— this is a great time to use that thesaurus we talked about putting away early in this chapter. Look for alternative words to use that allow for alliteration in your speech. You might consider doing this especially when it comes to the points that you would like your audience to remember most.

Antithesis

Antithesis allows you to use contrasting statements in order to make a rhetorical point. Perhaps the most famous example of antithesis comes from the Inaugural Address of President John F. Kennedy when he stated, "And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Going back to Reverend Jackson's (1984) "Rainbow Coalition" speech he notes, "I challenge them to put hope in their brains and not dope in their veins." In each of these cases, the speakers have juxtaposed two competing ideas in one statement to make an argument in order to draw the listener's attention.

Parallel Structure and Language

Antithesis is often worded using parallel structure or language. Parallel structure is the balance of two or more similar phrases or clauses, and parallel wording is the balance of two or more similar words. The Reverend Dr. King's (1963) "I Have a Dream" speech exemplifies both strategies in action. Indeed, the section where he repeats "I Have a Dream" over and over again is an example of the use of both parallel structure and language. The use of parallel structure and language helps your audience remember without beating them over the head with repetition. If worded and delivered carefully,you can communicate a main point over and over again, as did the Reverend Dr. King, and it doesn't seem as though you are simply repeating the same phrase over and over. You are often doing just that, of course, but because you are careful with your wording (it should be powerful and creative, not pedantic) and your delivery (the correct use of pause, volumes, and other elements of delivery), the audience often perceives the repetition as dramatic and memorable. The use of parallel language and structure can also help you when you are speaking persuasively. Through the use of these strategies you can create a speech that takes your audience through a series of ideas or arguments that seem to "naturally" build to your conclusion.

Personalized Language

We're all very busy people. Perhaps you've got work, studying, classes, a job, and extracurricular activities to juggle. Because we are all so busy, one problem that speakers often face is trying to get their audience interested in their topic or motivated to care about their argument. A way to help solve this problem is through the use of language that personalizes your topic. Rather than saying, "One might argue" say "You might argue." Rather than saying "This could impact the country in ways we have not yet imagined," say "This could impact your life in ways that you have not imagined." By using language that directly connects your topic or argument to the audience you better your chances of getting your audience to listen and to be persuaded that your subject matter is serious and important to them. Using words like "us," "you," and "we" can be a subtle means of getting your audience to pay attention to your speech. Most people are most interested in things that they believe impact their lives directly— make those connections clear for your audience by using personal language.

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11.5: Language and Ethics

For our purposes here, there are two ways to think about communication and ethics. First, ethical communication is that which does not unfairly label one thing or another based on personal bias. So, in addition to choosing “public housing” over “the projects,” an ethical speaker will choose terms that steer clear from intentional bias. For example, pro-life speakers would refrain from calling “pro-choice” people “pro-abortion” since the basic principle of the “pro- choice” position is that it is up to the person, not society, to choose whether or not an abortion is acceptable. That is a very different position than being “pro-abortion.” Indeed, many pro-choice citizens would not choose abortion if faced with an unplanned pregnancy; therefore calling them “pro- abortion” does not reflect the reality of the situation; rather, it is the purposeful and unethical use of one term over the other for emotional impact. Similarly, if a pro-choice person is addressing a crowd where religious organizations are protesting against the legality of abortion, it would not be ethical for the pro-choice speaker to refer to the “anti- abortion” protestors as “religious fanatics.” Simply because someone is protesting abortion on religious grounds does not make that person a “religious fanatic,” and as in the first example, choosing the latter phrase is another purposeful and unethical use of one term over another for emotional impact.

A second way to link communication and ethics is to remember that ethical speakers attempt to communicate reality to the best of their ability. Granted, each person’s social reality is different, depending on background, influences, and cultural institutions, for example. So ethical communication also means trying to define or explain your subject in terms that are as closely tied to an objective reality as is possible—it is your best attempt to communicate accurately about your topic.

Sexist and Heterosexist Language

One of the primary means by which speakers regularly communicate inaccurate information is through the use of sexist language. In spite of the fact that the Modern Language Association deemed sexist language as grammatically incorrect back in the 1970s, many people and institutions still regularly use sexist language in their communication.

First, you should avoid the use of what is called the **generic “he” or “man,”** which is the use of terms such as “mankind” instead of “humankind” or “humanity,” or the use of “man” or “he” to refer to all people. A common response from students with regard to the use of “generic he” is that the word is intended to represent men and women, therefore when it’s used it is not used to be sexist. If it were really the case that people truly recognized in their minds that the term “man” includes women, then we would talk about situations in which “man has difficulty giving birth” (Peccei, 2003) or the “impact of menstruation on man’s biology.” Of course, we do not say those things because they simply wouldn’t make sense to us. Perhaps you can now see why the people of the 1700s and 1800s had trouble switching from non-sexist to sexist language—it defied their own common sense just as discussing how “man gets pregnant” defies yours.

Second, you should avoid using **man-linked terms**, which are terms such as “fireman” or “policemen.” It is appropriate to use these terms when you know that the people you are speaking about are men only, but if you do not know for sure or if you’re talking about groups generally, you should avoid using these types of terms and replace them with “firefighters” and “police officers.” Other, non job- oriented words also suffer from this same problem. People often note that tables need to be “manned” rather than “staffed” and that items are “man- made” instead of “human made” or “handmade.”

A final common use of sexist language occurs when people use **spotlighting** when discussing the occupations of men and women. How often have you heard (or used) a phrase such as “he’s a male nurse” or “that female lawyer?” When we spotlight in these ways, we are pointing out that a person is deviating from the “norm” and implying that someone’s sex is relevant to a particular job. According to Peccei (2003), in the English language there is a very strong tendency to “place the adjective expressing the most ‘defining’ characteristic closest to the noun.” If you talk about a “male nurse” or a “female cop,” you risk communicating to the audience that you believe the most salient aspect of a particular job is the sex of the person that does it, and some audience members may not appreciate that assumption on your part.

The use of sexist language is not just grammatically incorrect; its use is also linked to ethics because it communicates a reality that does not exist—it is not accurate. Man- linked language communicates male superiority and that there are more men than women because women are regularly erased linguistically in speech and writing. Man- linked terms and spotlighting communicate that some job activities are appropriate for men but not women and vice versa by putting focus on the sex of a person as linked to their job or activity. Finally, the use of the generic “he” or “man” communicates that men are the norm and women deviate from that norm. If all humans are called “man,” what does that say about women? Sexist language can also limit what young males and females believe that they can accomplish in their lives. Ethical speakers should therefore avoid using language that communicates these sexist practices.

Heterosexist language is language that assumes the heterosexual orientation of a person or group of people. Be careful when speaking not to use words or phrases that assume the sexual orientation of your audience members. Do not make the mistake of pointing to someone in your audience as an example and discussing that person with the assumption that she is heterosexual by saying something like, “Let’s say this woman here is having trouble with her husband.” When thinking of examples to use, consider using names that could ring true for heterosexuals and homosexuals alike. Instead of talking about Pat and Martha, discuss an issue involving Pat and Chris. Not only will you avoid language that assumes everyone’s partner is of the opposite sex, you will also better your chances of persuading using your example. There are, of course, ethical considerations as well. Because it is likely that your entire audience is not heterosexual (and certainly they do not all hold heterosexist attitudes), using heterosexist language is another way that speakers may alienate audience members. In reality the world is not completely heterosexual and even in the unlikely case that you’re speaking in a room of consisting completely of heterosexuals, many people have friends or relatives that are homosexual, so the use of heterosexist language to construct the world as if this were not the case runs counter to ethical communication.

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11.6: Avoiding Language Pitfalls

Profanity

It seems obvious, but this fact bears repeating—you should **refrain from using profanity** in your speeches. One of the primary rules of all aspects of public speaking (audience analysis, delivery, topic selection, etc.) is that you should never ignore audience expectations. Audiences do not expect speakers to use profane language, and in most cases, doing so will hurt your credibility with the audience. It is true that certain audiences will not mind an occasional profane word used for effect, but unless you are speaking to a group of people with whom you are very familiar, it is difficult to know for sure whether the majority of the audience will respond positively or negatively to such language use.

Exaggeration

Speakers should also be careful about exaggeration. **Hyperbole** is the use of moderate exaggeration for effect and is an acceptable and useful language strategy. What is not acceptable, however, is the use of exaggeration to an extent that you risk losing credibility. For example, while it is acceptable to note that "it snows in South Texas as often as pigs fly," it would not be acceptable to state that "It never snows in South Texas." In the first case, you are using hyperbole as a form of exaggeration meant to creatively communicate an idea. In the second case, your use of exaggeration is stating something that is not true. It is unwise to use words such as "never" and "always" when speaking. It may be the case that speakers make this mistake accidentally because they are not careful with regard to word choice. We so easily throw words like "always" and "never" around in everyday conversation that this tendency transfers onto our public speeches when we are not thinking carefully about word choice.

There are two problems with the careless use of exaggeration. First, when you use words like "always" and "never," it is not likely that the statement you are making is true—as very few things *always or never* happen. Therefore, audiences might mistake your careless use of language for an attempt to purposefully misrepresent the truth. Second, when you suggest that something "always" or "never" happens, you are explicitly challenging your audience members to offer up evidence that contradicts your statement. Such a challenge may serve to impact your credibility negatively with the audience, as an audience member can make you look careless and/or silly by pointing out that your "always" or "never" statement is incorrect.

Powerless Language

Finally, think about using powerful language when speaking. Because women are more likely than men to be socialized to take the feelings of others into account, women tend to use less powerful language than men (Gamble & Gamble, 2003). Both men and women, however, can use language that communicates a lack of power. In some cases speakers use **powerless language that communicates uncertainty**. For example, a speaker might say "It seems to me that things are getting worse." Phrases like this communicate a lack of certainty in your statements. It is likely that in the case of these speeches, the speaker is arguing that some problem is getting worse, therefore more powerful language would be acceptable. Simply state that "Things are getting worse" and don't weaken your statement with phrases that communicate uncertainty.

Speakers should also beware of **hedges, tag questions**, and **qualifiers**. Examples of hedges would include, "I thought we should," "I sort of think," or "Maybe we should." Use more powerful statements such as "We should" or "I believe." In addition, speakers should avoid the use of tag questions, which are quick questions at the end of a statement that also communicate uncertainty. People who use tag questions might end a statement with "Don't you think?" or "Don't you agree?" rather than flatly stating what they believe because it can appear to audiences that you are seeking validation for your statements. Qualifiers such as "around" or "about" make your sentences less definitive, so generally avoid using them.

Incorrect Grammar

There are four primary means by which incorrect grammar tends to make its way into speeches, including basic error, mispronunciations, regionalisms, and colloquialisms.

Basic errors occur when people make simple mistakes in grammar because of carelessness or a lack of knowledge. If you are unsure about the grammatical structure of a sentence, ask someone. Practicing your speech in front of others can help you catch mistakes. Grammatical errors can also happen when speakers aren't familiar enough with their speech. If you do not know your topic well and have not given yourself an adequate amount of time for practice, you may fumble some during your speech and use incorrect grammar that you normally wouldn't use.

In addition, you must be sure that you are pronouncing words correctly. Making **pronunciation mistakes**, especially when you're pronouncing words that the general public deems ordinary, can seriously impede your credibility. If you're unsure about how to pronounce a word, check with someone else or with the dictionary to make sure you're pronouncing it correctly. In fact, many online dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster.com and Dictionary.com now include a function that allows you to hear how the word is pronounced. And if it's a word you're not used to saying, such as a technical or medical term, practice saying it out loud 10-20 times a day until you're comfortable with the word. Remember that our mouths are machines and that our tongues, teeth, cheeks, lips, etc. all work together to pronounce sounds. When faced with a word that our mouths are not yet "trained" to say, it is more likely that we'll mispronounce the word or stutter some on it during a speech. But if you practice saying the word out loud several times a day leading up to your speech, you're less likely to make a mistake and your confidence will be boosted instead of hurt in the midst of your speech.

Some grammar problems occur because people use regionalisms when speaking, which may pose problems for people in the audience not familiar with the terms being used. **Regionalisms** are customary words or phrases used in different geographic regions. You must be careful when using regional terms because your audience may not interpret your message correctly if they are not familiar with the regionalism you're using.

Another grammar issue often linked to region is the use of colloquialisms. **Colloquialisms** are words or phrases used in informal speech but not typically used in formal speech. Using the word "crick" instead of "creek" is one example of a colloquialism, and in some areas "I'm getting ready to cook dinner" would be said, "I'm fixin' to make dinner." Colloquialisms can also be phrases that stem from particular regions. In some regions nice clothes are often referred to as your "Sunday best," and in some areas, when people are preparing to vacuum, they note that they are getting ready to "red up the place" (make it ready for visitors). Like regionalisms, an audience understanding your use of colloquialisms depends on their familiarity with the language tendencies of a certain geographic area, so steering clear of their use can help you make sure that your message is understood by your audience.

Other Language Choices to Consider

Clichés are phrases or expressions that, because of overuse, have lost their rhetorical power. Examples include sayings such as "The early bird gets the worm" or "Making a mountain out of a molehill." Phrases such as these were once powerful ways of communicating an idea, but because of overuse these phrases just don't have the impact that they once had. Using clichés in your speeches runs the risk of having two negative attributions being placed on you by audience members. First, audience members may feel that your use of a cliché communicates that you didn't take the speech seriously and/or were lazy in constructing it. Second, your audience members may perceive you as someone who is not terribly creative. Clichés area easy ways to communicate your message, but you might pay for that ease with negative feelings about you as a speaker from your audience. Try to avoid using clichés so that audiences are more likely to perceive you positively as a speaker.

Another consideration for speakers is whether or not to use **language central to the popular culture** of a time period. Whether we're talking about "groovy, man" from the 1970s or "like totally awesome" from the 1980s, or "word to your mutha" from the 1990s, the language central to the popular culture of any time period is generally something to be avoided in formal public speaking. Like slang or profanity, language stemming from popular culture can be limited in its appeal. Some audiences may not understand it, some audiences may negatively evaluate you for using language that is too informal, and other audiences will have negative preconceived notions about "the kind of people" that use such language (e.g., "hippies" in the 1970s), and they will most likely transfer those negative evaluations onto you.

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11.7: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed a number of important aspects of language that good speakers should always consider. It is important for speakers to remember the power of language and to harness that power effectively, yet ethically. We've discussed the relationship between the language we use and the way we see the world, the importance of using language that is clear, vivid, stylized, ethical and that reflects well on you as the speaker.

The difference between choosing one word over another can be as significant as an audience member remembering your presentation or forgetting it and/or an audience turning against you and your ideas. Taking a few extra moments to add some alliteration or to check for language that might offend others is time very well spent. The next time you have to write or speak about an issue, remember the importance of language and its impact on our lives— carefully consider what language will you use and how will those language choices make a difference in how your audiences defines and understands your topic.

Review Questions and Activities

Review Questions

1. Explain the difference between communication and language.
2. Explain the relationship between language and the way that humans perceive their worlds.
3. Why should you use simple language in your speech?
4. The use of concrete and precise language in your speeches helps prevent what sorts of problems?
5. Give an example of a metaphor and explain how that metaphor functions to communicate a specific idea more clearly.
6. What is alliteration?
7. Why is personalized language important?
8. What are some examples of types of sexist language and what is the impact of those examples?
9. What are two problems associated with using exaggerated language in your speeches?
10. Explain the types of powerless language most commonly used.
11. Why shouldn't you use clichés in your speech?
12. Why is correct grammar important to good speech making?

Activities

1. Speakers should avoid the use of sexist language. Consider the sexist words and phrases listed below and think of as many replacement words as you can.
    a. Bogeyman
    b. Brotherhood
    c. Businessman
    d. Chairman
    e. Forefather
    f. Layman
    g. Mailman
    h. Manmade
    i. Repairman
    j. Salesman
    k. Female Doctor
2. Using speeches from mlkonline.net or jfklibrary.org, choose any speech from the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President John F. Kennedy, or Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and isolate one paragraph that you believe exemplifies a careful and effective use of language. Rewrite that paragraph as I did for my classes, using more common and less careful word choices. Compare the paragraphs to each other once you're done, noticing the difference your changes in language make.
3. Speakers should always remember that it's rarely helpful to use a long word when a short word will do and that clichés should be avoided in speeches. Look at these common clichés, reworded using language that obstructs rather than clarifies, and see if you can figure out which clichés have been rewritten.
    a. A piece of pre-decimal currency conserved is coinage grossed.

b. The timely avian often acquires the extended soft-bodied invertebrate.
c. A utensil often used for writing is more prodigious than a certain long-edged weapon.
d. Let slumbering members of the canine variety remain in slumber
e. An animal of the avian variety resting on one's palm is more valuable than double that amount in one's appendage most often used for tactile feedback.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Delivering the Speech

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12.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Differentiate among the four methods of speech delivery.
2. Understand how the physical setting of a speech is an element that calls for preparation.
3. Examine some tips and strategies for common speaking situations.
4. Understand how to develop effective note cards for a speech.
5. Know how to use note cards
6. Explain why having a strong conversational quality is important for effective public speaking.
7. Explain the importance of eye contact in public speaking.
8. Define vocalics and differentiate among the different factors of vocalics.
9. Explain effective physical manipulation during a speech.
10. Understand how to practice effectively for good speech delivery.

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12.2: Four Methods of Delivery



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The easiest approach to speech delivery is not always the best. Substantial work goes into the careful preparation of an interesting and ethical message, so it is understandable that students may have the impulse to avoid “messing it up” by simply reading it word for word. But students who do this miss out on one of the major reasons for studying public speaking: to learn to “connect” with one’s audience and to increase one’s confidence. You already know how to read, and you already know how to talk. But public speaking is neither reading nor talking.

Speaking in public has more formality than talking. During a speech, you should present yourself professionally. This doesn’t mean you must wear a suit or “dress up” (unless your instructor asks you to), but it does mean making yourself presentable by being well groomed and wearing clean, appropriate clothes. You should consult with your instructor on what they consider "professional." It also means being prepared to use language correctly and appropriately for the audience and the topic, to maintain eye contact with your audience, and to look like you know your topic very well.

While speaking has more formality than talking, it has less formality than reading. Speaking allows for meaningful pauses, eye contact, small changes in word order, and vocal emphasis. Reading is more or less an exact replication of words on paper without the use of any nonverbal interpretation; speaking provides a more animated message.

The next sections introduce four methods of delivery that can help you balance between too much and too little formality when giving a public speech.

Impromptu Speaking

Impromptu speaking is the presentation of a short message without advance preparation. Impromptu speeches often occur when someone is asked to “say a few words” or give a toast on a special occasion. 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 documentary?”

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 his or her 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 you want to make.
- Thank the person for inviting you to speak.
- 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.
- Thank the person again for the opportunity to speak.
- Stop talking.

As you can see, impromptu speeches are generally most successful when they are brief and focus on a single point.

Extemporaneous Speaking

Extemporaneous speaking is the presentation of a carefully planned and rehearsed speech, spoken in a conversational manner using brief notes. Under no circumstances should the speaker be spending more than 20% of the speaking time looking at the notes. It would be ideal to practice so you only glance at your notes approximately 5% of the time of the speech. By using notes rather than a full manuscript, the extemporaneous speaker can establish and maintain eye contact with the audience and assess how well they are understanding the speech as it progresses. The opportunity to assess is also an opportunity to restate more clearly any idea or concept that the audience seems to have trouble grasping.

For instance, suppose you are speaking about workplace safety and you use the term “sleep deprivation.” If you notice your audience’s eyes glazing over, this might not be a result of their own sleep deprivation, but rather an indication of their uncertainty about what you mean. If this happens, you can add a short explanation; for example, “sleep deprivation is sleep loss serious enough to threaten one’s cognition, hand-to-eye coordination, judgment, and emotional health.” You might also (or instead) provide a concrete example to illustrate the idea. Then you can resume your message, having clarified an important concept.

Speaking extemporaneously has some advantages. It promotes the likelihood that you, the speaker, will be perceived as knowledgeable and credible. In addition, your audience is likely to pay better attention to the message because it is engaging both verbally and nonverbally. The disadvantage of extemporaneous speaking is that it requires a great deal of preparation for both the verbal and the nonverbal components of the speech. Adequate preparation cannot be achieved the day before you’re scheduled to speak.

Because extemporaneous speaking is the style used in the great majority of public speaking situations, most of the information in this chapter is targeted to this kind of speaking.

Speaking from a 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 visual aids.

The advantage to reading from a manuscript is the exact repetition of original words. As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in some circumstances this can be extremely important. 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.

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 (as poets do in a poetry slam and actors do in a reader’s theater), the presentation tends to be dull. Keeping one’s eyes glued to the script precludes 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 before the delivery begins.

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 a lot of practice, a speaker can achieve a conversational tone and give the impression of speaking extemporaneously 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. This is not a practical for most college level public speaking courses. Please avoid the temptation to read your speech directly to your audience when speaking online or in-person. This is a major frustration for college professors and it is obvious when a speaker is just reading the speech to their audience rather than speaking extemporaneously.

Speaking from Memory

Memorized speaking is the rote recitation of 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 scene. 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

visual aids, this freedom is even more of an advantage. However, there are some real and potential costs. First, unless you also plan and memorize every vocal cue (the subtle but meaningful variations in speech delivery, which can include the use of pitch, tone, volume, and pace), gesture, and facial expression, your presentation will be flat and uninteresting, and even the most fascinating topic will suffer. You might end up speaking in a monotone or a sing-song repetitive delivery pattern. You might also present your speech in a rapid “machine-gun” style that fails to emphasize the most important points. Second, 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. More frighteningly, if you go completely blank during the presentation, it will be extremely difficult to find your place and keep going.

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12.3: Speaking Contexts That Affect Delivery



Mad Mou – Empty – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous *I Have a Dream* speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at a gigantic civil rights rally on an August afternoon in 1963. His lectern was bristling with microphones placed there for news coverage and for recording the historic event. His audience, estimated to number a quarter of a million people, extended as far as the eye could see. He was the last speaker of the day, delivering his speech after more than a dozen civil rights leaders and world-famous performers such as Joan Baez, Mahalia Jackson, and Charlton Heston had occupied the stage (Ross, 2007). King gave us his speech in the assertive ringing tones of inspired vision. Nothing less would have worked that day.

Most of us will never speak to so many people at once. Even an appearance on television will probably command a much smaller audience than the crowd that heard King's speech. Even though you don't expect an audience of such size or a setting of such symbolic importance, you should still be prepared to adapt to the setting in which you will speak.

Our audiences, circumstances, and physical contexts for public speaking will vary. At some point in your life you may run for public office or rise to a leadership role in a business or volunteer organization. Or you may be responsible for informing coworkers about a new policy, regulation, or opportunity. You may be asked to deliver remarks in the context of a worship service, wedding, or funeral. You may be asked to introduce a keynote speaker or simply to make an important announcement in some context. Sometimes you will speak in a familiar environment, while at other times you may be faced with an unfamiliar location and very little time to get used to speaking with a microphone. These are contexts and situations we address in the following subsections.

Using Lecterns

A lectern is a small raised surface, usually with a slanted top, where a speaker can place notes during a speech. While a lectern adds a measure of formality to the speaking situation, it allows speakers the freedom to do two things: to come out from behind the lectern to establish more immediate contact with the audience and to use both hands for gestures.

However, for new speakers who feel anxious, it is all too tempting to grip the edges of the lectern with both hands for security. You might even wish you could hide behind it. 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. One way to achieve this is by limiting your use of the lectern to simply a place to rest your notes. 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.

Speaking in a Small or Large Physical 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 than what you are used to.

A large auditorium can be intimidating, especially for speakers who feel shy and "exposed" when facing an audience. However, the maxim that "proper preparation prevents poor performance" is just as true here as anywhere. If you have prepared and practiced well, you can approach a large-venue speaking engagement with confidence. In terms of practical adjustments, be aware that your voice is likely to echo, so you will want to speak more slowly than usual and make use of pauses to mark the ends of phrases and sentences. Similarly, your facial expressions and gestures should be larger so that they are visible from farther away. If you are using visual aids, they need to be large enough to be visible from the back of the auditorium.

Limited space is not as disconcerting for most speakers as enormous space, but it has the advantage of minimizing the tendency to pace back and forth while you speak. We have all seen dramatic soliloquies in the movies and plays where an actor makes use of the space on the stage, but this is generally not a good strategy for a speech. A small space also calls for more careful management of notecards and visual aids, as your audience will be able to see up close what you are doing with your hands. Do your best to minimize fumbling, including setting up in advance or arriving early to decide how to organize your materials in the physical space. We will discuss visual aids further in Chapter 15 "Presentation Aids: Design and Usage".

Speaking Outdoors

Outdoor settings can be charming, but they are prone to distractions. If you're giving a speech in a setting that is picturesquely beautiful, it may be difficult to maintain the audience's attention. If you know this ahead of time, you might plan your speech to focus more on mood than information and perhaps to make reference to the lovely view.

More typically, outdoor speech venues can pose challenges with weather, sun glare, and uninvited guests, such as ants and pigeons. If the venue is located near a busy highway, it might be difficult to make yourself heard over the ambient noise. You might lack the usual accommodations, such as a lectern or table. Whatever the situation, you will need to use your best efforts to project your voice clearly without sounding like you're yelling.

Using a Microphone

Most people today are familiar with microphones that are built into video recorders and other electronic devices, but they may be new at using a microphone to deliver a speech. One overall principle to remember is that a microphone only amplifies, it does not clarify. If you are not enunciating clearly, the microphone will merely enable your audience to hear amplified mumbling.

Microphones come in a wide range of styles and sizes. Generally, the easiest microphone to use is the clip-on style worn on the front of your shirt. If you look closely at many television personalities and news anchors, you will notice these tiny microphones clipped to their clothing. They require very little adaptation. You simply have to avoid looking down—at your notes, for instance—because your voice will be amplified when you do so.

Lectern and handheld microphones require more adaptation. If they're too close to your mouth, they can screech. If they're too far away, they might not pick up your voice. Some microphones are directional, meaning that they are only effective when you speak directly into them. If there is any opportunity to do so, ask for tips about how to use a particular microphone and practice with it for a few minutes while you have someone listen from a middle row in the audience and signal whether you can be heard well. The best plan, of course, would be to have access to the microphone for practice ahead of the speaking date.

Often a microphone is provided when it isn't necessary. If the room is small or the audience is close to you, do not feel obligated to use the microphone. Sometimes an amplified voice can feel less natural and less compelling than a direct voice. However, if you forgo the microphone, make sure to speak loudly enough for all audience members to hear you—not just those in front.

Audience Size

A small audience is an opportunity for a more intimate, minimally formal tone. If your audience has only eight to twelve people, you can generate greater audience contact. Make use of all the preparation you have done. You do not have to revamp your speech just because the audience is small. When the presentation is over, there will most likely be opportunities to answer questions and have individual contact with your listeners.

Your classroom audience may be as many as twenty to thirty students. The format for an audience of this size is still formal but conversational. Depending on how your instructor structures the class, you may or may not be asked to leave time after your speech for questions and answers.

Some audiences are much larger. If you have an audience that fills an auditorium, or if you have an auditorium with only a few people in it, you still have a clearly formal task, and you should be guided as much as possible by your preparation.

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12.4: Using Notes Effectively

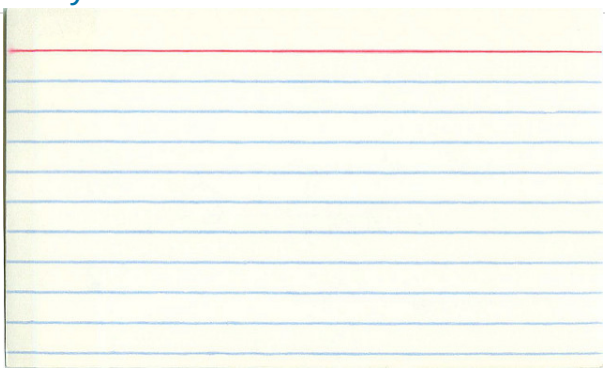


Figure 12.4.1: Blank index card! (CC BY 2.0; Dave Gray via Blank index card!)

It's a great deal of work to prepare a good speech, and you want to present it effectively so that your audience will benefit as much as possible. We've already said that extemporaneous speaking provides the best opportunity for speaker-audience contact and that speaking extemporaneously means you do not have your full manuscript or outline with you. Instead, you will use notecards. The cards should have notes, not the full text of your speech.

We have developed a system for creating highly effective notecards. Our system has been used effectively both in public speaking courses and in freshman composition courses. Surprisingly, the system consists of only five cards. For many people, this does not sound like nearly enough cards. We would make the case that you can do a good job with five cards, and we have seen many students do just that.

The Purpose of Speaker Notes

Using notes adds to your credibility as a speaker. If you depend on a full manuscript to get through your delivery, your listeners might believe you don't know the content of your speech. Second, the temptation to read the entire speech directly from a manuscript, even if you're only carrying it as a safety net, is nearly overwhelming. Third, well-prepared cards are more gracefully handled than sheets of paper, and they don't rattle if your hands tremble from nervousness. Finally, cards look better than sheets of paper. Five carefully prepared cards, together with practice, will help you more than you might think.

Key Tips for Using Notes

Plan on using just five cards, written on one side only. Get 4 × 6 cards. Use one card for the introduction, one card for each of your three main points, and one card for the conclusion.

Include Only Key Words

Your cards should include key words and phrases, not full sentences. The words and phrases should be arranged in order so that you can stay organized and avoid forgetting important points.

One exception to the key word guideline would be an extended or highly technical quotation from an authoritative source. If it is critically important to present an exact quotation, you may add one additional card that will contain the quotation together with its citation. If you plan to use such a quotation, make sure it has central importance in your speech.

Hold Your Notes Naturally

Notes are a normal part of giving a presentation. You do not need to conceal them from the audience; in fact, trying to hide and use your notes at the same time tends to be very awkward and distracting. Some instructors recommend that you avoid gesturing with your notes on the grounds that nervous shaking is more noticeable if you are holding your notes in your hand. If this is the case for you, practice gesturing with your free hand, or put your cards down if you need to use both hands. Other instructors recommend treating notecards as a natural extension of your hand, as they believe it is distracting to put your notes down and pick them up again. Whichever "rule" you follow, remember that the goal is for your use of notecards to contribute to your overall appearance of confidence and credibility.

Prepare Notecards to Trigger Recall

The “trick” to selecting the words to write on your cards is to identify the keywords that will trigger a recall sequence. For instance, if the word “Fukushima” brings to mind the nuclear power plant meltdown that followed the earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan in 2011, then that one word on your notecard should propel you through a sizable sequence of points and details. Once you have delivered that material, perhaps you’ll glance at your card again to remind yourself of the key word or phrase that comes next.

You must discover what works for you and then select those words that tend to jog your recall. Having identified what works, make a preliminary set of five cards, written on one side only. Number the cards, and practice with them. Revise and refine them the way you would an outline. If you must, rewrite an entire card to make it work better, and test it the next time you practice.

Always practice with your notecards—and with any visual aids you plan to use. Practicing is also the best way to find out what kinds of things might go wrong with your notes in the presented speech and what steps you should take to make things go smoothly.

Write in Large Letters

You should be able to read something on your card by glancing, not peering at it. A few key words and phrases, written in large, bold print with plenty of white space between them, will help you. If the lighting in your speech location is likely to have glare, be sure to write your notes in ink, as pencil can be hard to read in poor lighting.

Using Notecards Effectively

If you use as much care in developing your five notecards as you do your speech, they should serve you well. If you lose your place or go blank during the speech, you will only need a few seconds to find where you were and get going again. For instance, if you know that you presented the introduction and the first main point, which centers on the Emancipation Proclamation, you can readily go to your second card and remind yourself that your next main point is about the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution.

In addition, the use of your notecards allows you to depart from the exact prepared wordings in your manuscript. In your recovery from losing your place, you can transpose a word or phrase to make your recovery graceful. It allows you to avoid feeling pressured to say every single word in your manuscript.

Under no circumstances should you ever attempt to put your entire speech on cards in little tiny writing. You will end up reading words to your audience instead of telling them your meaning, and the visual aspect of your speech will be spoiled by your need to squint to read your cards.

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12.5: Practicing for Successful Verbal and Nonverbal Delivery



Figure 12.5.1: Speech (CC BY 2.0; Christian Pierret via Speech)

There is no foolproof recipe for good delivery. Each of us is unique, and we each embody different experiences and interests. This means each person has an approach, or a style, that is effective for them. This further means that anxiety can accompany even the most carefully researched and interesting message. Even when we know our messages are strong and well-articulated on paper, it is difficult to know for sure that our presentation will also be good.

We are still obligated to do our best out of respect for the audience and their needs. Fortunately, there are some tools that can be helpful to you even the very first time you present a speech. You will continue developing your skills each time you put them to use and can experiment to find out which combination of delivery elements is most effective for you.

What Is Good Delivery?

The more you care about your topic, the greater your motivation to present it well. Good delivery is a process of presenting a clear, coherent message in an interesting way. Communication scholar Stephen E. Lucas tells us:

Good delivery…conveys the speaker's ideas clearly, interestingly, and without distracting the audience. Most audiences prefer delivery that combines a certain degree of formality with the best attributes of good conversation—directness, spontaneity, animation, vocal and facial expressiveness, and a lively sense of communication (Lucas, 2009).

Many writers on the nonverbal aspects of delivery have cited the findings of psychologist Albert Mehrabian, asserting that the bulk of an audience's understanding of your message is based on nonverbal communication. Specifically, Mehrabian is often credited with finding that when audiences decoded a speaker's meaning, the speaker's face conveyed 55 percent of the information, the vocalics conveyed 38 percent, and the words conveyed just 7 percent (Mehrabian, 1972). Although numerous scholars, including Mehrabian himself, have stated that his findings are often misinterpreted (Mitchell), scholars and speech instructors do agree that nonverbal communication and speech delivery are extremely important to effective public speaking.

In this section of the chapter, we will explain six elements of good delivery: conversational style, conversational quality, eye contact, vocalics, physical manipulation, and variety. And since delivery is only as good as the practice that goes into it, we conclude with some tips for effective use of your practice time.

Conversational Style

Conversational style is a speaker's ability to sound expressive and to be perceived by the audience as natural. It's a style that approaches the way you normally express yourself in a much smaller group than your classroom audience. This means that you want to avoid having your presentation come across as didactic or overly exaggerated. You might not feel natural while you're using a conversational style, but for the sake of audience preference and receptiveness, you should do your best to appear natural. It might be helpful to remember that the two most important elements of the speech are the message and the audience. You are the conduit with the important role of putting the two together in an effective way. Your audience should be thinking about the message, not the delivery.

Stephen E. Lucas defines conversational quality as the idea that "no matter how many times a speech has been rehearsed, it still *sounds* spontaneous" [emphasis in original] (Lucas, 2009). No one wants to hear a speech that is so well rehearsed that it sounds fake or robotic. One of the hardest parts of public speaking is rehearsing to the point where it can appear to your audience that the

thoughts are magically coming to you while you're speaking, but in reality you've spent a great deal of time thinking through each idea. When you can sound conversational, people pay attention.

Eye Contact

Eye contact is a speaker's ability to have visual contact with everyone in the audience. Your audience should feel that you're speaking to them, not simply uttering main and supporting points. If you are new to public speaking, you may find it intimidating to look directly at your audience members in the eye, but if you think about speakers you have seen who did not maintain eye contact, you'll realize why this aspect of speech delivery is important. Without eye contact, the audience begins to feel invisible and unimportant, as if the speaker is just speaking to hear their own voice. Eye contact lets your audience feel that your attention is on them, not solely on the cards in front of you.

Sustained eye contact with your audience is one of the most important tools toward effective delivery. O'Hair, Stewart, and Rubenstein note that eye contact is mandatory for speakers to establish a good relationship with an audience (O'Hair, Stewart, & Rubenstein, 2001). Whether a speaker is speaking before a group of five or five hundred, the appearance of eye contact is an important way to bring an audience into your speech.

Eye contact can be a powerful tool. It is not simply a sign of sincerity, a sign of being well prepared and knowledgeable, or a sign of confidence; it also has the power to convey meanings. Arthur Koch tells us that all facial expressions "can communicate a wide range of emotions, including sadness, compassion, concern, anger, annoyance, fear, joy, and happiness" (Koch, 2010).

If you find the gaze of your audience too intimidating, you might feel tempted to resort to "faking" eye contact with them by looking at the wall just above their heads or by sweeping your gaze around the room instead of making actual eye contact with individuals in your audience until it becomes easier to provide real contact. The problem with fake eye contact is that it tends to look mechanical. Another problem with faking eye contact is that you lose the opportunity to assess the audience's understanding of your message. Still, fake eye contact is somewhat better than gripping your cards and staring at them and only occasionally glancing quickly and shallowly at the audience.

This is not to say that you may never look at your notecards. On the contrary, one of the skills in extemporaneous speaking is the ability to alternate one's gaze between the audience and one's notes. Rehearsing your presentation in front of a few friends should help you develop the ability to maintain eye contact with your audience while referring to your notes. When you are giving a speech that is well prepared and well rehearsed, you will only need to look at your notes occasionally. This is an ability that will develop even further with practice. Your public speaking course is your best chance to get that practice.

Effective Use of Vocalics

Vocalics, also known as paralanguage, is the subfield of nonverbal communication that examines how we use our voices to communicate orally. This means that you speak loudly enough for all audience members (even those in the back of the room) to hear you clearly, and that you enunciate clearly enough to be understood by all audience members (even those who may have a hearing impairment or who may be English-language learners). If you tend to be soft-spoken, you will need to practice using a louder volume level that may feel unnatural to you at first. For all speakers, good vocalic technique is best achieved by facing the audience with your chin up and your eyes away from your notecards and by setting your voice at a moderate speed. Effective use of vocalics also means that you make use of appropriate pitch, pauses, vocal variety, and correct pronunciation.

If you are an English-language learner and feel apprehensive about giving a speech in English, there are two things to remember: first, you can meet with a reference librarian to learn the correct pronunciations of any English words you are unsure of; and second, the fact that you have an accent means you speak more languages than most Americans, which is an accomplishment to be proud of.

If you are one of the many people with a stutter or other speech challenge, you undoubtedly already know that there are numerous techniques for reducing stuttering and improving speech fluency and that there is no one agreed-upon "cure." The Academy Award–winning movie *The King's Speech* did much to increase public awareness of what a person with a stutter goes through when it comes to public speaking. It also prompted some well-known individuals who stutter, such as television news reporter John Stossel, to go public about their stuttering (Stossel, 2011). If you have decided to study public speaking in spite of a speech challenge, we commend you for your efforts and encourage you to work with your speech instructor to make whatever adaptations work best for you.

Volume

Volume refers to the loudness or softness of a speaker's voice. As mentioned, public speakers need to speak loudly enough to be heard by everyone in the audience. In addition, volume is often needed to overcome ambient noise, such as the hum of an air conditioner or the dull roar of traffic passing by. In addition, you can use volume strategically to emphasize the most important points in your speech. Select these points carefully; if you emphasize everything, nothing will seem important. You also want to be sure to adjust your volume to the physical setting of the presentation. If you are in a large auditorium and your audience is several yards away, you will need to speak louder. If you are in a smaller space, with the audience a few feet away, you want to avoid overwhelming your audience with shouting or speaking too loudly.

Rate

Rate is the speed at which a person speaks. To keep your speech delivery interesting, your rate should vary. If you are speaking extemporaneously, your rate will naturally fluctuate. If you're reading your speech directly from a manuscript, your delivery is less likely to vary. Because rate is an important tool in enhancing the meanings in your speech, you do not want to give a monotone drone or a rapid "machine-gun" style delivery. Your rate should be appropriate for your topic and your points. A rapid, lively rate can communicate such meanings as enthusiasm, urgency, or humor. A slower, moderated rate can convey respect, seriousness, or careful reasoning. By varying rapid and slower rates within a single speech, you can emphasize your main points and keep your audience interested.

Pitch

Pitch refers to the highness or lowness of a speaker's voice. Some speakers have deep voices and others have high voices. As with one's singing voice range, the pitch of one's speaking voice is determined to a large extent by physiology (specifically, the length of one's vocal folds, or cords, and the size of one's vocal tract). We all have a normal speaking pitch where our voice is naturally settled, the pitch where we are most comfortable speaking, and most teachers advise speaking at the pitch that feels natural to you.

While our voices may be generally comfortable at a specific pitch level, we all have the ability to modulate, or move, our pitch up or down. In fact, we do this all the time. When we change the pitch of our voices, we are using inflections. Just as you can use volume strategically, you can also use pitch inflections to make your delivery more interesting and emphatic. If you ordinarily speak with a soprano voice, you may want to drop your voice to a slightly lower range to call attention to a particular point. How we use inflections can even change the entire meaning of what we are saying. For example, try saying the sentence "I love public speaking" with a higher pitch on one of the words—first raise the pitch on "I," then say it again with the pitch raised on "love," and so on. "*I* love public speaking" conveys a different meaning from "I love *public* speaking," doesn't it?

There are some speakers who don't change their pitch at all while speaking, which is called monotone. While very few people are completely monotone, some speakers slip into monotone patterns because of nerves. One way to ascertain whether you sound monotone is to record your voice and see how you sound. If you notice that your voice doesn't fluctuate very much, you will need to be intentional in altering your pitch to ensure that the emphasis of your speech isn't completely lost on your audience.

Finally, resist the habit of pitching your voice "up" at the ends of sentences. It makes them sound like questions instead of statements. This habit can be disorienting and distracting, interfering with the audience's ability to focus entirely on the message. The speaker sounds uncertain or sounds as though he or she is seeking the understanding or approval of the listener. It hurts the speaker's credibility and it needs to be avoided.

The effective use of pitch is one of the keys to an interesting delivery that will hold your audience's attention.

Pauses

Pauses are brief breaks in a speaker's delivery that can show emphasis and enhance the clarity of a message. In terms of timing, the effective use of pauses is one of the most important skills to develop. Some speakers become uncomfortable very quickly with the "dead air" that the pause causes. And if the speaker is uncomfortable, the discomfort can transmit itself to the audience. That doesn't mean you should avoid using pauses; your ability to use them confidently will increase with practice. Some of the best comedians use the well-timed pause to powerful and hilarious effect. Although your speech will not be a comedy routine, pauses are still useful for emphasis, especially when combined with a lowered pitch and rate to emphasize the important point you do not want your audience to miss.

Vocal Variety

Vocal variety has to do with changes in the vocalics we have just discussed: volume, pitch, rate, and pauses. No one wants to hear the same volume, pitch, rate, or use of pauses over and over again in a speech. Your audience should never be able to detect that you're about to slow down or your voice is going to get deeper because you're making an important point. When you think about how you sound in a normal conversation, your use of volume, pitch, rate, and pauses are all done spontaneously. If you try to overrehearse your vocalics, your speech will end up sounding artificial. Vocal variety should flow naturally from your wish to speak with expression. In that way, it will animate your speech and invite your listeners to understand your topic the way you do.

Pronunciation

The last major category related to vocalics is pronunciation, or the conventional patterns of speech used to form a word. Word pronunciation is important for two reasons: first, mispronouncing a word your audience is familiar with will harm your credibility as a speaker; and second, mispronouncing a word they are unfamiliar with can confuse and even misinform them. If there is any possibility at all that you don't know the correct pronunciation of a word, find out. Many online dictionaries, such as the Wiktionary (http://wiktionary.org), provide free sound files illustrating the pronunciation of words.

Many have commented on the mispronunciation of words such as "nuclear" and "cavalry" by highly educated public speakers, including US presidents. There have been classroom examples as well. For instance, a student giving a speech on the Greek philosopher Socrates mispronounced his name at least eight times during her speech. This mispronunciation created a situation of great awkwardness and anxiety for the audience. Everyone felt embarrassed and the teacher, opting not to humiliate the student in front of the class, could not say anything out loud, instead providing a private written comment at the end of class.

One important aspect of pronunciation is articulation, or the ability to clearly pronounce each of a succession of syllables used to make up a word. Some people have difficulty articulating because of physiological problems that can be treated by trained speech therapists, but other people have articulation problems because they come from a cultural milieu where a dialect other than standard American English is the norm. Speech therapists, who generally guide their clients toward standard American English, use the acronym SODA when helping people learn how to more effectively articulate: substitutions, omissions, distortions, and additions.

- **Substitutions** occur when a speaker replaces one consonant or vowel with another consonant (*water* becomes *wudda*; *mouth* becomes *mouf*).
- **Omissions** occur when a speaker drops a consonant or vowel within a word (*Internet* becomes *Innet*; *mesmerized* becomes *memerized*; *probably* becomes *prolly*).
- **Distortions** occur when a speaker articulates a word with nasal or slurring sounds (*pencil* sounds like *mencil*; *precipitation* sounds like *persination*; *second* sounds like *slecond*).
- **Additions** occur when a speaker adds consonants or vowels to words that are not there (*anyway* becomes *anyways*; *athletic* becomes *athaletic*; *black* becomes *buhlack*; *interpret* becomes *interpretate*).

Another aspect of pronunciation in public speaking is avoiding the use of verbal surrogates or "filler" words used as placeholders for actual words (like *er*, *um*, *uh*, etc.). You might be able to get away with saying "um" as many as two or three times in your speech before it becomes distracting, but the same cannot be said of "like." We know of a student who trained herself to avoid saying "like." As soon as the first speech was assigned, she began wearing a rubber band on her left wrist. Each time she caught herself saying "like," she snapped herself with the rubber band. It hurt. Very quickly, she found that she could stop inflicting the snap on herself, and she had successfully confronted an unprofessional verbal habit.

Effective Physical Manipulation

In addition to using our voices effectively, a key to effective public speaking is physical manipulation, or the use of the body to emphasize meanings or convey meanings during a speech. While we will not attempt to give an entire discourse on nonverbal communication, we will discuss a few basic aspects of physical manipulation: posture, body movement, facial expressions, and dress. These aspects add up to the overall physical dimension of your speech, which we call self-presentation.

Posture

"Stand up tall!" I'm sure we've all heard this statement from a parent or a teacher at some point in our lives. The fact is, posture is actually quite important. When you stand up straight, you communicate to your audience, without saying a word, that you hold a position of power and take your position seriously. If however, you are slouching, hunched over, or leaning on something, you could be perceived as ill prepared, anxious, lacking in credibility, or not serious about your responsibilities as a speaker. While

speakers often assume more casual posture as a presentation continues (especially if it is a long one, such as a ninety-minute class lecture), it is always wise to start by standing up straight and putting your best foot forward. Remember, you only get one shot at making a first impression, and your body's orientation is one of the first pieces of information audiences use to make that impression.

Body Movement

Unless you are stuck behind a podium because of the need to use a nonmovable microphone, you should never stand in one place during a speech. However, movement during a speech should also not resemble pacing. One of our authors once saw a speaker who would walk around a small table where her speaking notes were located. She would walk around the table once, toss her chalk twice, and then repeat the process. Instead of listening to what the speaker was saying, everyone became transfixed by her walk-and-chalk-toss pattern. As speakers, we must be mindful of how we go about moving while speaking. One common method for easily integrating some movement into your speech is to take a few steps any time you transition from one idea to the next. By only moving at transition points, not only do you help focus your audience's attention on the transition from one idea to the next, but you also are able to increase your nonverbal immediacy by getting closer to different segments of your audience.

Body movement also includes gestures. These should be neither overdramatic nor subdued. At one extreme, arm-waving and fist-pounding will distract from your message and reduce your credibility. At the other extreme, refraining from the use of gestures is the waste of an opportunity to suggest emphasis, enthusiasm, or other personal connection with your topic.

There are many ways to use gestures. The most obvious are hand gestures, which should be used in moderation at carefully selected times in the speech. If you overuse gestures, they lose meaning. Many late-night comedy parodies of political leaders include patterned, overused gestures or other delivery habits associated with a particular speaker. However, the well-placed use of simple, natural gestures to indicate emphasis, direction, size is usually effective. Normally, a gesture with one hand is enough. Rather than trying to have a gesture for every sentence, use just a few well-planned gestures. It is often more effective to make a gesture and hold it for a few moments than to begin waving your hands and arms around in a series of gestures.

Finally, just as you should avoid pacing, you will also want to avoid other distracting movements when you are speaking. Many speakers have unconscious mannerisms such as twirling their hair, putting their hands in and out of their pockets, jingling their keys, licking their lips, or clicking a pen while speaking. As with other aspects of speech delivery, practicing in front of others will help you become conscious of such distractions and plan ways to avoid doing them.

Facial Expressions

Faces are amazing things and convey so much information. As speakers, we must be acutely aware of what our face looks like while speaking. While many of us do not look forward to seeing ourselves on videotape, often the only way you can critically evaluate what your face is doing while you are speaking is to watch a recording of your speech. If video is not available, you can practice speaking in front of a mirror.

There are two extremes you want to avoid: no facial expression and overanimated facial expressions. First, you do not want to have a completely blank face while speaking. Some people just do not show much emotion with their faces naturally, but this blankness is often increased when the speaker is nervous. Audiences will react negatively to the message of such a speaker because they will sense that something is amiss. If a speaker is talking about the joys of Disney World and his face doesn't show any excitement, the audience is going to be turned off to the speaker and his message. On the other extreme end is the speaker whose face looks like that of an exaggerated cartoon character. Instead, your goal is to show a variety of appropriate facial expressions while speaking.

Like vocalics and gestures, facial expression can be used strategically to enhance meaning. A smile or pleasant facial expression is generally appropriate at the beginning of a speech to indicate your wish for a good transaction with your audience. However, you should not smile throughout a speech on drug addiction, poverty, or the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. An inappropriate smile creates confusion about your meaning and may make your audience feel uncomfortable. On the other hand, a serious scowl might look hostile or threatening to audience members and become a distraction from the message. If you keep the meaning of your speech foremost in your mind, you will more readily find the balance in facial expression.

Another common problem some new speakers have is showing only one expression. One of our coauthors competed in speech in college. After one of his speeches (about how people die on amusement park rides), one of his judges pulled him aside and informed him that his speech was "creepy." Apparently, while speaking about death, our coauthor smiled the entire time. The incongruity between the speech on death and dying and the coauthor's smile just left the judge a little creeped out. If you are

excited in a part of your speech, you should show excitement on your face. On the other hand, if you are at a serious part of your speech, your facial expressions should be serious.

Dress

While there are no clear-cut guidelines for how you should dress for every speech you'll give, dress is still a very important part of how others will perceive you (again, it's all about the first impression). If you want to be taken seriously, you must present yourself seriously. While we do not advocate dressing up in a suit every time you give a speech, there are definitely times when wearing a suit is appropriate.

One general rule you can use for determining dress is the "step-above rule," which states that you should dress one step above your audience. If your audience is going to be dressed casually in shorts and jeans, then wear nice casual clothing such as a pair of neatly pressed slacks and a collared shirt or blouse. If, however, your audience is going to be wearing "business casual" attire, then you should probably wear a sport coat, a dress, or a suit. The goal of the step-above rule is to establish yourself as someone to be taken seriously. On the other hand, if you dress two steps above your audience, you may put too much distance between yourself and your audience, coming across as overly formal or even arrogant.

Another general rule for dressing is to avoid distractions in your appearance. Overly tight or revealing garments, over-the-top hairstyles or makeup, jangling jewelry, or a display of tattoos and piercings can serve to draw your audience's attention away from your speech. Remembering that your message is the most important aspect of your speech, keep that message in mind when you choose your clothing and accessories.

Self-Presentation

When you present your speech, you are also presenting yourself. Self-presentation, sometimes also referred to as poise or stage presence, is determined by how you look, how you stand, how you walk to the lectern, and how you use your voice and gestures. Your self-presentation can either enhance your message or detract from it. Worse, a poor self-presentation can turn a good, well-prepared speech into a forgettable waste of time. You want your self-presentation to support your credibility and improve the likelihood that the audience will listen with interest.

Your personal appearance should reflect the careful preparation of your speech. Your personal appearance is the first thing your audience will see, and from it, they will make inferences about the speech you're about to present.

Variety

One of the biggest mistakes novice public speakers make is to use the same gesture over and over again during a speech. While you don't want your gestures to look fake, you should be careful to include a variety of different nonverbal components while speaking. You should make sure that your face, body, and words are all working in conjunction with each other to support your message.

Practice Effectively

You might get away with presenting a hastily practiced speech, but the speech will not be as good as it could be. In order to develop your best speech delivery, you need to practice—and use your practice time effectively. Practicing does not mean reading over your notes, mentally running through your speech, or even speaking your speech aloud over and over. Instead, you need to practice with the goal of identifying the weaknesses in your delivery, improving upon them, and building good speech delivery habits.

When you practice your speech, place both your feet in full, firm contact with the floor to keep your body from swaying side to side. Some new public speakers find that they don't know what to do with their hands during the speech. Your practice sessions should help you get comfortable. When you're not gesturing, you can rest your free hand lightly on a lectern or simply allow it to hang at your side. Since this is not a familiar posture for most people, it might feel awkward, but in your practice sessions, you can begin getting used to it.

Seek Feedback from Others

Because we can't see ourselves as others see us, one of the best ways to improve your delivery is to seek constructive criticism from others. This, of course, is an aspect of your public speaking course, as you will receive evaluations from your instructor and possibly from your fellow students. However, by practicing in front of others before it is time to present your speech, you can anticipate and correct problems so that you can receive a better evaluation when you give the speech "for real."

Ask your practice observers to be honest about the aspects of your delivery that could be better. Sometimes students create study groups just for this purpose. When you create a study group of classroom peers, everyone has an understanding of the entire creative process, and their feedback will thus be more useful to you than the feedback you might get from someone who has never taken the course or given a speech.

If your practice observers seem reluctant to offer useful criticisms, ask questions. How was your eye contact? Could they hear you? Was your voice well modulated? Did you mispronounce any words? How was your posture? Were your gestures effective? Did you have any mannerisms that you should learn to avoid? Because peers are sometimes reluctant to say things that could sound critical, direct questions are often a useful way to help them speak up.

If you learn from these practice sessions that your voice tends to drop at the ends of sentences, make a conscious effort to support your voice as you conclude each main point. If you learn that you have a habit of clicking a pen, make sure you don't have a pen with you when you speak or that you keep it in your pocket. If your practice observers mention that you tend to hide your hands in the sleeves of your shirt or jacket, next time wear short sleeves or roll your sleeves up before beginning your speech. If you learn through practice that you tend to sway or rock while you speak, you can consciously practice and build the habit of *not* swaying.

When it is your turn to give feedback to others in your group, assume that they are as interested in doing well as you are. Give feedback in the spirit of helping their speeches be as good as possible.

Use Audio and/or Video to Record Yourself

Technology has made it easier than ever to record yourself and others using the proliferation of electronic devices people are likely to own. Video, of course, allows you the advantage of being able to see yourself as others see you, while audio allows you to concentrate on the audible aspects of your delivery. As we mentioned earlier in the chapter, if neither video nor audio is available, you can always observe yourself by practicing your delivery in front of a mirror.

After you have recorded yourself, it may seem obvious that you should watch and listen to the recording. This can be intimidating, as you may fear that your performance anxiety will be so obvious that everyone will notice it in the recording. But students are often pleasantly surprised when they watch and listen to their recordings, as even students with very high anxiety may find out that they "come across" in a speech much better than they expected.

A recording can also be a very effective diagnostic device. Sometimes students believe they are making strong contact with their audiences, but their cards contain so many notes that they succumb to the temptation of reading. By finding out from the video that you misjudged your eye contact, you can be motivated to rewrite your notecards in a way that doesn't provide the opportunity to do so much reading.

It is most likely that in viewing your recording, you will benefit from discovering your strengths and finding weak areas you can strengthen.

Good Delivery Is a Habit

Luckily, public speaking is an activity that, when done conscientiously, strengthens with practice. As you become aware of the areas where your delivery has room for improvement, you will begin developing a keen sense of what "works" and what audiences respond to.

It is advisable to practice out loud in front of other people several times, spreading your rehearsals out over several days. To do this kind of practice, of course, you need to have your speech be finalized well ahead of the date when you are going to give it. During these practice sessions, you can time your speech to make sure it lasts the appropriate length of time. A friend of ours was the second student on the program in an event where each student's presentation was to last thirty to forty-five minutes. After the first student had been speaking for seventy-five minutes, the professor in charge asked, "Can we speed this up?" The student said yes, and proceeded to continue speaking for another seventy-five minutes before finally concluding his portion of the program. Although we might fault the professor for not "pulling the plug," clearly the student had not timed his speech in advance.

Your practice sessions will also enable you to make adjustments to your notecards to make them more effective in supporting your contact with your audience. This kind of practice is not just a strategy for beginners; it is practiced by many highly placed public figures with extensive experience in public speaking.

Your public speaking course is one of the best opportunities you will have to manage your performance anxiety, build your confidence in speaking extemporaneously, develop your vocal skills, and become adept at self-presentation. The habits you can develop through targeted practice are to build continuously on your strengths and to challenge yourself to find new areas for

improving your delivery. By taking advantage of these opportunities, you will gain the ability to present a speech effectively whenever you may be called upon to speak publicly.

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12.6: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

In this chapter we focused on the four main kinds of speech delivery: impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript, and memorized. Impromptu speaking involves delivering a message on the spur of the moment, as when someone is asked to "say a few words."Extemporaneous speaking consists of delivering a speech in a conversational fashion using notes. This is the style most speeches call for. Manuscript speaking consists of reading a fully scripted speech. It is useful when a message needs to be delivered in precise words. Memorized speaking consists of reciting a scripted speech from memory. Memorization allows the speaker to be free of notes.

Not every speaking setting happens in a classroom. As such, different environments call for speakers to think through their basic speaking strategies. Speakers need to be prepared to deal with five common challenges in speaking contexts: using a lectern, large or small space, speaking in the outdoors, using a microphone, and audience size.

Good notecards are carefully based on key words and phrases to promote recall. Preparing good notecards can keep you from reading to your audience. Good notecards should enhance your relationship with listeners.

Conversational style is a speaker's ability to sound expressive while being perceived by the audience as natural. Conversational quality is a speaker's ability to prepare a speech and rehearse a speech but still sound spontaneous when delivering it. Eye contact helps capture and maintain an audience's interest while contributing to the speaker's credibility. Vocalics are the nonverbal components of the verbal message. There are six important vocalic components for a speaker to be aware of: volume (loudness or softness), pitch (highness or lowness), rate (fastness or slowness), pauses (use of breaks to add emphasis), vocal variety (use of a range of vocalic strategies), and pronunciation (using conventional patterns of speech formation). Physical manipulation is the use of one's body to add meaning and emphasis to a speech. As such, excessive or nonexistent physical manipulation can detract from a speaker's speech.

The key to effective delivery is a habit that is built through effective practice.

Exercises

1. Find a short newspaper story. Read it out loud to a classroom partner. Then, using only one notecard, tell the classroom partner in your own words what the story said. Listen to your partner's observations about the differences in your delivery.
2. In a group of four or five students, ask each student to give a one-minute impromptu speech answering the question, "What is the most important personal quality for academic success?"
3. Watch the evening news. Observe the differences between news anchors using a TelePrompTer and interviewees who are using no notes of any kind. What differences do you observe?
4. Get permission from your instructor and announce a campus event to the class. Make sure your details are complete and accurate. How does your physical space affect the way you present the information?
5. Watch a speech that takes place indoors or outside. How do you think this speech would be different if the speech occurred in the other location? What changes would you recommend for the speaker?
6. If you were suddenly asked to give your next classroom speech in front of two hundred of your peers, how would adjust your speech? Why?
7. Using the introduction to your speech, create a 4 × 6 notecard that includes the grabber, the thesis statement, and the preview. Test it by standing as you would during a speech and using it to guide you.
8. Answer these questions: Is it absolutely crucial to utter every word on your outline? Are there some words or phrases that are crucially important? How can you use your notecards to focus on the most important ideas?
9. Select key terms from your speech that you believe will trigger your recall of the sequence of main ideas in your speech. Use them as the basis of your next four notecards. Test the cards by practicing with them to see whether your selected terms are the ones you should use.
10. Find a speech online and examine the speaker's overall presentation. How good was the speaker's delivery? Make a list of the aspects of delivery in this chapter and evaluate the speaker according to the list. In what areas might the speaker improve?
11. Record a practice session of your speech. Write a self-critique, answering the following questions: What surprised you the most? What is an area of strength upon which you can build? What is *one* area for improvement?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

13: Mediated Communication

13.1: Learning Objectives
13.2: Introduction to Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) and Speaking Online
13.3: Online Public Speaking
13.4: Tips and Checklist for Your Online Presentation
13.5: Conclusion and Exercises

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13.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Define synchronous and asynchronous communication
2. Understand digital public speaking as an emerging medium
3. Strategize best practices for online speaking

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13.2: Introduction to Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) and Speaking Online

The world of technology is constantly evolving and reaching every aspect of our lives and public speaking is no different. We now communicate just as much online as we do in person. In the Communication discipline we refer to speaking through mediated platforms (Zoom, Instagram, apps, email, texting, etc.) as “computer mediated communication” or CMC. It is important to differentiate between these channels and face-to-face (F2F) because of the difference in communicative skills needed for each channel. When communicating F2F, the message is richer; meaning, we can see the person’s body language, pick up subtle cues, and there is no delay in receiving messages. When communicating through mediated channels, we may miss out on body language, cues, and even through video messaging, there may be a delay or interruption. As a public speaker you need to be aware of how your presentation will change depending on the medium through which you are communicating.

If you were a student during 2020, you were part of the huge shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only were students and educators forced to move their classes online, but many businesses and employees went remote and had to adapt to doing their job through a computer screen. Although communicating online is not new, it certainly gained more importance and became our main channel of communication during this time. Now that communication technologies like, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime, and many others, became the new norm for how students, teachers, and employees communicated during the pandemic, this technology shows no sign of leaving our communicative practices. Even though some classes and businesses transitioned or will transition back to face-to-face communication, many have opted to keep communicating through these technologies. Therefore, it is important for students to not only be comfortable presenting in-person but also across mediated platforms. These skills will not only help if you are in an online class, but also in the workforce, as this seems to be the future of doing business.

In this chapter, we will cover the differences between presenting face-to-face and online, the different types of online speeches, and technical considerations. We will discuss the similarities and differences between public speaking F2F and through CMC and how to give a successful presentation via mediated technologies.As our society moves more towards communicating online, as public speakers you need to know how to adapt your presentations to the online environment.

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13.3: Online Public Speaking



Traditionally, public speaking has been understood as a face-to-face exchange between a designated speaker and an audience. 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.Although traditional face-to-face public speaking has a 2500-year history and thousands of research articles to support it, speaking online is a relatively new procedure.

All online speaking is not created equal. You might take an online class that requires you to send a video of yourself giving a speech for a grade. You might be participating—or leading—a "webinar," which is a meeting or presentation over the Internet using a tool such as Blackboard Collaborate, Canvas, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Adobe Connect, or one of many other webconferencing tools. These have become very common in the educational and business world because they save a huge amount of money—employees, students, and learners can meet without having to travel to another location

With this growth in popularity, we have a growth in problems and common behaviors, or misbehaviors, in webconferencing and thus online "public speaking." Much of the advice on webconference public speaking comes as antidotes to the worst practices that have developed in them, which are:

1. the audience's multitasking (and thus not fully attending to the webinar)
2. the audience's being bored to death and going to sleep

Both of these conditions come from the fact that the communication is mediated and that in many cases the speaker and audience don't see each other. Even when the participants use their web cameras (which doesn't always happen), the screen is often covered with a slide and the speaker is invisible. Therefore, the speaker has to depend on something else to address the temptation to multitask or nod off.

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

Online public speaking – also known 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. Purpose, synchronicity, and the audience all play key roles in online public speaking.

Purpose

Online speaking opportunities are not created equally, and each speech will have different general purpose—informing, persuading, or entertaining. Remember that just like other forms of public speaking, digital oratory requires a thesis statement, and the purpose of your speech 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, prepare by considering your purpose for speaking and your thesis, then, organize your speech around the answer.

For example, you might be participating—or leading—a live webinar via Zoom or recording an instructional video that explains how to use a new piece of technology and which you might upload to YouTube. 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

Synchronicity describes whether your digital oratory will be delivered live or recorded for people to use later, 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. For example, if you're speaking to a non-profit organization about a local food pantry project through Zoom 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. 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 can't correct it later. The mishap also happens in real time, and those barriers can influence your credibility as a speaker.

In asynchronous speaking, you can control the content more easily because you can re-record the material to fix any technological errors. However, in asynchronous speaking, you cannot get live feedback from your audience, so you may be unaware if there's a key question or issue they need answered.

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 (the people who are physically present in the audience) or discrete (or targeted audience). In online speaking, you may have a discrete or dispersed audience (an audience whose members hear the speech in different times and locations). 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 Zoom. 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, in other instances, 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. 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 a Member of the Audience: you'll likely be an audience member for 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.

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.

Integrate the presentation strategies for an online speech 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.

At the beginning of the pandemic, when many of us were just learning how to use Zoom, we learned the hard way about what can be heard on camera if we weren't careful when meetings were interrupted by barking dogs, passing traffic outside, the voices of others who were not on camera, or the sounds of toilets flushing or lawn crews working next door.

Remember that extra noise is distracting: it can influence your credibility and the likelihood that an audience will continue listening. Try to find a quiet setting where you can record your speech without background noise or interruption.

Nonverbal Delivery

When rehearsing your nonverbal delivery, ask, "what's visible in the video?"

If your body is visible, you should rehearse with Chapter 12 in mind. As you rehearse, be conscious of where the camera will be. Will there be just one? Will there be multiple cameras? How far away is the camera? 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."

Background and Lighting

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. Are there windows behind you with bright light streaming through, making you almost invisible? If so, can you close the blinds or curtains or move? Can you set up a ring light to offset the light coming through outside sources and enhance your appearance? Does your videoconferencing software have filters that blur out imperfections that might otherwise be heightened by visual photography? It is best if you can have a light source facing your rather than behind you while recording the delivery of your speech. Facing a window (allowing daylight to naturally brighten your face) while recording also works really well.

Camera Positioning

Because your facial expressions and body language are also visible in a digital speech, you will want to pay some attention to how the camera(s) is positioned. Don't position the camera so closely that your head fills the frame, or so far away that you are a tiny object in the frame. To look your best, position the camera so that you are viewed from above from between 15° to 30° from eye level. Filming yourself at eye-level might make your facial features appear flat, while filming yourself from below eye level gives

the impression that you are towering over your audience. If your camera is in your laptop computer, try balancing it on a small stack of books to achieve an optimal level.

Wardrobe, Hair, and Makeup

Wear appropriate clothing on all parts of your body. By now, everyone has heard at least one story of someone in a Zoom meeting who stood up to reveal that he was wearing pajamas or sweatpants below more formal clothing on top, or worse. Dress as if the audience might see your entire body to avoid such embarrassment. Also, make sure that your clothing looks good on camera in terms of color and lighting in your setting. Avoid noisy jewelry such as earrings or bangles that jingle if you move. Style your hair the way you would if you were meeting with this audience in person. Also, if you normally wear cosmetics when you meet with this type of audience in person, wear them on camera as well. Your goal is to look just as you would in the same setting if you were meeting face to face.

For more detailed information, check out "Six Tips for Looking Great in a Zoom Meeting," Jefferson Graham (2020).

Dress Rehearsal

Rehearse under these conditions and record your facial expressions to see how they are translating to others. Is your body language clear? Do some gestures or facial expressions look exaggerated? Can you adjust the camera position or lighting? Are your clothing and accessories distracting or do they make you fade into the background? Do you look professional? A videoed rehearsal will provide you with answer to these questions.

Remember that effective rehearsal occurs under the conditions that you'll speak. 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:

Make sure you will not be interrupted during the web conference.

Have notes and anything else you need at hand. While you can use a computer to display them, be conscious of your audience's ability to see you reading.

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. Don't use a visual aid to avoid being seen because the audience will be much more interested in your embodied presentation. Second, do you know how to share your visual aid via the digital platform you will be speaking through? As with all other aspects of online public speaking, you need to practice beforehand so that you know what your audience will see as well as how to quickly switch from your screen to the visual aid and back again.

If you deem that a presentation aid is absolutely necessary (or required) 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 spare you from having an additional technological component.

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. Rehearse under the conditions that you'll speak. Be confident that you're aware of

- the technology you will need,
- where it will be placed,
- which technology that you are responsible for running, and
- how your embodiment of information translates.

Sharing Audiovisual Recordings

If you are recording an asynchronous presentation to share with others, post it to a cloud first (such as SoundCloud or YouTube) and send your instructor the link. Audiovisual recording files are too large to be emailed easily.

References

Graham, J. (2020). “Six tips for looking great in a Zoom meeting.” USA Today. usatoday.com/story/tech/...st/5125980002/

Lind, S. (2012). “Teaching digital oratory: Public speaking 2.0.” Communication Teacher, 26(3), 163-169.

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13.4: Tips and Checklist for Your Online Presentation

Experts give a few other preparation tips:



1. Make sure you will not be interrupted when presenting your speech. This can be extremely embarrassing as well as ineffective. You have probably seen the priceless video from the BBC of an interview with an expert on Korea. His children photobomb the interview and then the mother tries to clean up the damage. It is hilarious, but the same situation won't be for you. Lock the door, put a big sign on the door not to be disturbed, and turn off the phones
2. Have notes and anything else you need right at hand.
3. Along with standing up for your presentation, smile. People can hear a smile even when they don't see you.
4. Your anxiety does not go away just because you cannot see everyone in your "online audience." Also, you might not have ever met the people to whom you are speaking. Be aware of the likelihood of anxiety— it might not hit until you are "on air." As Ron Ashkenas says, "Anxiety in speaking is like static on the radio."
5. In your use of periodic questions, be specific. The typical "Any questions?-pause- let's go on" is really pretty ineffective. First, it's not directed or specific, and second, people need time to formulate their questions and articulate them. Even saying, "What questions do you have?" is better, but even better is to ask specific questions about what you've been addressing. Many times you can forecast possible questions, and use those.
6. The issue of a question-and-answer period brings up a logistical question. Some participants will question orally through the web cam set-up. Others, with limited technology, will use the chat feature. It takes time to type in the chat feature. Be prepared for pauses.
7. Remember the power of transitions. Many people think that slides don't need transitions because, well, they change, isn't that enough? No, it's not. The speaker needs to tie the messages of the slides together.
8. Verbal pauses can be helpful. Since one of the things that put audiences to sleep is continual, non-stop flow of words, a pause can get attention.
9. Finally, in preparing, think humor. Humor is a great attention-getter. Cartoons, short videos, funny anecdotes, and visual humor can help you work against the audience's temptations to multitask or daydream in a webinar. There is a limit and it should be tasteful and relevant, but humor might be one of your best allies. Plus, it might increase your own energy level and fun with the webinar.

Use this checklist as you prepare for your next online presentation!

1. Make sure your camera is set at a good angle and the picture is clear. Make sure your microphone is picking up sound clearly.

2. Make sure you test out the software ahead of your presentation to make sure you are familiar with it, and everything works correctly.

3. Double check presentational aids. Practice using them in your speech.

4. Use note cards or a form of speaking notes that allow you to keep good eye contact with your audience/camera.

5. Ensure you are in a well-lit, quiet area (light should be facing you, behind your camera). Avoid putting a light source behind you.

6. Check that the camera is set up at a good angle—we should be able to see you from about the waist up and camera should be at about eye level.

7. Remember to look at your webcam, not yourself or slides on screen or elsewhere. Avoid reading your speech to your audience.

8. Project your voice and speak clearly. Avoid speaking too fast. Make sure you are projecting your voice.

9. Practice and record yourself speaking. This is the best way to improve you skills and prepare for a successful presentation!

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13.5: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

As our society continues to move towards communicating online, as public speakers you need to know how to adapt your presentations to the online environment. In this chapter we discussed the differences between presenting face-to-face and online, the different types of online speeches, and technical considerations.

As mentioned before, this subject is an evolving one. These tips and tactics should help not just avoid the major problems but also cross the finish line into an effective presentation. Links that might help with this topic:

https://www.inc.com/kevin-daum/10-ti...entations.html

https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-to-give-a-killer-online-presentation/

http://performancesalesandtraining.c...-presentation/

http://web.archive.org/web/20170107231908/https://blog.cengage.com/five-guidelines-for-effective-online-presentations/

https://www.forbes.com/sites/kathycaprino/2013/05/28/how-to-bypass-the-5-worst-mistakes-in-online-presentations/?sh=7471ea913361

http://planyourmeetings.com/10-tips-...presentations/

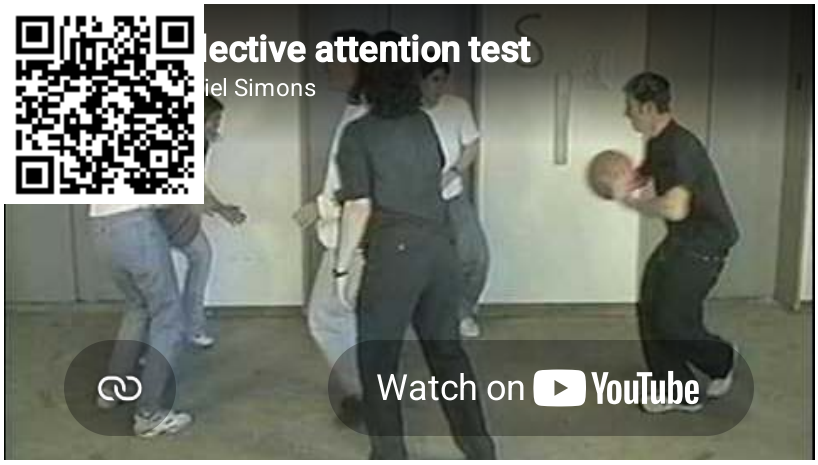
https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/10-tips-giving-effective-virtual-presentations

https://hbr.org/2014/01/presenting-t...e-presentation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJG698U2Mvo

Exercises

1. Choose one of the websites above and explain at least three tips you would like to follow when preparing to speaking online.

2. Watch the following video, how does this reflect "selective attention"? How might we apply this knowledge to public speaking online?



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

14: Presentation Aids- Design and Usage

14.1: Learning Objectives
14.2: Functions of Presentation Aids
14.3: Types of Presentation Aids
14.4: Media to Use for Presentation Aids
14.5: Presentation Aids Online
14.6: Tips for Preparing Presentation Aids
14.7: Conclusion and Exercises

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14.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

1. List four reasons why presentation aids are important in public speaking.
2. Explain two ways in which presentation aids can increase audience understanding of a message.
3. Describe four common types of representations.
4. Understand how charts can be used to present information.
5. Explain the importance of using graphs while speaking.
6. Differentiate between objects and models.
7. Understand why it is important to keep presentation aids organized and simple.
8. Explain how to make presentation aids easy to see, hear, and understand.
9. Identify advantages and disadvantages of different presentation aid media.
10. Explain the role of careful planning and good execution when using presentation aids.

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14.2: 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.

Presentation aids can fulfill several functions: they can serve to 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, and 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 the fact that perception and interpretation are highly complex individual processes. 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. This shows how interpretations 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 presentations 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.

Clarifying

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

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. The diagram in Figure 14.1A (left) would be effective because it shows the audience the interaction between equatorial wind patterns and wind patterns moving in other directions. The diagram allows the audience to process the information in two ways: through your verbal explanation and through the visual elements of the diagram.

Figure 14.1B (center) is another example of a diagram that maps out the process of human communication. In this image you clearly have a speaker and an audience (albeit slightly abstract), with the labels of source, channel, message, receivers, and feedback to illustrate the basic linear model of human communication.

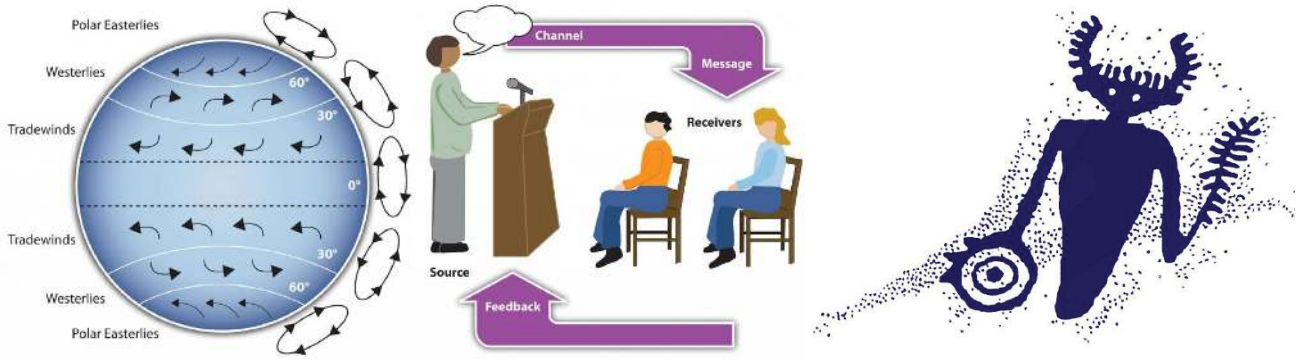


Figure 14.1 14.2.1: A(left) Coriolis Effect, B(middle) Model of Communication, C(right) Petroglyph

Another aspect of clarifying occurs when a speaker wants to visually help audience members understand a visual concept. For example, if a speaker is talking about the importance of petroglyphs in Native American culture, just describing the petroglyphs won't completely help your audience to visualize what they look like. Instead, showing an example of a petroglyph, as in Figure 14.1C (right), can more easily help your audience form a clear mental image of your intended meaning.

Emphasizing

When you use a presentational aid for emphasis, you impress your listeners with the importance of an idea. In a speech on water conservation, you might try to show the environmental proportions of the resource. When you use a conceptual drawing like the one in Figure 14.2 A (left) “Planetary Water Supply”, you show that if the world water supply were equal to ten gallons, only ten drops would be available and potable for human or household consumption. This drawing is effective because it emphasizes the scarcity of useful water and thus draws attention to this important information in your speech.

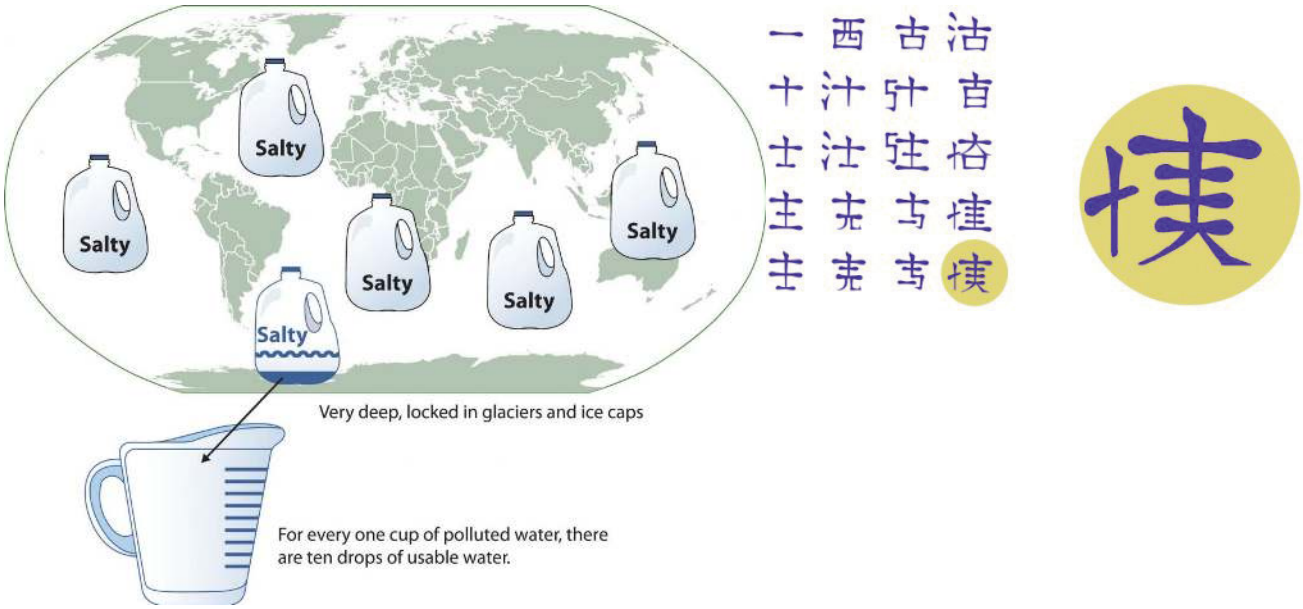


Figure 14.2 14.2.2: A (left) Planetary Water Supply B (right) Chinese Lettering Amplified (Wikimedia Commons – public domain)

Another way of emphasizing that can be done visually is to zoom in on a specific aspect of interest within your speech. In Figure 14.2 B (Right)“Chinese Lettering Amplified”, we see a visual aid used in a speech on the importance of various parts of Chinese characters. On the left side of the visual aid, we see how the characters all fit together, with an emphasized version of a single character on the right.

Aiding Retention and Recall

The second function that presentation aids can serve is to increase the audience’s chances of remembering your speech. A 1996 article by the US Department of Labor 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” (United States Department of Labor, 1996). Most of how people learn is through seeing things, so the visual component of learning is very important. The article goes on to note that information stored in long-term memory is also affected by how we originally learn the material. In a study of memory, learners were asked to recall information after a three day period. The researchers found that they retained 10 percent of what they heard from an oral presentation, 35 percent from a visual presentation, and 65 percent from a visual and oral presentation (Lockard & Sidowski, 1961). It’s amazing to see how the combined effect of both the visual and oral components can contribute to long-term memory.

For this reason, exposure to a visual 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.

Moreover, people often are able to remember information that is presented in sequential steps more easily than if that information is presented in an unorganized pattern. When you use a presentation aid to display the organization of your speech, you will help your listeners to observe, follow, and remember the sequence of information you conveyed to them. This is why some instructors display a lecture outline for their students to follow during class.

An added plus of using presentation aids is that they can boost your 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. For example, if you are giving an informative speech about diamonds, you might plan to display

a sequence of slides illustrating the most popular diamond shapes: brilliant, marquise, emerald, and so on. As you finish describing one shape and advance to the next slide, seeing the next diamond shape will help you remember the information about it that you are going to deliver.

Adding Variety and Interest

A third function of presentation aids is simply to make your speech more interesting. While it is true that a good speech and a well-rehearsed delivery will already include variety in several aspects of the presentation, in many cases, a speech can be made even more interesting by the use of well-chosen presentation aids.

For example, you may have prepared a very good speech to inform a group of gardeners about several new varieties of roses suitable for growing in your local area. Although your listeners will undoubtedly understand and remember your message very well without any presentation aids, wouldn't your speech have greater impact if you accompanied your remarks with a picture of each rose? You can imagine that your audience would be even more enthralled if you had the ability to display an actual flower of each variety in a bud vase.

Similarly, if you were speaking to a group of gourmet cooks about Indian spices, you might want to provide tiny samples of spices that they could smell and taste during your speech. Taste researcher Linda Bartoshuk has given presentations in which audience members receive small pieces of fruit and are asked to taste them at certain points during the speech (Association for Psychological Science, 2011).

Enhancing a Speaker's Credibility

Presentation aids alone will not be enough to create a professional image. As we mentioned earlier, impressive presentation aids will not rescue a poor speech. However, even if you give a good speech, you run the risk of appearing unprofessional if your presentation aids are poorly executed. 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. Conversely, a high quality presentation will contribute to your professional image. 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.

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, credible speaker.

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14.3: Types of Presentation Aids

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 to fulfill your classroom assignment. Although the maxim “less is more” may sound like a cliché, it really does apply in this instance. The number and the technical sophistication of your presentation aids should never overshadow your speech.

Another important consideration is technology. Keep your presentation aids within the limits of the working technology available to you. Whether or not your classroom technology works on the day of your speech, you will still have to present. What will you do if the computer file containing your slides is corrupted? What will you do if the easel is broken? What if you had counted on stacking your visuals on a table that disappears right when you need it? You must be prepared to adapt to an uncomfortable and scary situation. This is why we urge students to go to the classroom at least fifteen minutes ahead of time to test the equipment and ascertain the condition of things they’re planning to use. 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, and have an alternative plan prepared in case there is some glitch that prevents your computer-based presentation aids from being usable. The more sophisticated the equipment is, the more you should be prepared with an alternative, even in a “smart classroom.”

More important than the method of delivery is the audience’s ability to see and understand the presentation aid. It must deliver clear information, and it must not distract from the message. Avoid overly elaborate presentation aids because they can distract the audience’s attention from your message. Instead, simplify as much as possible, emphasizing the information you want your audience to understand.

Another thing to remember is that 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.

Although there are many useful presentation tools, you should not attempt to use every one of these tools in a single speech. Your presentation aids should be designed to look like a coherent set. For instance, if you decide to use three slides and a poster, all four of these visual aids should make use of the same type font and basic design.

Now that we’ve explored some basic hints for preparing visual aids, let’s look at the most common types of visual aids: charts, graphs, representations, objects/models, and people.

Charts

A chart is commonly defined as a graphical representation of data (often numerical) or a sketch representing an ordered process. Whether you create your charts or do research to find charts that already exist, it is important for them to exactly match the specific purpose in your speech. Figure 14.3.1 14.3.1 shows one chart related to acupuncture. This chart might not be useful in a speech about the history and development of acupuncture, but it would be useful for showing the locations of meridians, or the lines along which energy is thought to flow, and the acupuncture points.



Figure 14.3.1 14.3.1: Acupuncture Charts (public domain; Wikimedia Commons)

In the rest of this section, we're going to explore three common types of charts: statistical charts, sequence-of-steps chart, and decision trees.

Statistical Charts

For most audiences, statistical presentations must be kept as simple as possible, and they must be explained. Unless you are familiar with statistics, statistical charts may be very confusing. 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. If you are unsure about the data yourself, then you should probably not use this type of information. This is surely an example of a visual aid that, although it delivers a limited kind of information, does not speak for itself.

Sequence-of-Steps Charts

Figure 14.3.2 Steps in Cell Reproduction. Wikimedia Commons – public domain; and Wikimeida Commons – public domain.

Congenital Anomalies	Relative Risk	Number of Smokers N = 1,943	Number of Nonsmokers N = 16,073	95% Cl	p-Value
Cardiovascular System	1.56	43	217	1.12-2.19	p <.01</td>
Skeletal System	1.11	19	139	0.68-1.82	NS
Hematologic System	1.39	20	121	0.86-2.25	NS
Nervous System	1.30	4	25	0.91-1.86	NS
Pulmonary System	1.25	7	39	0.55-2.84	NS
Gastrointestinal System	0.54	1	17	0.07-4.11	NS

Charts are also useful when you are trying to explain a process that involves several steps. The two visual aids in Figure 14.3.3 "Steps in Cell Reproduction" both depict the process of cell division called mitosis using a sequence-of-steps chart, but they each deliver different information. The first chart lacks labels to indicate the different phases of cell division. Although the first chart may have more color and look more polished, the missing information may confuse your audience. In the second chart, each phase is labeled with a brief explanation of what is happening, which can help your audience understand the process.

Decision Trees

Sometimes a photograph or a drawing is the best way to show an unfamiliar but important detail. Figure 13.3.3 A (left) “Wigwam Picture” is a photograph of a wigwam, a wigwam was a living dwelling used by Native Americans in the North East. In this photograph you can see the curved birchbark exterior, which makes this dwelling ideal for a variety of weather conditions. The photograph of the tall ship in Figure 13.3.3 B (right) “Ship’s Rigging” emphasizes the sheer amount and complexity of the ship’s rigging.



Figure 13.3.3 14.3.3: (A) To Play or Not to Play. Iheartpandas – Wigwams – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0. (B) Ship’s Rigging Wikimedia Commons – public domain.

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.

Imagine, for example, that you’re giving a speech on how “Lap-Band” surgeries help people lose weight. One of the sections of your speech could explain how the Lap-Band works, so you could easily show the following forty-three-second video to demonstrate the medical part of the surgery: Lap-Band Procedure.

There is one major caveat 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 three mistakes that speakers often make when using audio and video clips:

1. Avoid choosing clips that are too long for the overall length of the speech. If you are giving a five-minute speech, then any audio or video clip you use should be under thirty seconds in length.
2. Don’t fail to 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. This fiddling around will not only take your audience out of your speech but also have a negative impact on your credibility.
3. Don’t fail to cue the clip to the appropriate place prior to beginning your speech. We cannot tell you the number of times we’ve seen students spend valuable speech time trying to find a clip on YouTube or a DVD. You need to make sure your clip is ready to go before you start speaking.

Objects or Models

Objects and models are another form of presentation aid that can be very helpful in getting your audience to understand your message. 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. If you’re talking about the percussion family of musical instruments and you own (and can play) several different percussion instruments, you can show your audience in person what they look like and how they sound.

Models, on the other hand, are re-creations of physical objects that you cannot have readily available with you during a speech. If you’re giving a speech on heart murmurs, you may be able to show how heart murmurs work by holding up a model of the human heart.

People and Animals

The next category of presentation aids are people and animals. We can often use ourselves or other people to adequately demonstrate an idea during our speeches.

Animals as Presentation Aids

When giving a speech on a topic relating to animals, it is often tempting to bring an animal to serve as your presentation aid. While this can sometimes add a very engaging dimension to the speech, it carries some serious risks that you need to consider.

- The first risk is that animal behavior tends to be unpredictable. You may think this won't be a problem if your presentation aid animal is a small enough to be kept confined throughout your speech—for example, a goldfish in a bowl or a lizard or bird in a cage. However, even caged animals can be very distracting to your audience if they run about, chirp, or exhibit other agitated behavior. The chances are great that an animal will react to the stress of an unfamiliar situation by displaying behavior that does not contribute positively to your speech.
- The second risk is that some audience members may respond negatively to a live animal. In addition to common fears and aversions to animals like snakes, spiders, and mice, many people have allergies to various animals.
- The third risk is that some locations may have regulations about bringing animals onto the premises. If animals are allowed, the person bringing the animal may be required to bring a veterinary certificate or may be legally responsible for any damage caused by the animal.

For these reasons, before you decide to use an animal as a presentation aid, ask yourself if you could make your point equally well with a picture, model, diagram, or other representation of the animal in question.

Speaker as Presentation Aid

Speakers can often use their own bodies to demonstrate facets of a speech. If your speech is about ballroom dancing or ballet, you might use your body to demonstrate the basic moves in the cha-cha or the five basic ballet positions.

Other People as Presentation Aids

In many speeches, it can be cumbersome and distracting for the speaker to use their own body to illustrate a point. In such cases, the best solution is to ask someone else to serve as your presentation aid.

You should arrange ahead of time for a person (or persons) to be an effective aid—do not assume that an audience member will volunteer on the spot. If you plan to demonstrate how to immobilize a broken bone, your volunteer must know ahead of time that you will touch him or her as much as necessary to splint their foot. You must also make certain that they will arrive dressed presentably and that they will not draw attention away from your message through their appearance or behavior.

The transaction between you and your human presentation aid must be appropriate, especially if you are going to demonstrate something like a dance step. Use your absolute best judgment about behavior, and make sure that your human presentation aid understands this dimension of the task.

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14.4: Media to Use for Presentation Aids

The venue of your speech should suggest the appropriate selection of presentation aids. In your classroom, you have several choices, including some that omit technology. If you are speaking in a large auditorium, you will almost certainly need to use technology to project text and images on a large screen.

Many students feel that they lack the artistic skills to render their own graphics, so they opt to use copyright-free graphics on their presentation aids. You may do this as long as you use images that are created in a consistent style.

In keeping with careful choices and effective design, we also have to do a good job in executing presentation aids. They should never look hastily made, dirty, battered, or disorganized. They do not have to be fancy, but they do need to look professional. In this section we will discuss the major types of media that can be used for presentation aids, which include computer-based media, audiovisual media, and low-tech media.

Computer-Based Media

In most careers in business, industry, and other professions for which students are preparing themselves, computer-based presentation aids are the norm today. Whether the context is a weekly department meeting in a small conference room or an annual convention in a huge amphitheater, speakers are expected to be comfortable with using PowerPoint or other similar software to create and display presentation aids.

If your public speaking course meets in a smart classroom, you have probably had the opportunity to see the computer system in action. Many such systems today are easy to use. Still, “easy” is a relative term. Don’t take for granted someone else’s advice that “it’s really self-explanatory”—instead, make sure to practice ahead of time. It is also wise to be prepared for technical problems, which can happen to even the most sophisticated computer users. When Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple and cofounder of Pixar, introduced a new iPhone 4 in June, 2010, his own visual presentation froze (Macworld, 2010). The irony of a high-tech guru’s technology not working at a public presentation did not escape the notice of news organizations.

The world was first introduced to computer presentations back in the 1970s, but these software packages were expensive and needed highly trained technicians to operate the programs. Today, there are a number of presentation software programs that are free or relatively inexpensive and that can be learned quickly by nonspecialists. Table 14.4 “Presentation Software Packages” lists several of these.

Table 14.4 Presentation Software Packages

Name	Website	Price
Google Presentations	https://www.google.com/slides/about/	Free
Harvard Graphics	http://www.harvardgraphics.com	$
Keynote	http://www.apple.com/keynote	$
OpenOffice Impress	http://www.openoffice.org/product/impress.html	Free
PowerPoint	https://products.office.com/en-us/powerpoint	$
PrezentIt	http://prezentit.com	Free
Prezi	prezi.com	Free/$
ThinkFree Show	http://member.thinkfree.com	Free
Zoho Show	show.zoho.com	Free

In addition to becoming more readily accessible, presentation software has become more flexible over the years. As recently as the mid-2000s, critics such as the eminent graphic expert and NASA consultant Edward Tufte charged that PowerPoint’s tendency to force the user to put a certain number of bullet points on each slide in a certain format was a serious threat to the accurate presentation of data. As Tufte put it, “the rigid slide-by-slide hierarchies, indifferent to content, slice and dice the evidence into

arbitrary compartments, producing an anti-narrative with choppy continuity" (Tufte, 2005). Tufte argues that poor decision making, such as was involved with the 2003 space shuttle Columbia disaster, may have been related to the shortcomings of such presentation aids in NASA meetings. While more recent versions of PowerPoint and similar programs allow much more creative freedom in designing slides, this freedom comes with a responsibility—the user needs to take responsibility for using the technology to support the speech and not get carried away with the many special effects the software is capable of producing.

What this boils down to is observing the universal principles of good design, which include unity, emphasis or focal point, scale and proportion, balance, and rhythm (Lauer & Pentak, 2000). As we've mentioned earlier, it's generally best to use a single font for the text on your visuals so that they look like a unified set. In terms of scale or proportion, it is essential to make sure the information is large enough for the audience to see; and since the display size may vary according to the monitor you are using, this is another reason for practicing in advance with the equipment you intend to use. The rhythm of your slide display should be reasonably consistent—you would not want to display a dozen different slides in the first minute of a five-minute presentation and then display only one slide per minute for the rest of the speech.

In addition to presentation software such as PowerPoint, speakers sometimes have access to interactive computer-based presentation aids. These are often called "clickers"—handheld units that audience members hold and that are connected to a monitor to which the speaker has access. These interactive aids are useful for tracking audience responses to questions, and they have the advantage over asking for a show of hands in that they can be anonymous. A number of instructors in various courses use "clickers" in their classrooms.

Using computer-based aids in a speech brings up a few logistical considerations. In some venues, you may need to stand behind a high-tech console to operate the computer. You need to be aware that this will physically isolate you from the audience you with whom you are trying to establish a relationship in your speech. When you stand behind presentation equipment, you may feel really comfortable, but you end up limiting your nonverbal interaction with your audience.

If your classroom is not equipped with a computer and you want to use presentation software media in your speech, you may of course bring your computer, or you may be able to schedule the delivery of a computer cart to your classroom. In either case, check with your instructor about the advance preparations that will be needed. At some schools, there are very few computer carts, so it is important to reserve one well in advance. You will also want to see if you can gain access to one ahead of time to practice and familiarize yourself with the necessary passwords and commands to make your slides run properly. On the day of your speech, be sure to arrive early enough to test out the equipment before class begins.

Audiovisual Media

Although audio and video clips are often computer-based, they can be (and, in past decades, always were) used without a computer.

Audio presentation aids are useful for illustrating musical themes. For instance, if you're speaking about how the Polish composer Frederick Chopin was inspired by the sounds of nature, you can convey that meaning only through playing an example. If you have a smart classroom, you may be able to use it to play an MP3. Alternatively, you may need to bring your music player. In that case, be sure the speakers in the room are up to the job. The people in the back of the room must be able to hear it, and the speakers must not sound distorted when you turn the volume up.

Video that clarifies, explains, amplifies, emphasizes, or illustrates a key concept in your speech is appropriate, as long as you do not rely on it to do your presentation for you. There are several things you must do. First, identify a specific section of video that delivers meaning. Second, "cue up" the video so that you can easily play and it will begin at the right place (embedding the video or link into your slides is a great way to do this). Third, tell your audience where the footage comes from. You can tell your audience, for instance, that you are showing them an example from the 1985 BBC documentary titled "In Search of the Trojan War." Fourth, tell your audience why you're showing the footage. For instance, you can tell them, "This is an example of storytelling in the Bardic tradition." You can interrupt or mute the video to make a comment about it, but your total footage should not use more than 20 percent of the time for your speech.

Low-Tech Media

In some speaking situations, of course, computer technology is not available. Even if you have ready access to technology, there will be contexts where computer-based presentation aids are unnecessary or even counterproductive. And in still other contexts, computer-based media may be accompanied by low-tech presentation aids. One of the advantages of low-tech media is that they are very predictable. There's little that can interfere with using them. Additionally, they can be inexpensive to produce. However, unlike digital media, they can be prone to physical damage in the form of smudges, scratches, dents, and rips. It can be difficult to

keep them professional looking if you have to carry them through a rainstorm or blizzard, so you will need to take steps to protect them as you transport them to the speech location. Let's examine some of the low-tech media that you might use with a speech.

Chalk or Dry-Erase Board

If you use a chalkboard or dry-erase board you are not using a prepared presentation aid. Your failure to prepare visuals ahead of time can be interpreted in several ways, mostly negative. If other speakers carefully design, produce, and use attractive visual aids, yours will stand out by contrast. You will be seen as the speaker who does not take the time to prepare even a simple aid. Do not use a chalkboard or marker board and pretend it's a prepared presentation aid.

However, 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. You may have a PowerPoint all prepared, but at various points in your speech you want to get your audience's responses. 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 three simple rules:

1. Write large enough so that everyone in the room can see.
2. Print legibly; don't write in cursive script.
3. Write short phrases; don't take time to write complete sentences.

It is also worth mentioning that some classrooms and business conference rooms are equipped with smartboards, or digitally enhanced whiteboards. On a smartboard you can bring up prepared visuals and then modify them as you would a chalk or dry-erase board. The advantage is that you can keep a digital record of what was written for future reference. However, as with other technology-based media, smartboards may be prone to unexpected technical problems, and they require training and practice to be used properly.

Flipchart

A flipchart is useful when you're trying to convey change over a number of steps. For instance, you could use a prepared flipchart to show dramatic population shifts on maps. In such a case, you should prepare highly visible, identical maps on three of the pages so that only the data will change from page to page. Each page should be neatly titled, and you should actively point out the areas of change on each page. You could also use a flip chart to show stages in the growth and development of the malaria-bearing mosquito. Again, you should label each page, making an effort to give the pages a consistent look.

Organize your flip chart in such a way that you flip pages in one direction only, front to back. It will be difficult to flip large pages without damaging them, and if you also have to "back up" and "skip forward," your presentation will look awkward and disorganized. Pages will get damaged, and your audience will be able to hear each rip.

In addition, most flip charts need to be propped up on an easel of some sort. If you arrive for your speech only to find that the easel in the classroom has disappeared, you will need to rig up another system that allows you to flip the pages.

Poster Board or Foam Board

Foam board consists of a thin sheet of Styrofoam with heavy paper bonded to both surfaces. It is a lightweight, inexpensive foundation for information, and it will stand on its own when placed in an easel without curling under at the bottom edge. Poster board tends to be cheaper than foam board, but it is flimsier, more vulnerable to damage, and can't stand on its own.

If you plan to paste labels or paragraphs of text to foam or poster board, for a professional look you should make sure the color of the poster board matches the color of the paper you will paste on. You will also want to choose a color that allows for easy visual contrast so your audience can see it, and it must be a color that's appropriate for the topic. For instance, hot pink would be the wrong color on a poster for a speech about the Protestant Reformation.

Avoid producing a presentation aid that looks like you simply cut pictures out of magazines and pasted them on. Slapping some text and images on a board looks unprofessional and will not be viewed as credible or effective. Instead, when creating a poster you need to take the time to think about how you are going to lay out your aid and make it look professional. You do not have to spend lots of money to make a very sleek and professional-looking poster.

Some schools also have access to expensive, full-color poster printers where you can create large poster for pasting on a foam board. In the real world of public speaking, most speakers rely on the creation of professional posters using a full-color poster

printer. Typically, posters are sketched out and then designed on a computer using a program like Microsoft PowerPoint or Publisher (these both have the option of selecting the size of the printed area).

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 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. Under no circumstances should you ever provide a single copy of a handout to pass around. There are several reasons this is a bad idea. You will have no control over the speed at which it circulates, or the direction it goes. Moreover, only one listener will be holding it while you're making your point about it and by the time most people see it they will have forgotten why they need to see it. In some case, it might not even reach everybody by the end of your speech. Finally, listeners could still be passing your handout around during the next speaker's speech.

There are three possible times to distribute handouts: before you begin your speech, during the speech, and after your speech is over. Naturally, if you need your listeners to follow along in a handout, you will need to distribute it before your speech begins. If you have access to the room ahead of time, place a copy of the handout on each seat in the audience. If not, ask a volunteer to distribute them as quickly as possible while you prepare to begin speaking. If the handout is a "takeaway," leave it on a table near the door so that those audience members who are interested can take one on their way out; in this case, don't forget to tell them to do so as you conclude your speech. It is almost never appropriate to distribute handouts during your speech, as it is distracting and interrupts the pace of your presentation.

Like other presentation aids, handouts should include only the necessary information to support your points, and that information should be organized in such a way that listeners will be able to understand it. For example, in a speech about how new health care legislation will affect small business owners in your state, a good handout might summarize key effects of the legislation and include the names of state agencies with their web addresses where audience members can request more detailed information.

If your handout is designed for your audience to follow along, you should tell them so. State that you will be referring to specific information during the speech. Then, as you're presenting your speech, ask your audience to look, for example, at the second line in the first cluster of information. Read that line out loud and then go on to explain its meaning.

As with any presentation aid, handouts are not a substitute for a well-prepared speech. Ask yourself what information your audience really needs to be able to take with them and how it can be presented on the page in the most useful and engaging way possible.

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14.5: Presentation Aids Online

Previously we have discussed strategies for using presentation aids during speeches. Those same strategies apply to the use of presentation aids in online speeches.

When using presentation aids online, the slide show will usually fill the whole screen. When presenting online, try to have your face visible as much as possible, and use slides for emphasis or clarification. It's hard for your audience to connect with a slide!

One key difference between speaking in person compared to speaking online is that if you are using a digital presentation tool such as a video or presentation slides, you generally have the option online to make your digital presentation aids the only thing that appears onscreen for your audience.

Most commonly, we see this option when speakers use presentation slides like PowerPoint, Keynote, or Prezi. A speaker may start by talking to their camera so their audience can see them before switching to showing their slides in full screen mode as they narrate or talk over their slides. Webinars often use this format because they are often heavily focused on providing information to the audience.

There are pros and cons to using digital presentation aids in this manner. Whatever is on screen will be what the audience focuses on. Would you prefer your audience to focus on you and your message or on your presentation aids?

We would generally recommend that for speeches you give online in a public speaking class, you try to have your face on camera as much as possible and use your slides to supplement, add emphasis, and clarify what you are saying rather than allowing them to become the main focus of the presentation. This method will help you stay more engaged with your audience.

You will want to make sure you get plenty of practice using your presentation aids before you give your speech. Be particularly attentive to practicing how to transition between the view of yourself on your webcam and your slides and vice versa.

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14.6: Tips for Preparing Presentation Aids

As we've seen earlier in this chapter, impressive presentation aids do not take the place of a well-prepared speech. Although your presentation aids should be able to stand on their own in delivering information, do not count on them to do so. Work toward that goal, but also plan on explaining your presentation aids so that your audience will know why you're using them.

One mistake you should avoid is putting too much information on an aid. You have to narrow the topic of your speech, and likewise, you must narrow the content of your presentation aids to match your speech. Your presentation aids should not represent every idea in your speech. Whatever presentation aids you choose to use, they should fulfill one or more of the functions described at the beginning of this chapter: to clarify or emphasize a point, to enhance retention and recall of your message, to add variety and interest to your speech, and to enhance your credibility as a speaker.

As a practical matter in terms of producing presentation aids, you may not be aware that many college campuses have a copy service or multimedia lab available to students for making copies, enlargements, slides, and other presentation aids. Find out from your instructor or a librarian what the resources on your campus are. In the rest of this section, we will offer some tips for designing good-quality presentation aids.

Easily Seen or Heard by Your Audience

The first rule of presentation aids is that they must be accessible for every audience member. If those in the back of the room cannot see, hear, or otherwise experience a presentation aid, then it is counterproductive to use it. Graphic elements in your presentation aids must be large enough to read. Audio must be loud enough to hear. If you are passing out samples of a food item for audience members to taste, you must bring enough for everyone.

Do not attempt to show your audience a picture by holding up a book open to the page with the photograph. Nobody will be able to see it. It will be too small for your listeners in the back of the room, and the light will glare off of the glossy paper usually used in books with color pictures so that the listeners in front won't be able to see it either.

Text-based visuals, charts, and graphs need to be executed with strong, clean lines and blocks of color. Weak lines in a graph or illustration do not get stronger with magnification. You must either strengthen those lines by hand or choose another graphic element that has stronger lines. On a poster or a slide, a graphic element should take up about a third of the area. This leaves room for a small amount of text, rendered in a large, simple font. The textual elements should be located closest to the part of your graphic element that they are about.

Carefully limit the amount of text on a presentation aid. If a great deal of text is absolutely necessary, try to divide it between two slides or posters. Many students believe that even small text will magnify amply when it's projected, but we find that this is rarely the case. We can't recommend a specific point size because that refers to the distance between the baselines of two lines of text, not to the size of the type itself.

We recommend two things: First, use a simple, easy-to-read type style. It doesn't have to be utterly devoid of style, but it should be readable and not distracting. Second, we recommend that you print your text in three or four sizes on a sheet of paper. Place the printed sheet on the floor and stand up. When you look at your printed sheet, you should be able to make a choice based on which clusters of type you are able to read from that distance.

Easily Handled

You should be able to carry your presentation aids into the room by yourself. In addition, you should be skilled in using the equipment you will use to present them. Your presentation aids should not distract you from the delivery of your speech.

Aesthetically Pleasing

For our purposes, aesthetics refers to the beauty or good taste of a presentation aid. Earlier we mentioned the universal principles of good design: unity, emphasis or focal point, scale and proportion, balance, and rhythm. Because of wide differences in taste, not everyone will agree on what is aesthetically pleasing, and you may be someone who does not think of yourself as having much artistic talent. Still, if you keep these principles in mind, they will help you to create attractive, professional-looking visuals.

The other aesthetic principle to keep in mind is that your presentation aids are intended to support your speech, not the other way around. The decisions you make in designing your visuals should be dictated by the content of your speech. If you use color, use it

for a clear reason. If you use a border, keep it simple. Whatever you do, make certain that your presentation aids will be perceived as carefully planned and executed elements of your speech.

Tips for Text Aids

Use text only when you must. For example, if you're presenting an analysis of the First Amendment, it is permissible to display the text of the First Amendment, but not your entire analysis. The type must be big, simple, and bold. It needs white space around it to separate it from another graphic element or cluster of text that might be on the same presentation aid. When you display text, you must read it out loud before you go on to talk about it. That way, you won't expect your listeners to read one thing while trying to listen to something else. However, under no circumstances should you merely read what's on your text aids and consider that a speech.

Tips for Graphic Aids

If you create your graphic images, you will have control over their size and the visible strength of the lines. However, you might want to show your listeners an illustration that you can't create yourself. For instance, you might want to display a photograph of a portion of the Dead Sea Scrolls. First, find a way to enlarge the photograph. Then, to show integrity, cite your source. You should cite your source with an added caption, and you should also cite the source out loud as you display the graphic, even if your photograph is considered to be in the public domain. The NASA photograph "Spaceship Earth" is such an example. Many people use it without citing the source, but citing the source boosts your credibility as a speaker, and we strongly recommend doing so.

Rules for Computer Presentations

Mark Stoner, a professor in the Department of Communication Studies at California State University, Sacramento, has written a useful assessment of the uses and abuses of PowerPoint. Stoner observes that

PowerPoint is a hybrid between the visual and the written. When we pay attention to the design of our writing—to whether we are putting key word at the beginning or end of a sentence, for instance—we are likely to communicate more effectively. In the same way, it makes sense to understand the impact that PowerPoint's design has on our ability to communicate ideas to an audience (Stoner, 2007).

While this article is specifically about PowerPoint, Stoner's advice works for all presentation software formats. Presentation aids should deliver information that is important or is difficult to present with spoken words only. Although many speakers attempt to put their entire speech on PowerPoint slides or other visual aids, this is a bad idea for several reasons. First, if you try to put your entire speech on PowerPoint, you will lose contact with your audience. Speakers often end up looking at the projected words or directly at the computer screen instead of at their audience. Second, your vocal delivery is likely to suffer, and you will end up giving a boring reading, not a dynamic speech. Third, you will lose credibility, as your listeners question how well you really know your topic. Fourth, you are not using the presentation aids to clarify or emphasize your message, so all the information may come across as equally important.

No matter what presentation software package you decide to utilize, there are some general guidelines you'll need to follow.

Watch Your Font

One of the biggest mistakes novice users of presentational software make is thinking that if you can read it on the screen, your audience will be able to read it in their seats. While this may be the case if you're in a close, intimate conference room, most of us will be speaking in situations where audience members are fifteen feet away or more. Make sure each slide is legible from the back of the room where you will be speaking.

Don't Write Everything Out

In addition to watching your font size, you also need to watch how you use words on the screen. Do not try to put too much information on a slide. Make sure that your slide has the appropriate information to support the point you are making and no more. We strongly recommend avoiding complete sentences on a slide unless you need to display a very important direct quotation.

Don't Bow Down to the Software

Remember, presentation software is an aid, so it should aid and not hinder your presentation. We have seen too many students who only end up reading the slides right off the screen instead of using the slides to enhance their presentations. When you read your

slides right off the projector screen, you're killing your eye contact. As a general word of advice, if you ever find yourself being forced to turn your back to the audience to read the screen, then you are not effectively using the technology. On the flip side, you also shouldn't need to hide behind a computer monitor to see what's being projected.

Slide Color

Color is very important and can definitely make a strong impact on an audience. However, don't go overboard or decide to use unappealing combinations of color. For example, you should never use a light font color (like yellow) on a solid white background because it's hard for the eye to read.

You should also realize that while colors may be rich and vibrant on your computer screen at home, they may be distorted by a different monitor. While we definitely are in favor of experimenting with various color schemes, always check your presentation out on multiple computers to see if the slide color is being distorted in a way that makes it hard to read.

Slide Movement

Everyone who has had an opportunity to experiment with PowerPoint knows that animation in transitions between slides or even on a single slide can be fun, but often people do not realize that too much movement can actually distract audience members. While all presentation software packages offer you very cool slide movements and other bells and whistles, they are not always very helpful for your presentation. If you're going to utilize slide transitions or word animation, stick to only three or four different types of transitions in your whole presentation. Furthermore, do not have more than one type of movement on a given slide. If you're going to have all your text come from the right side of the screen in a bulleted list, make sure that all the items on the bulleted list come from the right side of the screen.

Practice, Practice, Practice

It is vital to practice using the technology. Nothing is worse than watching a speaker stand up and not know how to turn on the computer, access the software, or launch their presentation. When you use technology, audiences can quickly see if you know what you are doing, so don't give them the opportunity to devalue your credibility because you can't even get the show going.

Always Have a Backup Plan

Lastly, always have a backup plan. Unfortunately, things often go wrong. One of the parts of being a professional is keeping the speech moving in spite of unexpected problems. Decide in advance what you will do if things break down or disappear right when you need them. Don't count on your instructor to solve such predicaments; it is your responsibility. If you take this responsibility seriously and check the room where you will be presenting early, you will have time to adapt. If the computer or audiovisual setup does not work on the first try, you will need time to troubleshoot and solve the problem. If an easel is missing, you will need time to experiment with using a lectern or a chair to support your flip chart. If you forgot to bring your violin for a speech about music—don't laugh, this actually happened to a friend of ours!—you will need time to think through how to adapt your speech so that it will still be effective.

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14.7: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

Presentation aids should help audiences more thoroughly understand a speaker's basic message. There are four basic reasons to use presentation aids. First, they increase audience understanding of a speaker's message. Second, they help audiences retain and recall a speaker's message after the fact. Third, they make a speech more interesting by adding variety. Lastly, by making a speaker's overall speech more polished, presentation aids can increase an audience's perception of the speaker's credibility.

Presentation aids help an audience more clearly understand a speaker's message in two ways: they help clarify and they help emphasize. Speakers in professional contexts are expected to be familiar with presentation software, such as PowerPoint. Computer-based media can produce very professional-looking presentation aids, but as with any other media, the universal principles of good design apply.

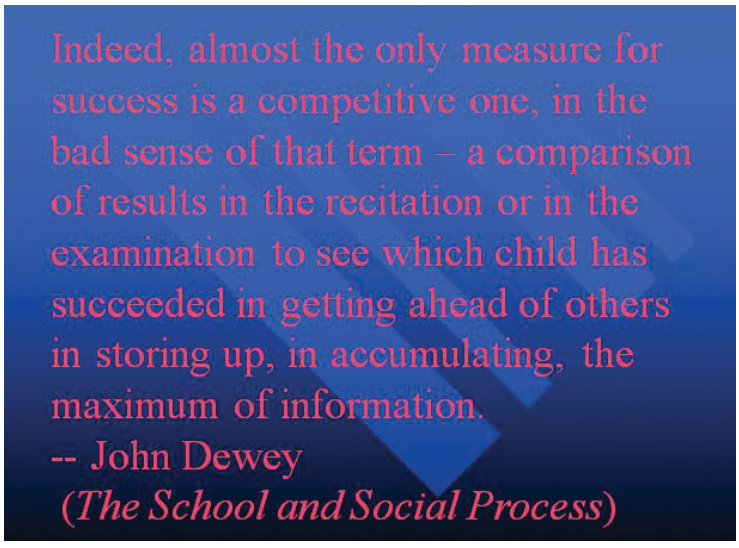
Speakers using computer-based media need to practice ahead of time with the computer they intend to use in the speech. Each presentation aid vehicle has advantages and disadvantages. As such, speakers need to think through the use of visual aids and select the most appropriate ones for their individual speeches.Every presentation aid should be created with careful attention to content and appearance. The universal principles of good design can be a useful guide. Remember, presentation aids are supposed to aid a speech, not become the speech itself. When presentation aids look unprofessional, they can decrease a speaker's credibility.

Various types of charts can aid audience understanding of a speaker's message. Statistical charts help audiences see and interpret numerical information. Sequence-of-steps charts show how a process occurs. Decision trees help audience members see how a specific decision can be made in a logical fashion. Line graphs, bar graphs, and pie graphs are commonly used by speakers to help present numerical information. The information presented on a graph should be clean and easily understandable from a distance. Representations are presentation aids designed to represent a real process or object. Commonly used representations in public speaking include diagrams, maps, photographs, and video or audio recordings. Objects are physical items that can be held up and used during a speech. Models, on the other hand, refer to tangible items that can be held during a speech, but are not the actual object but rather a facsimile of it.

Always practice with your presentation aids, and be prepared for unexpected problems.Speakers often will use their own bodies or the bodies of other people to help them illustrate a part of a speech. When using another person, it is very important to coach that person prior to the speech to ensure that he or she will not upstage the speaker. Using animals as presentation aids is generally not recommended.

Exercises

- What's wrong with this presentation aid?



- How would you change it?
- What kind of presentation aids might you use in a speech on the health benefits of laughter? Why might these be good choice?

1. Look at the outline you have prepared for a classroom speech. Where in the speech would it be appropriate to use presentation aids? Why would presentation aids help at the points you identify?
2. Presentational slides from speeches are sometimes available online. Search for and evaluate three sets of presentation slides you find online. Identify three ways that the slides could be improved to be more effective presentation aids.
3. Create a new presentation aid for a previous speech given in your public speaking class. How could that aid have helped your overall speech?
4. Find a speech on YouTube and see what types of presentation aids the speaker uses. Does the speaker select appropriate aids? How could you have made them better? Were there any missing presentation aids that should have been in the speech?
5. Create a chart representing the speech creation process. Try using either a sequence-of-steps chart or a decision tree.
6. Think about your next speech. What presentation aids can you use in your speech to enhance your audience's understanding?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

15: Listening

15.1: Learning Objectives
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15.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapters, students will be able to:

1. Understand the differences between listening and hearing.
2. Explain the benefits of listening.
3. Understand the types of noise that can affect a listener's ability to attend to a message.
4. Analyze barriers to listening
5. Explain the five stages of listening
6. Understand the two types of feedback listeners give to speakers.
7. Define and explain critical listening and its importance in the public speaking context.
8. Understand six distinct ways to improve ability to critically listen to speeches.
9. Evaluate what it means to be an ethical listener.
10. Understand the nature of listening styles.

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15.2: The Importance of Listening

“Are you listening to me?”

This question is often asked because the speaker thinks the listener is nodding off or daydreaming. We sometimes think that listening means we only have to sit back, stay barely awake, and let a speaker’s words wash over us. While many Americans look upon being active as something to admire, to engage in, and to excel at, listening is often understood as a “passive” activity. More recently, *O, the Oprah Magazine* featured a cover article with the title, “How to Talk So People *Really* Listen: Four Ways to Make Yourself Heard.” This title leads us to expect a list of ways to leave the listening to others and insist that they do so, but the article contains a surprise ending. The final piece of advice is this: “You can’t go wrong by showing interest in what other people say and making them feel important. In other words, the better *you* listen, the more you’ll be listened to” (Jarvis, 2009).



Figure 15.2.1: Zach Graves – The Importance of Listening – CC BY-SA 2.0.

You may have heard the adage, “We have two ears but only one mouth”—an easy way to remember that listening can be twice as important as talking. As a student, you most likely spend many hours in a classroom doing a large amount of focused listening, yet sometimes it is difficult to apply those efforts to communication in other areas of your life. College students spend more than half of their daily communication listening (Emanuel et. al., 2008). As a result, your listening skills may not be all they could be. In this chapter, we will examine listening versus hearing, listening styles, listening difficulties, listening stages, and listening critically.

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15.3: Listening vs. Hearing



Figure 15.3.1: Kimba Howard – megaphone – CC BY 2.0.

Listening vs. Hearing

Hearing is an accidental and automatic brain response to sound that requires no effort. We are surrounded by sounds most of the time. For example, we are accustomed to the sounds of airplanes, lawn mowers, furnace blowers, the rattling of pots and pans, and so on. We hear those incidental sounds and, unless we have a reason to do otherwise, we train ourselves to ignore them. We learn to filter out sounds that mean little to us, just as we choose to hear our ringing cell phones and other sounds that are more important to us.



Figure 15.3.1: Hearing vs. Listening

Listening, on the other hand, is purposeful and focused rather than accidental. As a result, it requires motivation and effort. **Listening** is active, focused, concentrated attention for the purpose of understanding the meanings expressed by a speaker. We do not always listen at our best, however, and later in this chapter we will examine some of the reasons why and some strategies for becoming more active critical listeners.

Benefits of Listening

Listening should not be taken for granted. Before the invention of writing, people conveyed virtually all knowledge through some combination of showing and telling. Elders recited tribal histories to attentive audiences. Listeners received religious teachings enthusiastically. Myths, legends, folktales, and stories for entertainment survived only because audiences were eager to listen. Nowadays, however, we gain information and entertainment through reading and electronic recordings rather than through real-time listening. If we become distracted and let our attention wander, we can go back and replay a recording. Despite that fact, we can still gain at least four compelling benefits by becoming more active and competent at real-time listening.

Become a Better Student

When we focus on the material presented in a classroom, we will be able to identify not only the words used in a lecture but their emphasis and their more complex meanings. We will take better notes, and will more accurately remember the instructor's claims, information, and conclusions. Many times, instructors give verbal cues about what information is important, specific expectations about assignments, and even what material is likely to be on an exam, so careful listening can be beneficial.

Become a Better Friend

When we give our best attention to people expressing thoughts and experiences that are important to them, those individuals are likely to see us as someone who cares about their well-being. This fact is especially true when we give our attention only and refrain from interjecting opinions, judgments, and advice.

Others Will View Thoughtful Listener as Intelligent & Perceptive

When we listen well to others, we reveal ourselves as being curious and interested in people and events. In addition, our ability to understand the meanings of what we hear will make us more knowledgeable and thoughtful people.

Good Listening Can Help Public Speaking

When we listen well to others, we start to pick up more on the stylistic components related to how people form arguments and present information. As a result, we have the ability to analyze what we think works and doesn't work in others' speeches, which can help us transform our speeches in the process. For example, really paying attention to how others cite sources orally during their speeches may give us ideas about how to more effectively cite sources in our presentations.

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15.4: Why Listening Is Difficult

At times, everyone has difficulty staying completely focused during a lengthy presentation. We can sometimes have difficulty listening to even relatively brief messages. Some of the factors that interfere with good listening might exist beyond our control, but others are manageable. It's helpful to be aware of these factors so that they interfere as little as possible with understanding the message.

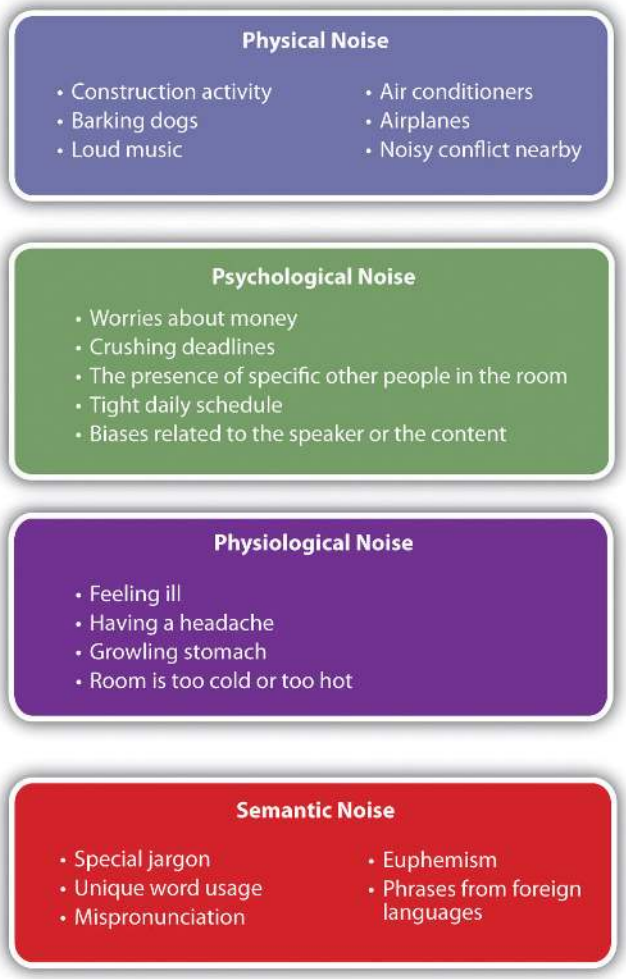


Figure 15.4.2: Figure 4.2 Types of Noise

Many **distractions** are the fault of neither the listener nor the speaker. However, when as a speaker, being aware of these sources of noise can help us reduce some of the noise that interferes with our audience's ability to understand.

Attention Span

A person can only maintain focused attention for a finite length of time. In his 1985 book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, New York University's Steinhardt School of Education professor Neil Postman argued that modern audiences have lost the ability to sustain attention to a message (Postman, 1985). More recently, researchers have engaged in an ongoing debate over whether Internet use is detrimental to **attention span** (Carr, 2010).

The limits of the human attention span can interfere with listening, but listeners and speakers can use strategies to prevent this interference. As many classroom instructors know, listeners will readily renew their attention when the presentation includes frequent breaks in pacing (Middendorf & Kalish, 1996). For example, a fifty- to seventy-five-minute class session might include some lecture material alternated with questions for class discussion, video clips, handouts, and demonstrations. Instructors who are adept at holding listeners' attention also move about the front of the room, writing on the board, drawing diagrams, and intermittently using slide transparencies or PowerPoint slides.

Receiver Biases

Good listening involves keeping an open mind and withholding judgment until the speaker has completed the message. Conversely, biased listening is characterized by jumping to conclusions; the biased listener believes, "I don't need to listen because I already know what I think." **Receiver biases** can refer to two things: biases with reference to the speaker and preconceived ideas and **opinions** about the topic or message. Both can be considered noise. Everyone has biases, but good listeners have learned to hold them in check while listening.

The first type of bias listeners can have is related to the speaker. Often a speaker stands up and an audience member simply doesn't like the speaker, so the audience member may not listen to the speaker's message. Maybe there is annoying classmate, or maybe we question a classmate's competence on a given topic. When we have preconceived notions about a speaker, those biases can interfere with our ability to listen accurately and competently to the speaker's message.

The second type of bias listeners can have is related to the topic or content of the speech. If the speech topic is one we've heard a thousand times, then we might tune out. Or maybe the speaker is presenting a topic or position we fundamentally disagree with. When listeners have strong preexisting opinions about a topic, such as the death penalty, religious issues, affirmative action, abortion, or global warming, their biases may make it difficult for them to even consider new information about the topic, especially if the new information is inconsistent with what they already believe to be true. As listeners, we have difficulty identifying our biases, especially when they seem to make sense. However, it is worth recognizing that our lives would be very difficult if no one ever considered new points of view or new information. We live in a world where everyone can benefit from clear thinking and open-minded listening.

Listening or Receiver Apprehension

Listening or receiver apprehension is the fear that we might be unable to understand the message or process the information correctly or be able to adapt our thinking to include the new information coherently (Wheeless, 1975). In some situations, we might worry that the information presented will be "over our heads"—too complex, technical, or advanced for us to understand adequately.

Many students will actually avoid registering for courses in which they feel certain they will do poorly. In other cases, students will choose to take a challenging course only if it's a requirement. This avoidance might be understandable but is not a good strategy for success. To become educated people, students should take a few courses that can shed light on areas where their knowledge is limited.

As a speaker, we can reduce listener apprehension by defining terms clearly and using simple visual aids to hold the audience's attention. We don't want to underestimate or overestimate our audience's knowledge on a subject, so good audience analysis is always important. For example, if we know our audience doesn't have special knowledge on a given topic, we should start by defining important terms. Research has shown us that when listeners do not feel they understand a speaker's message, their apprehension about receiving the message escalates. Imagine that we are listening to a speech about chemistry and the speaker begins talking about "colligative properties." We may start questioning whether we are even in the right place. When this happens, apprehension clearly interferes with a listener's ability to accurately and competently understand a speaker's message. As a speaker, we can lessen the listener's apprehension by explaining that colligative properties focus on *how much* is dissolved in a solution, not on *what* is dissolved in a solution. We could also give an example that they might readily understand, such as saying that it doesn't matter what kind of salt to use in the winter to melt ice on a driveway, what is important is how much salt to use.

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15.5: Stages of Listening

As you read earlier, there are many factors that can interfere with listening, so you need to be able to manage a number of mental tasks at the same time in order to be a successful listener. Author Joseph DeVito (2000) has divided the listening process into five stages: receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding.

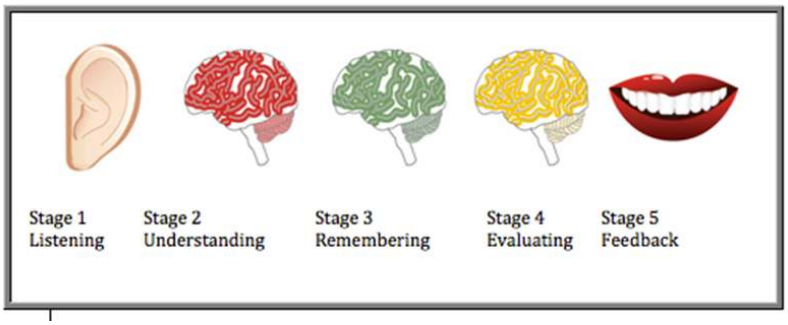


Figure 15.5.1: Stages of Feedback

Receiving

Receiving is the intentional focus on hearing a speaker's message, which happens when we filter out other sources so that we can isolate the message and avoid the confusing mixture of incoming stimuli. At this stage, we are still only hearing the message. Notice in Figure 15.5.1 "Stages of Feedback" that this stage is represented by the ear because it is the primary tool involved with this stage of the listening process.

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

Understanding

In the understanding stage, we attempt to learn the meaning of the message, which is not always easy. For one thing, if a speaker does not enunciate clearly, it may be difficult to tell what the message was—did your friend say, "I think she'll be late for class," or "my teacher delayed the class"? Notice in Figure 15.5.1 "Stages of Feedback" that stages two, three, and four are represented by the brain because it is the primary tool involved with these stages of the listening process.

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

The consequences of ineffective listening in a classroom can be much worse. When the professor advises students to get an "early start" on your speech, he, she, or they probably hopes students will begin research right away and move on to developing a thesis statement and outlining the speech as soon as possible. However, students might misunderstand the instructor's meaning in several ways. One student might interpret the advice to mean that as long as she gets started, the rest of the assignment will have time to develop itself. Another student might instead think that to start early is to start on the Friday before the Monday due date instead of Sunday night.

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

Remembering

Remembering begins with listening; if we can't remember something that was said, we might not have been listening effectively. Wolvin and Coakley (1996) note that the most common reason for not remembering a message after the fact is because it wasn't

really learned in the first place. However, even when we are listening attentively, some messages are more difficult than others to understand and remember. Highly complex messages that are filled with detail call for highly developed listening skills. Moreover, if something distracts our attention even for a moment, we could miss out on information that explains other new concepts we hear when we begin to listen fully again.

It's also important to know that we can improve our memory of a message by processing it meaningfully—that is, by applying it in ways that are meaningful to our own lives (Gluck, et al., 2008). Instead of simply repeating a new acquaintance's name over and over, for example, we might remember it by associating it with something in our own lives. For example, "Emily," we might say, "reminds me of the Emily we knew in middle school," or "Mr. Impiari's name reminds us of the Prius our friend drives."

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

Evaluating

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

Unfortunately, personal opinions sometimes result in prejudiced evaluations. Imagine listening to a speech given by someone from another country and this person has an accent that is hard to understand. We may have a hard time simply making out the speaker's message. Some people find a foreign accent to be interesting or even exotic, while others might find it challenging. If a listener has a strong bias against foreign accents, the listener may not even attempt to attend to the message. If we mistrust a speaker because of an accent, we could be rejecting important or personally enriching information. Good listeners have learned to refrain from making these judgments and instead to focus on the speaker's meanings.

Responding

Responding—sometimes referred to as feedback—is the fifth and final stage of the listening process. It's the stage at which we indicate our involvement. Almost anything we do at this stage can be interpreted as feedback. For example, students are giving positive feedback to their instructors if at the end of class they stay behind to finish a sentence in their notes or approach the instructor to ask for clarification. The opposite kind of feedback is given by students who gather their belongings and rush out the door as soon as class is over. Notice in Figure 15.5.1 "Stages of Feedback" that this stage is represented by the lips because we often give feedback in the form of verbal feedback; however, we can just as easily respond nonverbally.

Formative Feedback

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

Summative Feedback

Summative feedback is given at the end of the communication. When we attend a political rally, a presentation given by a speaker we admire, or even a class, there are verbal and nonverbal ways of indicating our appreciation for or our disagreement with the messages or the speakers at the end of the message. Maybe we stand up and applaud a speaker we agreed with or just sit staring in silence after listening to a speaker we didn't like. In other cases, a speaker may be attempting to persuade us to donate to a charity, so if the speaker passes a bucket and we make a donation, we are providing feedback on the speaker's effectiveness. At the same time, we do not always listen most carefully to the messages of speakers we admire. Sometimes we simply enjoy being in their presence, and our summative feedback is not about the message but about our attitudes about the speaker. If our feedback is limited to something like, "I just love your voice," we might be indicating that we did not listen carefully to the content of the message.

There is little doubt that by now, listening is complex and there is great potential for errors. By becoming aware of what is involved with active listening and where difficulties might lie, we can prepare ourselves both as listeners and as speakers to minimize

listening errors with our own public speeches.

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15.6: Listening Critically

Students are exposed to many kinds of messages: messages conveying academic information, institutional rules, instructions, and warnings. Students also receive messages through political discourse, advertisements, gossip, jokes, song lyrics, text messages, invitations, social media, web links, and all other manner of communication. It's not all the same, but it isn't always clear how to separate the truth from the messages that are misleading or even blatantly false. Nor is it always clear which messages are intended to help the listener and which ones are merely self-serving for the speaker. Part of being a good listener is to learn when to use caution in evaluating the messages we hear.



Figure 4.6.1: Amanda Mills, USCDCP – Good Listener – CCO

Critical listening in this context means using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to see whether a message makes sense in light of factual evidence. Critical listening can be learned with practice but is not necessarily easy to do. Some people never learn this skill; instead, they take every message at face value even when those messages are in conflict with their knowledge. Problems occur when messages are repeated to others who have not yet developed the skills to discern the difference between a valid message and a mistaken one. Critical listening can be particularly difficult when the message is complex. Unfortunately, some speakers may make their messages intentionally complex to avoid critical scrutiny. For example, a city treasurer giving a budget presentation might use very large words and technical jargon, which make it difficult for listeners to understand the proposed budget and ask probing questions.

Six Ways to Improve Critical Listening

Critical listening is first and foremost a skill that can be learned and improved. In this section, we are going to explore six different techniques you can use to become a more critical listener.

1. Recognizing the Difference between Facts & Opinions

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan is credited with saying, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts" (Wikiquote). Part of critical listening is learning to separate opinions from facts, and this works two ways: critical listeners are aware of whether a speaker is delivering a factual message or a message based on opinion, and they are also aware of the interplay between their own opinions and facts as they listen to messages.

In American politics, and throughout the world, COVID became highly politicized, and the politicization was fueled by difficulty in sorting through opinions and facts. A clash of fact versus opinion happened multiple times at the beginning of the Pandemic and continued throughout the Pandemic. On Monday, July 6th,2020 former President Donald Trump stated, "We now have the lowest fatality (mortality) rate in the world." However, this was false information. "At the time, it had the world's ninth-worst mortality rate, with 41.33 deaths per 100,000 people, according to Johns Hopkins University" (Paz, 2020, para. 10).

Often when people have a negative opinion about a topic, they are unwilling to accept facts. Instead, they question all aspects of the speech and have a negative predisposition toward both the speech and the speaker.

This is not to say that speakers should not express their opinions. Many of the greatest speeches in history include personal opinions. Consider, for example, Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech, in which he expressed his personal wish for the future of American society. Critical listeners may agree or disagree with a speaker's opinions, but the point is that they know when a message they are hearing is based on opinion and when it is factual.

2. Uncovering Assumptions

If something is factual, supporting evidence exists. However, we still need to be careful about what evidence does and does not mean. **Assumptions** are gaps in a logical sequence that listeners passively fill with their own ideas and opinions and may or may not be accurate. When listening to a public speech, we may find ourselves being asked to assume something is a fact when in reality many people question that fact. For example, suppose we are listening to a speech on weight loss. The speaker talks about how people who are overweight are simply not motivated or lack the self-discipline to lose weight. The speaker has built the speech on the assumption that motivation and self-discipline are the only reasons why people can't lose weight. We may think to ourselves, though, what about genetics? By listening critically, we will be more likely to notice unwarranted assumptions in a speech, which may prompt questions to the speaker or to do further research to examine the validity of the speaker's assumptions. If, however, we sit passively by and let the speaker's assumptions go unchallenged, we may find ourselves persuaded by information that is not factual.

When we listen critically to a speech, we might hear information that appears unsupported by evidence. We shouldn't accept that information unconditionally. We would accept it under the condition that the speaker offers credible evidence that directly supports it.

Table 15.6.1: Facts vs. Assumptions

Facts	Assumptions
Facts are verified by clear, unambiguous evidence.	Assumptions are not supported by evidence.
Most facts can be tested.	Assumptions about the future cannot be tested in the present.

3. Be Open to New Ideas

Sometimes people are so fully invested in their perceptions of the world that they are unable to listen receptively to messages that make sense and would be of great benefit to them. Human progress has been possible, sometimes against great odds, because of the mental curiosity and discernment of a few people. In the late 1700s when the technique of vaccination to prevent smallpox was introduced, it was opposed by both medical professionals and everyday citizens who staged public protests (Edward Jenner Museum). More than two centuries later, vaccinations against smallpox, diphtheria, polio, and other infectious diseases have saved countless lives, yet popular opposition continues, something we have seen during the Pandemic.

In the world of public speaking, we must be open to new ideas. Let's face it, people have a tendency to filter out information they disagree with and to filter in information that supports what they already believe. Nicolaus Copernicus was a sixteenth-century astronomer who dared to publish a treatise explaining that the earth revolves around the sun, which was a violation of Catholic doctrine. Copernicus's astronomical findings were labeled heretical and his treatise banned because a group of people at the time were not open to new ideas. In May of 2010, almost five hundred years after his death, the Roman Catholic Church admitted its error and reburied his remains with the full rites of Catholic burial (Owen, 2010).

While the Copernicus case is a fairly dramatic reversal, listeners should always be open to new ideas. We are not suggesting that you have to agree with every idea that you are faced with in life; rather, we are suggesting that you at least listen to the message and then evaluate the message.

4. Rely on Reason & Common Sense

If we are listening to a speech and **common sense** tells us that the message is illogical, we might be right. However, we should be thinking about whether the speech seems credible and coherent. In this way, our use of common sense can act as a warning system.

One of our coauthors once heard a speech on the environmental hazards of fireworks. The speaker argued that fireworks (the public kind, not the personal kind people buy and set off in their backyards) were environmentally hazardous because of litter. Although

there is certainly some paper that makes it to the ground before burning up, the amount of litter created by fireworks displays is relatively small compared to other sources of litter, including trash left behind by all the spectators watching fireworks at public parks and other venues. It just does not make sense to identify a few bits of charred paper as a major environmental hazard.

If a message is inconsistent with things already known to be true, if the argument is illogical, or if the language is exaggerated, investigate the issues before accepting or rejecting the message. Often, we are unable to take this step during the presentation of the message; it may take longer to collect enough knowledge to determine whether or not a message was true.

As speakers, we should not substitute common sense for evidence. That's why during a speech it's necessary to cite the authority of scholars whose research is irrefutable, or at least highly credible. It is all too easy to make a mistake in reasoning, sometimes called fallacy, in stating a case. One of the most common fallacies is *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, a "common sense" form of logic that translates roughly as "after the fact, therefore because of the fact." The argument says that if A happened first, followed by B, then A caused B. We know the outcome cannot occur earlier than the cause, but we also know that the two events might be related indirectly or that causality works in a different direction. For instance, imagine a speaker arguing that because the sun rises after a rooster's crow, the rooster caused the sun to rise. This argument is clearly illogical because roosters crow many times each day, and the sun's rising and setting do not change according to crowing or lack thereof. But the two events are related in a different way. Roosters tend to wake up and begin crowing at first light, about forty-five minutes before sunrise. Thus it is the impending sunrise that causes the predawn crowing.

It is important not to assume that our audience shares the beliefs that are, for us, common sense, as common sense is often created in community and often bound by cultural beliefs. Likewise, if the message of a speech is complex or controversial, consider the needs of the audience and explain its complexities factually and logically, not intuitively.

5. Relate New Ideas to Old Ones

As both a speaker and a listener, one of the most important things we can do to understand a message is to relate new ideas to previously held ideas. Imagine giving a speech about biological systems and using the term "homeostasis," which refers to the ability of an organism to maintain stability by making constant adjustments. To help the audience understand homeostasis, we could show how homeostasis is similar to adjustments made by the thermostats that keep our homes at a more or less even temperature. If we set our thermostats for seventy degrees and it gets hotter, the central cooling will kick in and cool our houses down. If our houses gets below seventy degrees, our heater will kick in and heat our houses up. Notice that in both cases our thermostats are making constant adjustments to stay at seventy degrees. Explaining that the body's homeostasis works in a similar way will make it more relevant to listeners and will likely help them both understand and remember the idea, as it links to something they have already experienced.

Making effective comparisons while listening can deepen the understanding of a message. Providing those comparisons for listeners makes it easier for them to give consideration to the new ideas.

6. Take Notes

Note-taking is a skill that improves with practice. As we already know, it nearly impossible to write down everything a speaker says. In fact, in our attempt to record everything, we might fall behind and wish we had divided our attention differently between writing and listening.

Careful, selective note-taking is important because we want an accurate record that reflects the meanings of the message. However much we might concentrate on the notes, we could inadvertently leave out an important word, such as *not*, and undermine the reliability of our otherwise carefully written notes. Instead, if we give the same care and attention to listening, we are less likely to make that kind of a mistake.

It's important to find a balance between listening well and taking good notes. Many people struggle with this balance for a long time. For example, if we try to write down only key phrases instead of full sentences, we might find that we can't remember how two ideas were related. In that case, too few notes were taken. At the opposite end, extensive note-taking can result in a loss of emphasis on the most important ideas.

To increase critical listening skills, continue developing an ability to identify the central issues in messages so that notes represent the meanings intended by the speaker.

Listening Ethically

Ethical listening rests heavily on honest intentions. We should extend to speakers the same respect we want to receive when it's our turn to speak. We should be facing the speaker with our eyes open. We should not be checking our cell phones. We should avoid any behavior that belittles the speaker or the message.



Figure 15.6.1: Ben Smith – String telephone – CC BY-SA 2.0.

Scholars Stephanie Coopman and James Lull (2008) emphasize the creation of a climate of caring and mutual understanding, observing that "respecting others' perspectives is one hallmark of the effective listener" (p. 60). Respect, or unconditional positive regard for others, means that you treat others with consideration and decency whether we agree with them or not. Professors Sprague, Stuart, and Bodary (2010). also urge us to treat the speaker with respect even when we disagree, don't understand the message, or find the speech boring.

Doug Lippman (1998), a storytelling coach, wrote powerfully and sensitively about listening in his book:

> *Like so many of us, I used to take listening for granted, glossing over this step as I rushed into the more active, visible ways of being helpful. Now, I am convinced that listening is the single most important element of any helping relationship.*
>
> *Listening has great power. It draws thoughts and feelings out of people as nothing else can. When someone listens to you well, you become aware of feelings you may not have realized that you felt. You have ideas you may have never thought before. You become more eloquent, more insightful.…*
>
> *As a helpful listener, I do not interrupt you. I do not give advice. I do not do something else while listening to you. I do not convey distraction through nervous mannerisms. I do not finish your sentences for you. In spite of all my attempts to understand you, I do not assume I know what you mean.*
>
> *I do not convey disapproval, impatience, or condescension. If I am confused, I show a desire for clarification, not dislike for your obtuseness. I do not act vindicated when you misspeak or correct yourself.*
>
> *I do not sit impassively, withholding participation.*
>
> *Instead, I project affection, approval, interest, and enthusiasm. I am your partner in communication. I am eager for your imminent success, fascinated by your struggles, forgiving of your mistakes, always expecting the best. I am your delighted listener (Lippman, 1998).*

This excerpt expresses the decency with which people should treat each other. It doesn't mean we must accept everything we hear, but ethically, we should refrain from trivializing each other's concerns. We have all had the painful experience of being ignored or misunderstood. This is how we know that one of the greatest gifts one human can give to another is listening.

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15.7: Listening Styles



Figure 15.7.1: John Benson – Listening Styles – CC BY 2.0.

If listening were easy, and if all people went about it in the same way, the task for a public speaker would be much easier. Even Aristotle, over 2,000 years ago, recognized that listeners in his audience were varied in **listening style**. He differentiated them as follows:

> *Rhetoric falls into three divisions, determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making—speaker, subject, and person addressed—it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object. The hearer must be either a judge, with a decision to make about things past or future, or an observer. A member of the assembly decides about future events, a juryman about past events: while those who merely decide on the orator's skill are observers (Aristotle, c. 350 BCE).*

Thus Aristotle classified listeners into those who would be using the speech to make decisions about past events, those who would make decisions affecting the future, and those who would evaluate the speaker's skills. This is all the more remarkable when we consider that Aristotle's audiences were composed exclusively of male citizens of one city-state, all prosperous property owners.

Our audiences today are likely to be much more diverse. Think about the classroom audience that will listen to our speeches in this course. Our classmates come from many different religious, ethnic, ability, and socio-economic backgrounds. Some of them may speak English as a second language. Some might be survivors of war-torn parts of the world such as Afghanistan, Yemen, or Ethiopia. Being mindful of such differences will help us prepare a speech in which we minimize the potential for misunderstanding.

Part of the potential for misunderstanding is the difference in listening styles. In an article in the *International Journal of Listening*, Watson, Barker, and Weaver (Watson, et al., 1995) identified four listening styles: people, action, content, and time. While there are several different approaches to understanding listening styles and preferences, the following four listening styles are utilized most often across disciplines:

People

The **people-oriented listener** is interested in the speaker. People-oriented listeners listen to the message in order to learn how the speaker thinks and how they feel about their message. For instance, when people-oriented listeners listen to an interview with a famous rap artist, they are likely to be more curious about the artist as an individual than about music, even though the people-oriented listener might also appreciate the artist's work. If an audience member (receiver) is a people-oriented listener, she, he, or they might have certain expectations about questions that will be answered, such as: Does the artist feel successful? What's it like to be famous? What kind of educational background do they have? In the same way, if we're listening to a doctor who responded to the earthquake crisis in Haiti, we might be more interested in the doctor as a person than in the state of affairs for Haitians. Why did they go to Haiti? How did they get away from their normal practice and patients? How many lives did the doctor save? We might be less interested in the equally important and urgent needs for food, shelter, and sanitation following the earthquake.

The people-oriented listener is likely to be more attentive to the speaker than to the message. People-oriented listeners understand that the message is about what is important to the speaker.

Action

Action-oriented listeners are primarily interested in finding out what the speaker hopes to accomplish through the message. Does the speaker want votes, donations, volunteers, or something else? It's sometimes difficult for an action-oriented speaker to listen through the descriptions, evidence, and explanations with which a speaker builds his, her, or their case.

Action-oriented listening is sometimes called task-oriented listening. In it, the listener seeks a clear message about what needs to be done, and might have less patience for listening to the reasons behind the task. This can be especially true if the reasons are complicated. For example, when we are passengers on an airplane waiting to push back from the gate, a flight attendant delivers a brief speech called the preflight safety briefing. The flight attendant does not read the findings of a safety study or the regulations about seat belts. The flight attendant doesn't explain that the content of his, her, or their speech is actually mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration. Instead, the attendant says only to buckle up so we can leave. An action-oriented listener finds "buckling up" a more compelling message than a message about the underlying reasons.

Content

Content-oriented listeners are interested in the message itself, whether it makes sense, what it means, and whether it's accurate. When we give speeches, many members of our classroom audience will be content-oriented listeners who will be interested in learning from us. We therefore have an obligation to represent the truth as accurately as possible. We can emphasize an idea, but if we exaggerate, we could lose credibility in the minds of our content-oriented audience members. We can advocate ideas that are important to us, but if we omit important limitations, we are withholding part of the truth and could leave our audience with an inaccurate view.

Imagine delivering a speech on the plight of orphans in Syria. If we just talk about the fact that there are over forty-five million orphaned Syrians, but don't explain why, we will sound like an infomercial. In such an instance, our audience's response is likely to be less enthusiastic than we might want. Instead, content-oriented listeners want to listen to well-developed information with solid explanations.

Time

People using a **time-oriented listening** style prefer a message that gets to the point quickly. Time-oriented listeners can become impatient with slow delivery or lengthy explanations. This kind of listener may be receptive for only a brief amount of time and may become rude or even hostile if the speaker expects a longer focus of attention. Time-oriented listeners convey their impatience through eye rolling, shifting about in their seats, checking their cell phones, and other inappropriate behaviors. If asked to speak to a group of middle-school students, the speaker needs to realize that their attention spans are simply not as long as those of college students. This is an important reason speeches to young audiences must be shorter, or broken up by more variety than speeches to adults.

Let's consider a professional situation, some audience members will have real time constraints, not merely perceived ones. Imagine being asked to deliver a speech on a new project to the board of directors of a local corporation. Chances are the people on the board of directors are all pressed for time. If the speech is long and filled with overly detailed information, time-oriented listeners will simply start to tune the speaker out. Obviously, if time-oriented listeners start tuning out, they will not be listening to the message. This is not the same thing as being a time-oriented listener who might be less interested in the message content than in its length.

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15.8: Speech Feedback and Evaluation

Feedback as an Audience Member

Audience members are vital in helping speakers understand how they are doing both during and after the presentation. In the public speaking rounds you will have the chance to practice your active listening skills. Knowing what it feels like to be on stage is often motivation enough for many people to give nonverbal feedback or verbal feedback.

Your instructor will guide the evaluation sessions and will provide some prompting questions to help you give some constructive feedback to your classmates. Part of your assignment points will be determined by your participation in being a good audience member for your classmates' speeches.

Let's look at how you can provide nonverbal and verbal feedback to a speaker.

Nonverbal Feedback

Effective listening is more than just using your ears. In fact, Boothman (2008) recommends listening with your whole body, not just your ears. Consider how confident you would feel speaking to a room full of people with their eyes closed, arms and legs crossed, and bodies bent in slouches. These listeners are presenting non-verbal cues communicating that they are uninterested and unimpressed. Meanwhile, listeners sitting up straight, facing you with an intent look on their face, are more likely to offer reassurance that the speaker's words are being understood.

Eye contact is another nonverbal cue to the speaker that you are paying attention. You don't want to be bug-eyed and unblinking; the speaker might assume there is a tiger behind them and begin to panic as you seem to be doing. However, attentive eye contact can indicate you are listening and help you to stay focused too. There are some cultures where maintaining eye contact would cause discomfort, so keep that in mind. Also, you may be someone who listens better with eyes closed to visualize what is being said. This can be difficult for a speaker to recognize, so if this is you, consider incorporating one of the following non-verbals while you listen with eyes closed.

Nodding your head affirmatively and making responses such as "Yes," "Umhum," or "OK" can help the speaker gauge your interest. Even the speed of your head nod can signal your level of patience or understanding (Pease & Pease, 2006). Leaning in as a listener is far more encouraging than slumping in your seat. Nevertheless, sending too many non-verbal responses to the speaker can go wrong, too. After all, a conference room full of people shifting in their seats and nodding their heads may translate as a restless audience that the speaker needs to recapture.

Verbal Feedback

While speakers sometimes want all questions held until the end of a presentation, asking questions when the opportunity presents itself can help you as a listener. For one, you have to listen in order to be able to ask a question. Your goal should be to ask open-ended questions ("What do you think about….?" rather than "We should do …, right?"). You can use questions to confirm your understanding of the speaker's message. If you're not entirely sure of a significant point, you might ask a clarifying question. These are questions such as "What did you mean?" "Can you be more specific?" or "What is a concrete example of your point?" Such questions can help your comprehension while also offering the speaker feedback. When asking questions, approach the speaker in a positive, non-threatening way. A good listener doesn't seek to put the speaker on the defensive. You want to demonstrate your objectivity and willingness to listen to the speaker's response.

Finally, paraphrasing what has been said in your interactions with the speaker can be another useful tool for a good listener. Imagine the difference if, before you respond to an upset colleague, you take a moment to say, "I understand you are disappointed we didn't consult you before moving forward with the product release…" before you say, "we didn't have time to get everyone's input." Reflecting back the speaker's point of view before responding allows the speaker to know you were listening and helps foster trust that everyone's voice is being heard.

Non-Verbal Feedback (constructive)	**Verbal Feedback (constructive)**
Listen with whole body	Ask open-ended questions
Use appropriate eye contact	Questions confirm understanding of message
Nod affirmatively (mmm hmm, yes, OK)	Ask clarifying questions (can you give an example of/did you mean…)

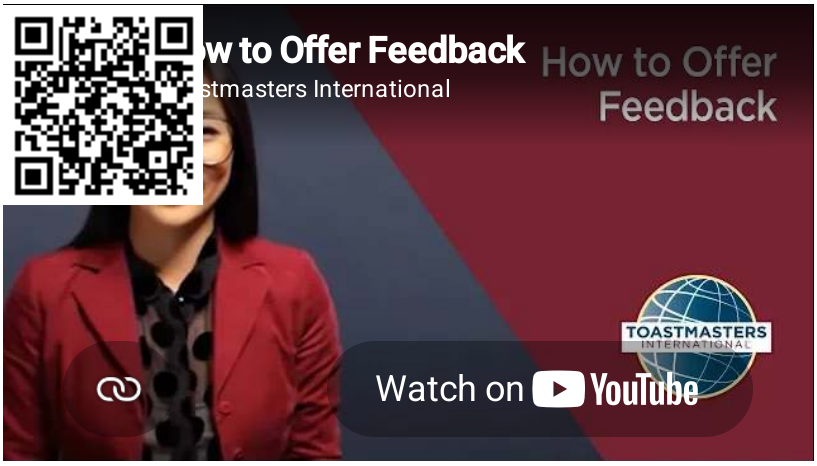
Use **listener's lean**	Use paraphrasing to demonstrate accurate understanding
Non-Verbal Feedback (not constructive)	**Verbal Feedback (not constructive)**
Closed body position	Asking closed questions
No eye contact	Asking questions that don't relate to speaker's message
Inattentive, distracted (playing with phones, engaging in side conversations etc.)	Asking rhetorical questions
Slumping, yawning	Making your own speech instead of asking a question

Receiving Feedback

Being open to receiving feedback is the only way to have a better picture of your performance as a presenter or speaker. Combining self-analysis with the feedback of your audience or peers is your opportunity to better understand your strengths as a presenter and what resonated well with your audience.

It may be a bit more uncomfortable to look at things that did not go well or receive feedback that's judgemental, biased, or otherwise laden with emotion. When receiving and making sense of feedback, it is very important to be self-aware and honest with yourself. This honesty will help you distinguish between an environmental situation, a situation that lies with the audience member, or a situation with the presenter.

Watch this video from Toastmasters.org to gain some helpful tips for providing feedback:



Watch this video to learn about conscious listening:



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15.9: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

This chapter explored enhancing listening skills, distinctions between listening and hearing, benefits and challenges of listening, the influence of noise and biases, and stages of listening (receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, responding).We discussed the importance of critical listening, types of feedback, ways to improve listening abilities, ethical listening, and various listening styles (people, action, content, time).

Learning how to be an effective listener has numerous advantages. First, effective listening can help us become better students. Second, effective listening can help us become more effective in our interpersonal relationships. Third, effective listening can lead others to perceive us as more intelligent. Lastly, effective listening can help us become a stronger public speaker. Being an ethical listener means giving respectful attention to the ideas of a speaker, even though you may not agree with or accept those ideas.

Listeners are often unable to accurately attend to messages because of four types of noise. Physical noise is caused by the physical setting a listener is in. Psychological noise exists within a listener's own mind and prevents them from attending to a speaker's message. Physiological noise exists because a listener's body is feeling some sensation that prevents them from attending to a speaker's message. Semantic noise is caused by a listener's confusion over the meanings of words used by a speaker. All audiences have a limited attention span. As a speaker, we must realize how long we can reasonably expect an audience to listen to our messages.

Exercises

1. Make a list of some of the abstract words you have misunderstood. What were the consequences of the misunderstanding?
2. Reflect on your listening in class or in other settings where remembering information is important. What keeps you from remembering important information accurately?
3. Give an example of a time when you felt that your message was misunderstood or treated with shallow attention. How did you know your message had been misunderstood or rejected? What does this mean you must do as a student of public speaking?
4. In a group, discuss what distracts you most from listening attentively to a speaker. Have you found ways to filter out or manage the distraction?
5. Make a list of biases you might have as a listener. You can think about how you'd answer such questions as, With whom would I refuse to be seen socially or in public? Who would I reject as a trustworthy person to help if I were in danger? What topics do I refuse to discuss? The answers to these questions might provide useful insights into your biases as a listener.
6. With a partner, discuss how you find out when you haven't been listening carefully. What are some of the consequences of poor listening?
7. Think of a time when you were too tired or distracted to give your full attention to the ideas in a speech. What did you do? What should you have done?
8. Give an example of a mistake in reasoning that involved the speaker mistaking an assumption for fact.
9. In a small group, discuss what each person's usual listening style is. Under what circumstances might you practice a different listening style?
10. Make a list of benefits and drawbacks to each of the listening styles discussed in this section.
11. As you prepare for your next speech, identify ways that you can adapt your message to each of the listening styles noted in this section.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

16: Persuasive Speaking

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16.3: A Definition of Persuasion
16.4: Why is Persuasion Difficult?
16.5: Traditional Views of Persuasion
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16.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. The importance of persuasion.
2. Define persuasion.
3. Define ethos, logos, and pathos.
4. Explain the barriers to persuading an audience.
5. Construct a clear, reasonable proposition for a short classroom speech.
6. Compose an outline for a well-supported persuasive speech using an appropriate organizational pattern such as Monroe's Motivated Sequence.
7. Analyze the audience to determine appropriate emotional and personal appeals
8. Explain the causes of cross-cultural miscommunication.
9. Identify fundamental cross-cultural communication strategies.

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16.2: The Importance of Persuasion

At the gas pump, when buying snacks at the grocery store, in the examination room of your doctor's office, everywhere you go, advertisers are trying to persuade you to buy their product. This form of persuasion used to be reserved for magazines and television commercials, but now it is unavoidable. One marketing research firm estimates that a person living in a large city today sees approximately 5,000 ads per day (Story, 2007). It is easy to assume that our over- exposure to persuasion makes us immune to its effect, but research demonstrates that we are more susceptible than ever. In fact, advertisers have gotten even better at learning exactly the right times and places to reach us by studying different audiences and techniques (Aral & Walker, 2012; Blackman, 2009; Rodendaal, Lapierre, vanReijmersdal, Buijzen, 2011).

We also encounter persuasion in our daily interactions. Imagine you stop at a café on your way to school, and the barista persuades you to try something new. While enjoying your espresso, a salesperson attempts to persuade you to upgrade your home Internet package. Later, while walking across campus, you observe students who are enthusiastically inviting others to join their organizations. Within thirty minutes, you have encountered at least three instances of persuasion, and there were likely others emanating in the background unbeknownst to you. Amidst being persuaded, you were also actively persuading others. You may have tried to convince the Internet sales person to give you a better deal and an extended contract, and later persuaded a group of friends to enjoy a night on the town. Persuasion is everywhere.

When your instructor announced on the syllabus or in class that you would be required to give a persuasive speech for this class, what was your reaction? "Oh, good, I've got a great idea," or, "Oh, no!"? For many people, there is something a little uncomfortable about the word "persuasion." It often gets paired with ideas of seduction, manipulation, force, lack of choice, or inducement as well as more positive concepts such as encouragement, influence, urging, or logical arguments. You might get suspicious if you think someone is trying to persuade you. You might not appreciate someone telling you to change your viewpoints. On the other hand, you might not think you have any beliefs, attitudes, values, or positions that are worth advocating for in front of an audience.

However, if you think of persuasion simply as a formal speech with a purpose of getting people to do something they do not want to do, then you will miss the value of learning persuasion and its accompanying skills of appeal, argument, and logic. Persuasion is something you do every day, in various forms. 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 (do not try that for this speech, though!); 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.

You may also be thinking, "I've given an informative speech. What's the difference?" While this chapter will refer to all of the content of the preceding chapters as it walks you through the steps of composing your persuasive speech, there is a difference. Although your persuasive speech will involve information—probably even as much as in your informative speech—the key difference is the word "change." Think of it like this:

INFORMATION + CHANGE = PERSUASION

You will be using the information for the purpose of changing something. First, we try to change the audience's beliefs, attitudes, and actions, and second, possibly the context they act upon. In the next section we will investigate the persuasive act and then move on to the barriers to persuasion.

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16.3: A Definition of Persuasion

Persuasion can be defined in two ways, for two purposes. The first (Lucas, 2015) is “the process of creating, reinforcing, or changing people’s beliefs or actions” (p. 306). This is a good, simple straightforward definition to start with, although it does not encompass the complexity of persuasion. This definition does introduce us to what could be called a “scaled” way of thinking about persuasion and change.

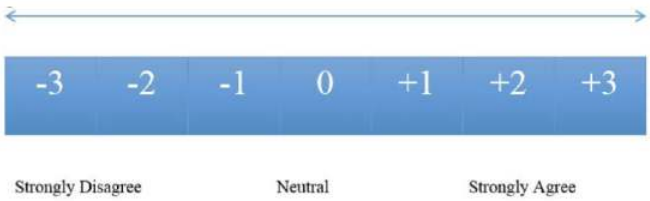


Figure 16.3.1: Persuasion Continuum

Think of persuasion as a continuum or line going both directions (see Figure 16.3.1). Your audience members, either as a group or individually, are sitting somewhere on that line in reference to your central idea statement, or what we are going to call a proposition in this chapter. In your speech you are proposing the truth or validity of an idea, one which the audience may not find true or acceptable. Sometimes the word “claim” is used for proposition or central idea statement in a persuasive speech, because you are claiming an idea is true or an action is valuable.

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 climate change is mainly due to pollution and other harmful things humans have done to the environment. To be an effective persuasive speaker, one of your first jobs after coming up with this topic would be to determine where your audience “sits” on the continuum in Figure 16.3.1.

> *+3 means strongly agree to the point of making lifestyle choices to lessen climate change (such as riding a bike instead of driving a car, recycling, eating certain kinds of foods, and advocating for government policy changes).*
>
> *+2 means agree but not to the point of acting upon it or only acting on it in small ways.*
>
> *+1 as mildly 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 too uninformed 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 in this case means moving them to the right, somewhere closer to +3. Thinking about persuasion this way has three values:

- You can visualize and quantify where your audience “sits.”
- 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 be able 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.

Your instructor may have the class engage in some activity about your proposed topics in order for you to write your proposition in a way that it is more applicable to your audience. For example, you might have a group discussion on the topics or administer surveys to your fellow students. Some topics are so controversial and divisive that trying to persuade about them in class is inappropriate. Your instructor may forbid some topics or steer you in the direction of others.

You might also ask if it is possible to persuade to the negative, for example, to argue against something or try to move the audience to be. You might also ask if it is possible to persuade to the negative, for example, to argue against something or try to move the audience to be opposed to something. In this case you would be trying to move your audience to the left on the continuum rather than to the right. Yes, it is possible to do so, but it might confuse the audience. Also, you might want to think in terms of phrasing

your proposition so that it is favorable as well as reasonable. For example, “Elderly people should not be licensed to drive” could be replaced with “Drivers over the age of 75 in our state of should be required to pass a vision and health test every two years to renew their drivers’ licenses.” The first one is not clear (what is “elderly?”), reasonable (no license at all?), or positive (based on restriction) in approach. The second is specific, reasonable, doable, and positive.

It should also be added that the proposition is assumed to be controversial. By that is meant that some people in the audience disagree with your proposition or at least have no opinion; they are not “on your side.” It would be foolish to give a speech when everyone in the audience totally agrees with you at the beginning of the speech. For example, trying to convince your classroom audience that attending college is a good idea is a waste of everyone’s time since, for one reason or another, everyone in your audience has already made that decision. That is not persuasive.

Those who disagree with your proposition but are willing to listen could be called the **target audience**. These are the members of your audience on whom you are truly focusing your persuasion. At the same time, another cluster of your audience that is not part of your target audience are those who are extremely opposed to your position to the point that they probably will not give you a fair hearing. Finally, some members of your audience may already agree with you, although they don’t know why.

To go back to our original definition, “the process of creating, reinforcing, or changing people’s beliefs or actions,” and each of these purposes implies a different approach. You can think of creating as moving an audience from 0 to +1, +2, or +3. You only really “create” something when it does not already exist, meaning the audience’s attitude will be a 0 since they have no opinion. In creating, you have to first engage the audience that there is a vital issue at stake. Then you must provide arguments in favor of your claim to give the audience a basis for belief.

Reinforcing is moving the audience from +1 toward +3 in the hope that they take action (since the real test of belief is whether people act on it). In reinforcing, the audience already agrees with you but need steps and pushes (nudges) to make it action. Changing is moving from -1 or –2 to +1 or higher. In changing, you must first be credible, provide evidence for your side but also show why the audience’s current beliefs are mistaken or wrong in some way.

However, this simple definition from Lucas, while it gets to the core of “change” that is inherent in persuasion, could be improved with some attention to the ethical component and the “how” of persuasion. For that purpose, let’s look at Perloff’s (2003) definition of **persuasion**:

> *A symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice. (p. 8)*

There are several important factors about this definition. First, notice that persuasion is symbolic, that is, uses language or other symbols (even graphics can be symbols), rather than force or other means. Second, notice that it is an attempt, not always fully successful. Third, there is an “atmosphere of free choice,” in that the persons being persuaded can choose not to believe or act. And fourth, notice that the persuader is “trying to convince others to change.” Modern psychological research has confirmed that the persuader does not change the audience directly. The processes that the human mind goes through while it listens to a persuasive message is like a silent, mental dialogue the audience is having with the speaker’s ideas. The audience members as individuals eventually convince themselves to change based on the “symbols” used by the speaker.

Some of this may sound like splitting hairs, but these are important points. The fact that an audience has free choice means that they are active participants in their own persuasion and that they can choose whether the speaker is successful. This factor calls on the student speaker to be ethical and truthful. Sometimes students will say, “It is just a class assignment, I can lie in this speech,” but that is not a fair or respectful way to treat your classmates.

Further, the basis of your persuasion is language; even though “a picture is worth a thousand words” and can help add emotional appeal to your speech, you want to focus on communicating through words. Also, Perloff’s definition distinguishes between “attitude” and “behavior,” meaning that an audience may be persuaded to think, to feel, or to act. Finally, persuasion is a process. Successful persuasion actually takes a while. One speech can be effective, but usually other messages influence the listener in the long run.

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16.4: Why is Persuasion Difficult?

Persuasion is difficult 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. Research, for example, including decades of research in social psychology, has shown that people are resistant to changing beliefs and are committed to maintaining beliefs and values that are important to them (Jost, 2015).

In the 1960s psychiatrists Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe wanted to investigate the effect of stress on life and health. As explained on the Mindtools website:

> *They surveyed more than 5,000 medical patients and asked them to say whether they had experience any of a series of 43 life events in the previous two years. Each event, called a Life Change Unit (LCU), had a different “weight” for stress. The more events the patient added up, the higher the score. The higher the score, and the larger the weight of each event, the more likely the patient was to become ill (The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale, 2015).*

You can find the Holmes-Rahe stress scale on many websites. What you will find is that the stressful events almost all have to do with change in some life situations—death of a close family member (which might rate 100 LCUs), loss of a job, even some good changes like the Christmas holidays (12 LCUs). Change is stressful. We do not generally embrace things that bring us stress.

Additionally, psychologists have pointed to how we go out of our way to protect our beliefs, attitudes, and values. First, we 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 and read, whether TV, radio, or Internet sites. Not only do we selectively expose ourselves to information, we selectively attend to, perceive, and recall information that supports our existing viewpoints (referred to as selective attention, selective perception, and 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. This state can be very uncomfortable, and we will do things to get rid of the dissonance and maintain “consonance.” Ideally, at least for a public speaker, the dissonance is relieved or resolved by being persuaded (changed) to a new belief, attitude, or behavior. However, the easiest way to avoid dissonance is to not expose oneself to conflicting messages in the first place.

Additionally, as mentioned before, during a persuasive speech the audience members are holding a mental dialogue with the speaker or at least the speaker’s content. They are putting up rebuttals or counter-arguments. These have been called reservations (as in the audience member would like to believe the speaker but has reservations about doing so). They 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, the bias is to be loss averse and not to change our actions or beliefs.

In a sense, the reasons *not* to change can be stronger than even 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.” You may have had this conversation, or one like it. Their arguments 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. If they are open-minded and can listen to evidence, they might experience cognitive dissonance and then be persuaded.



Solutions to the Difficulty of Persuasion

With these reasons for the resistance audience members would have to persuasion, what is a speaker to do? Here are some strategies.

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 in our lives every day. Going back to our scale in Figure 16.3.1, trying to move an audience from -3 to +2 or +3 is too big a move. Having reasonable persuasive goals is the first way to meet resistance. Even moving someone from -3 to -2 is progress, and over time these small shifts can eventually result in a significant amount of persuasion.

Secondly, a speaker must "deal with the reservations." First, the speaker must acknowledge they exist, which shows audience awareness, but then the speaker must attempt to rebut or refute them. In reality, since persuasion involves a mental dialogue, your audience is more than likely thinking of counter-arguments in their minds. Therefore, including a refutation section in your speech, usually after your presentation of arguments in favor of your proposition, is a required and important strategy.

However, there are some techniques for rebuttal or refutation that work better than others. You would not want to say, "One argument against my proposition is . . . , and that is wrong" or "If you are one of the people who believe this about my proposition, you are wrong." On the other hand, you could say that the reservations are "misconceptions," "myths," or "mistaken ideas" that are commonly held about the proposition.

Generally, strong persuasive speeches offer the audience what are called **two-tailed arguments**, which bring up a valid issue against your argument which you, as the speaker, must then refute. After acknowledging them 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. However, you cannot just say something like this:

> *One common misconception about wearing seatbelts is that if the car goes off a bridge and is sinking in water, you would not be able to release the belt and get out. First, that rarely happens. Second, if it did, getting the seat belt unbuckled would be the least of your worries. You would have to know how to get out of the car, not just the seat belt. Third, the seat belt would have protected you from any head injuries in such a crash, therefore keeping you conscious and able to help anyone else in the car.*

This is a good start, but there are some assertions in here that would need support from a reliable source, such as the argument that the "submerging in water" scenario is rare. If it has happened to someone you know, you probably would not think it is rare.

The third strategy is to keep in mind that since you are asking the audience to change something, they must view the benefits of the change as worth the stress of the change. If you do good audience analysis, you know they are asking, "What's in it for me?" What benefit or advantage or improvement would happen for the audience members?

If the audience is being persuaded to sign an organ donor card, which is an altruistic action that cannot benefit them in any way because they will be dead, what would be the benefit? Knowing others would have better lives, feeling a sense of contribution to the good of humanity, and helping medical science might be examples. The point is that a speaker should be able to engage the audience at the level of needs, wants, and values as well as logic and evidence.

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16.5: Traditional Views of Persuasion

In the fourth century BCE, Aristotle took up the study of the public speaking practices of the ruling class in Athenian society. For two years he observed the rhetoric of the men who spoke in the assembly and the courts. In the end, he wrote Rhetoric to explain his theories about what he saw. Among his many conclusions, which have formed the basis of communication study for centuries, was the classification of persuasive appeals into ethos, logos, and pathos. Over the years, Aristotle's original understanding and definition of these terms have been refined as more research has been done.

Ethos

Ethos has come to mean the influence of speaker credentials and character in a speech. Ethos is one of the more studied aspects of public speaking, and it was discussed earlier in this textbook. During the speech, a speaker should seek to utilize their existing credibility, based on the favorable things an audience already knows or believes about the speaker, such as education, expertise, background, and good character. The speaker should also improve or enhance credibility through citing reliable, authoritative sources, strong arguments, showing awareness of the audience, and effective delivery.

The word "ethos" looks very much like the word "ethics," and there are many close parallels to the trust an audience has in a speaker and their honesty and ethical stance. In terms of ethics, it goes without saying that your speech will be truthful. Another matter to consider is your own personal involvement in the topic. Ideally you have chosen the topic because it means something to you personally.

For example, perhaps your speech is designed to motivate audience members to take action against bullying in schools, and it is important to you because you work with the Boys and Girls Club organization and have seen how anti-bullying programs can have positive results. Sharing your own involvement and commitment is key to the credibility and emotional appeal (ethos and pathos) of the speech, added to the logos (evidence showing the success of the programs and the damage caused by bullying that goes unchecked). However, it would be wrong to manufacture stories of personal involvement that are untrue, even if the proposition is a socially valuable one.

Logos

Aristotle's original meaning for **logos** had philosophical meanings tied to the Greek worldview that the universe is a place ruled by logic and reason. Logos in a speech was related to standard forms of arguments that the audience would find acceptable. Today we think of logos as both logical and organized arguments and the credible evidence to support the arguments. Chapter 17 will deal with logic and avoiding logical fallacies more specifically.

Pathos

In words like "empathy," "sympathy," and "compassion" we see the root word behind pathos. **Pathos**, to Aristotle, was using the emotions such as anger, joy, hate, desire for community, and love to persuade the audience of the rightness of a proposition. One example of emotional appeals is using strong visual aids and engaging stories to get the attention of the audience. Someone's just asking you to donate money to help homeless pets may not have a strong effect, but seeing the ASPCA's commercials that feature emaciated and mistreated animals is probably much more likely to persuade you to donate (add the music for full emotional effect).

Emotions are also engaged by showing the audience that the proposition relates to their needs. However, we recognize that emotions are complex and that they also can be used to create a smokescreen to logic. Emotional appeals that use inflammatory language—name-calling—are often unethical or at least counterproductive. Some emotions are more appropriate for persuasive speeches than others. Anger and guilt, for example, do have effectiveness but they can backfire. Positive emotions such as pride, sympathy, and contentment are usually more productive.

One negative emotion that is useful and that can be used ethically is fear. When you think about it, we do a number of things in life to avoid negative consequences, and thus, out of fear. Why don't we drive 100 miles an hour on the interstate? Fear of getting a ticket, fear of paying more for insurance, fear of a crash, fear of hurting ourselves or others. Fear is not always applicable to a specific topic, but research shows that mild fear appeals, under certain circumstances, are very useful. When using fear appeals, the speaker must:

- Prove the fear appeal is valid.
- Prove that it applies to the audience
- Prove that the solution can work

- Prove the solution is available to the audience

Without these “proofs,” the audience may dismiss the fear appeal as not being real or not applying to them (O’Keefe, 2002). Mild and reasonable are the keys here. Intense, over-the-top fear appeals, especially showing gory photos, are often dismissed by the audience.

For example, a student gave a speech in one of our classes about flossing teeth. This may seem like an overdone subject, but in this case it wasn’t. He used dramatic and disturbing photos of dental and gum problems but also proved that these photos of gum disease really did come from lack of flossing. He also showed the link between lack of flossing and heart disease. The solution to avoid the gum disease and other effects was readily available, and the student proved through his evidence that the solution of flossing regularly did work to avoid the disease. Fear appeals can be overdone, but mild ones supported by evidence are very useful.

Because we feel positive emotions when our needs are met and negative ones when our needs are not met, aligning your proposition with strong audience needs is part of pathos. Earlier in this book we examined the well-known Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Students are often so familiar with it that they do not see its connection to real-life experiences. For example, safety and security needs, the second level on the hierarchy, is much broader than what many of us initially think. It includes:

- supporting the military and homeland security;
- buying insurance for oneself and one’s family;
- having investments and a will;
- personal protection such as taking self-defense classes;
- policies on crime and criminal justice in our communities;
- buying a security system for your car or home; seat belts and automotive safety; or even
- having the right kind of tires on one’s car (which is actually a viable topic for a speech).

The third level up in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, love and belongingness, deals with a whole range of human experiences, such as connection with others and friendship; involvement in communities, groups, and clubs; prioritizing family time; worship and connection to a faith community; being involved in children’s lives; patriotism; loyalty; and fulfilling personal commitments.

Up to this point in the chapter, we have looked at the goals of persuasion, why it is hard, and how to think about the traditional modes of persuasion based on Aristotle’s theories. In the last section of this chapter, we will look at generating an overall organizational approach to your speech based on your persuasive goals.

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16.6: Constructing a Persuasive Speech

In a sense, constructing your persuasive speech is the culmination of the skills you have learned already. In another sense, you are challenged to think somewhat differently. While the steps of analyzing your audience, formulating your purpose and central idea, applying evidence, considering ethics, framing the ideas in appropriate language, and then practicing delivery will of course apply, you will need to consider some expanded options about each of these steps.

Formulating a Proposition

As mentioned before, when thinking about a central idea statement in a persuasive speech, we use the terms "proposition" or claim. Persuasive speeches have one of four types of propositions or claims, which determine your overall approach. Before you move on, you need to determine what type of proposition you should have (based on the audience, context, issues involved in the topic, and assignment for the class).

Proposition of Fact

Speeches with this type of proposition attempt to establish the truth of a statement. The core of the propositoin (or claim) is not whether something is morally right and wrong or what should be done about the topic, only that a statement is supported by evidence or not. These propositions are not facts such as "the chemical symbol for water is H20" or "Barack Obama won the presidency in 2008 with 53% of the vote." Propositions or claims of fact are statements over which persons disagree and there is evidence on both sides, although probably more on one than the other. 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.*
- *Experiments using animals are essential to the development of many life-saving medical procedures.*
- *Climate change has been caused by human activity.*
- *Granting tuition tax credits to the parents of children who attend private schools will perpetuate educational inequality.*
- *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 in none of these are any values—good or bad—mentioned. Perpetuating segregation is not portrayed as good or bad, only as an effect of a policy. Of course, most people view educational inequality negatively, just as they view life-saving medical procedures positively. But the point of these propositions is to prove with evidence the truth of a statement, not its inherent value or what the audience should do about it. In fact, in some propositions of fact no action response would even be possible, such as the proposition listed above that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination of President Kennedy

Propositions of Definition

This is probably not one that you will use in your class, but it bears mentioning here because it is used in legal and scholarly arguments. Propositions of definitions argue that a word, phrase, or concept has a particular meaning. Remembering back to Chapter 6 on supporting materials, we saw that there are various ways to define words, such as by negation, operationalizing, and classification and division. It may be important for you to define your terms, especially if you have a value proposition. Lawyers, legislators, and scholars often write briefs, present speeches, or compose articles to define terms that are vital to defendants, citizens, or disciplines. We saw a proposition of definition defended in the Supreme Court's 2015 decision to redefine marriage laws as applying to same-sex couples, based on arguments presented in court. Other examples might be:

- *The Second Amendment to the Constitution does not include possession of automatic weapons for private use.*
- *Alcoholism should be considered a disease because…*
- *The action committed by Mary Smith did not meet the standard for first-degree murder.*
- *Thomas Jefferson's definition of inalienable rights did not include a right to privacy.*

In each of these examples, the proposition is that the definition of these things (the Second Amendment, alcoholism, crime, and inalienable rights) needs to be changed or viewed differently, but the audience is not asked to change an attitude or action.

Propositions of Value

It is likely that you or some of your classmates will give speeches with propositions of value. When the proposition has a word such as "good," "bad," "best," "worst," "just," "unjust," "ethical," "unethical," "moral," "immoral," "beneficial," "harmful,"

"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.*
- *Capital punishment is morally wrong.*
- *Mascots that involve Native American names, characters, and symbols are demeaning.*
- *A vegan diet is the healthiest one for adults.*

Propositions of value require a first step: defining the "value" word. If a war is unjustified, what makes a war "just" or "justified" in the first place? That is a fairly philosophical question. 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," "stylish," "powerful," or "prestigious." Obviously, in the case of the first proposition above, it means "environmentally responsible." It would be the first job of the speaker, after introducing the speech and stating the proposition, to explain what "best form of automobile transportation" means. Then the proposition would be defended with separate arguments.

Propositions of Policy

These propositions are easy to identify because they almost always have the word "should" in them. These propositions call for a change in policy or practice (including those in a government, community, or school), or they can call for the audience to adopt a certain behavior. Speeches with propositions of policy can be those that call for passive acceptance and agreement from the audience and those that try to instigate the audience to action, to actually do something immediately or in the long-term.

- *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 federal government should not allow the use of technology to choose the sex of an unborn child.*
- *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.*
- *Young people should monitor their blood pressure regularly to avoid health problems later in life.*

Organization Based on Type of Proposition

Organization for a proposition of fact

If your proposition is one of fact, you will do best to use a topical organization. Essentially that means that you will have two to four discrete, separate arguments in support of the proposition. For example:

Proposition: Converting to solar energy can save homeowners money.

I. Solar energy can be economical to install.

A. The government awards grants.

B. The government gives tax credits.

II. Solar energy reduces power bills.

III. Solar energy requires less money for maintenance.

IV. Solar energy works when the power grid goes down.

Here is a first draft of another outline for a proposition of fact:

Proposition: Experiments using animals are essential to the development of many life-saving medical procedures.

I. Research of the past shows many successes from animal experimentation.

II. Research on humans is limited for ethical and legal reasons.

III. Computer models for research have limitations.

However, these outlines are just preliminary drafts because preparing a speech of fact requires a great deal of research and understanding of the issues. A speech with a proposition of fact will almost always need an argument or section related to the

"reservations," refuting the arguments that the audience may be preparing in their minds, their mental dialogue. So the second example needs revision, such as:

I. The first argument in favor of animal experimentation is the record of successful discoveries from animal research.

II. A second reason to support animal experimentation is that research on humans is limited for ethical and legal reasons.

III. Animal experimentation is needed because computer models for research have limitations.

IV. Many people today have concerns about animal experimentation.

A. Some believe that all experimentation is equal.

1. There is experimentation for legitimate medical research.

2. There is experimentation for cosmetics or shampoos.

B. Others argue that the animals are mistreated.

1. There are protocols for the treatment of animals in experimentation.

2. Legitimate medical experimentation follows the protocols.

C. Some believe the persuasion of certain advocacy groups like PETA.

1. Many of the groups that protest animal experimentation have extreme views.

2. Some give untrue representations.

To complete this outline, along with introduction and conclusion, there would need to be quotations, statistics, and facts with sources provided to support both the pro-arguments in Main Points I-III and the refutation to the misconceptions about animal experimentation in Subpoints A-C under Point IV.

Organization for a proposition of value

A persuasive speech that incorporates a proposition of value will have a slightly different structure. As mentioned earlier, a proposition of value must first define the "value" word for clarity and provide a basis for the other arguments of the speech. The second or middle section would present the defense or "pro" arguments for the proposition based on the definition. The third section would include refutation of the counter arguments or "reservations." The following outline draft shows a student trying to structure a speech with a value proposition. Keep in mind it is abbreviated for illustrative purposes, and thus incomplete as an example of what you would submit to your instructor, who will expect more detailed outlines for your speeches.

Proposition: Hybrid cars are the best form of automotive transportation available today.

I. Automotive transportation that is best meets three standards. **(Definition)**

A. It is reliable and durable.

B. It is fuel efficient and thus cost efficient.

C. It is therefore environmentally responsible.

II. Studies show that hybrid cars are durable and reliable. **(Pro-Argument 1)**

A. Hybrid cars have 99 problems per 100 cars versus 133 problem per 100 conventional cars, according to TrueDelta, a car analysis website much like Consumer Reports.

B. J.D. Powers reports hybrids also experience 11 fewer engine and transmission issues than gas-powered vehicles, per 100 vehicles.

III. Hybrid cars are fuel-efficient. **(Pro-Argument 2)**

A. The Toyota Prius gets 48 mpg on the highway and 51 mpg in the city.

B. The Ford Fusion hybrid gets 47 mpg in the city and in the country.

IV. Hybrid cars are environmentally responsible. **(Pro-Argument 3)**

A. They only emit 51.6 gallons of carbon dioxide every 100 miles.

B. Conventional cars emit 74.9 gallons of carbon dioxide every 100 miles.

C. The hybrid produces 69% of the harmful gas exhaust that a conventional car does.

V. Of course, hybrid cars are relatively new to the market and some have questions about them. **(Reservations)**

A. Don't the batteries wear out and aren't they expensive to replace?

1. Evidence to address this misconception.
2. Evidence to address this misconception.

B. Aren't hybrid cars only good for certain types of driving and drivers?

1. Evidence to address this misconception.
2. Evidence to address this misconception.

C. Aren't electric cars better?

1. Evidence to address this misconception.
2. Evidence to address this misconception.

Organization for a propositions of policy

The most common type of outline organizations for speeches with propositions of policy is problem-solution or problem-cause-solution. Typically we do not 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?"As mentioned before, some policy speeches look for passive agreement or acceptance of the proposition. Some instructors call this type of policy speech a "think" speech since the persuasion is just about changing the way your audience thinks about a policy.

On the other hand, other policy speeches seek to move the audience to do something to change a situation or to get involved in a cause, and these are sometimes called a "do" speech since the audience is asked to do something. This second type of policy speech (the "do" speech) is sometimes called a "speech to actuate." Although a simple problem-solution organization with only two main points 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), who wrote a popular speaking textbook for many years, is based on John Dewey's reflective thinking process. It seeks to go in-depth with the many questions an audience would have in the process of listening to a persuasive speech. 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.

1. **Attention**. This is the introduction, where the speaker brings attention to the importance of the topic as well as his or her own credibility and connection to the topic. This step will include the thesis and preview.
2. **Need**. Here the problem is defined and defended. This step may be divided into two main points, such as the problem and the causes of it, since logically a solution should address the underlying causes as well as the external effects of a problem. It is important to make the audience see the severity of the problem, and how it affects them, their family, or their community. The harm or need can be physical, financial, psychological, legal, emotional, educational, social, or a combination. It will have to be supported by evidence.
3. **Satisfaction**. A need calls for satisfaction in the same way a problem requires a solution. This step could also, in some cases, take up two main points. Not only does the speaker present the solution and describe it, but they must also defend that it works and will address the causes of the problem as well as the symptoms.
4. **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 anything to solve the problem are shown. There may be times when it is acceptable to skip this step, especially if time is limited. The purpose of visualization is to motivate the audience by revealing future benefits or through fear appeals by showing future harms.
5. **Action**. This can be the conclusion, although if the speaker really wants to spend time on moving the audience to action, the action step should be a full main point and the conclusion saved for summary and a dramatic ending. 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 (which can cause a

serious disease called shingles in adults), 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.

In some cases for speeches of policy, no huge problem needs solving. Or, there is a problem, but the audience already knows about it and is convinced that the problem exists and is important. In those cases, a format called "comparative advantages" is used, which focuses on how one possible solution is better than other possible ones. The organizational pattern for this kind of proposition might be topical:

I. This policy is better because…

II. This policy is better because…

III. This policy is better because…

If this sounds a little like a commercial that is because advertisements often use comparative advantages to show that one product is better than another. Here is an example:

Proposition: Owning the Barnes and Noble Nook is more advantageous than owning the Amazon Kindle.

I. The Nook allows owners to trade and loan books to other owners or people who have downloaded the Nook software, while the Kindle does not.

II. The Nook has a color-touch screen, while the Kindle's screen is black and grey and non-interactive.

III. The Nook's memory can be expanded through microSD, while the Kindle's memory cannot be upgraded.

Building Upon Your Persuasive Speech's Arguments

Once you have constructed the key arguments and order of points (remembering that if you use topical order, to put your strongest or most persuasive point last), it is time to be sure your points are well supported. In a persuasive speech, there are some things to consider about evidence.

First, your evidence should be from sources that the audience will find credible. If you can find the same essential information from two sources but know that the audience will find the information more credible from one source than another, use and cite the information from the more credible one. For example, if you find the same statistical data on Wikipedia and the U.S. Department of Labor's website, cite the U.S. Department of Labor (your instructor will probably not accept the Wikipedia site anyway). Audiences also accept information from sources they consider unbiased or indifferent. Gallup polls, for example, have been considered reliable sources of survey data because unlike some organizations, Gallup does not have a cause (political or otherwise) it is supporting.

Secondly, your evidence should be new to the audience. In other words, the best evidence is that which is from credible sources and the audience has not heard before (Reinard, 1988; McCroskey, 1969). If they have heard it before and discounted it, they will not consider your argument well supported. An example is telling people who smoke that smoking will cause lung cancer. Everyone in the U.S. has heard that thousands of times, but 14% of the population still smokes, which is about one in seven (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017). Many of those who smoke have not heard the information that really motivates them to quit yet, and of course quitting is very difficult. Additionally, new evidence is more attention-getting, and you will appear more credible if you tell the audience something new (as long as you cite it well) than if you use the "same old, same old" evidence they have heard before.

Third, in order to be effective and ethical, your supporting evidence should be relevant and not used out of context, and fourth, it should be timely and not out of date.

After choosing the evidence and apportioning it to the correct parts of the speech, you will want to consider use of metaphors, quotations, rhetorical devices, and narratives that will enhance the language and "listenability" of your speech. Narratives are especially good for introduction and conclusions, to get attention and to leave the audience with something dramatic. You might refer to the narrative in the introduction again in the conclusion to give the speech a sense of finality

Next you will want to decide if you should use any type of presentation aid for the speech. The decision to use visuals such as PowerPoint slides or a video clip in a persuasive speech should take into consideration the effect of the visuals on the audience and the time allotted for the speech (as well as your instructor's specifications). The charts, graphs, or photographs you use should be focused and credibly done.

One of your authors remembers a speech by a student about using seat belts (which is, by the way, an overdone topic). What made the speech effective in this case were photographs of two totaled cars, both of which the student had been driving when they crashed. The devastation of the wrecks and his ability to stand before us and give the speech because he had worn his seat belt was effective (although it didn't say much for his driving ability). If you wanted an audience to donate to disaster relief after an earthquake in a foreign country, a few photographs of the destruction would be effective, and perhaps a map of the area would be helpful. But in this case, less is more. Too many visual aids will likely distract from your overall speech claim.

Finally, since you've already had experience in class giving at least one major speech prior to this one, your delivery for the persuasive speech should be especially strong. Since delivery does affect credibility (Burgoon, Birk, & Pfau, 1990), you want to be able to connect visually as you make your appeals. You want to be physically involved and have vocal variety when you tell dramatic narratives that emphasize the human angle on your topic. If you do use presentation slides, you want them to work in seamlessly, using black screens when the visuals are not necessary.

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16.7: Persuasion Across Cultures



The Impact of Language and Culture on Public Speaking

Speaking English as a lingua franca refers to the global phenomenon of people who use English as a common language when they do not comprehend each other's native languages. Despite their limited skills, users of English as a lingua franca manage to overcome considerable linguistic and cultural communication barriers by focusing on meaning and purpose. The fact that users of English as a lingua franca can communicate effectively, gain trust, maintain respect, and avoid conflict speaks volumes about the ingenuity of human communication skills.

The use of English as a lingua franca is one consequence of globalization, which Swedish journalist Thomas Larsson has defined as "the process of world shrinkage, of distances getting shorter, things moving closer. It pertains to the increasing ease with which somebody on one side of the world can interact, to mutual benefit, with somebody on the other side of the world" (9). Enhanced by the revolutionary advances in communication technologies, globalization has facilitated direct contact among people from various countries, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Face-to-face or technology-mediated, cross-cultural encounters are typically friendly, respectful, and positive despite cultural and linguistic barriers and differences. In this section, we will explore the nature and causes of cross-cultural miscommunication and identify key strategies for effective cross-cultural persuasion.



Photo by Alexandre Pellaes on Unsplash

The Root of Cross-Cultural Miscommunication

When people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds meet, the interaction is usually friendly and respectful. In cross-cultural communication, people are typically proud of their acceptance and tolerance and emphasize shared values with different people. Many people dream of traveling to foreign countries to learn about other nations, cultures, traditions, and religions. Unfortunately, misunderstandings and conflicts may occur when people from differing linguistic and cultural worldviews argue about controversial political or social issues.

While respect and tolerance can go a long way in reducing conflict among people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, misunderstandings can still result in severe disagreements and conflicts due to differences in worldviews and communication styles. Personal, social, and cultural factors usually shape a person's communication style. However, how individuals express themselves reflects their socio-economic status and the influence and power in society. For instance, people who belong to a dominant or privileged group tend to speak in a way that reflects their influential status. Privileged individuals in some societies may project their dominant position over less privileged groups or individuals by using direct, assertive, and goal-oriented language. On the other hand, individuals with less power may reflect their lack of influence by using indirect or implicit expressions.

Despite sharing universally accepted values such as harmony, trust, sincerity, honesty, and loyalty among world cultures, traditions, and religions, cross-cultural communication can still be distrustful and tense due to differences in values, beliefs, and worldviews.

Gender roles are perceived differently in different cultures and religions and are usually controversial. For example, in many cultures, men are protective of women and show respect by preventing or shielding them from working or doing demanding jobs. In contrast, barring women from work or doing challenging jobs is viewed as violating gender equality and fundamental workplace rights in other cultures. Thus, the different perceptions of gender roles may lead to miscommunication and serious misunderstandings in cross-cultural settings.

Miscommunication between people from different linguistic or cultural backgrounds may result from differences in values, beliefs, or communication styles. For example, people in some cultures emphasize direct and explicit communication to express individualism, independence, and pride. Furthermore, the straightforward communication style is viewed positively in Western cultures as an honest and practical approach to personal and professional interactions.

Cross-Cultural Persuasion Strategies

Persuasion involves influencing others to do or believe something by presenting convincing reasons or evidence. Robert B. Cialdini has identified six persuasion techniques that can help speakers win hearts and minds: reciprocity, scarcity, authority, consistency, liking, and consensus (Cialdini, 2001). The six techniques can be used in different combinations and include persuading listeners to like and trust the speaker as someone who has something valuable to offer. To like you, your listeners have to feel appreciated and respected by you, and to trust you; they need to trust your knowledge or expertise and trust your commitment to your ideas. Effective cross-cultural communication should be based on effective persuasion techniques and the strategies specific to communication in diverse linguistic and cultural settings. The following are fundamental cross-cultural communication strategies.

Watch this video to learn more about Cialdini's six persuasion techniques:



Emphasizing Shared Values

The first cross-cultural persuasion strategy is to build rapport and establish by emphasizing your values with your audience from a different linguistic or cultural background. New York City is an excellent example of how millions of people from all corners of the globe overcome countless linguistic and cultural barriers. New Yorkers live, work, and prosper in their diverse communities by championing such values as freedom, equality, and justice, which serve as a solid foundation for communication and persuasion.

A practical example of building rapport by emphasizing shared values is loyalty to family and community to a listener who grew up in Saudi Arabian society. Saad Said A. Al-Zahrani and Stan A. Kaplowitz (1993) explored the differences between Americans and Saudis and concluded that Saudis are more collectivist than Americans. People from collectivist cultures tend to be more family- and group-serving than people from individualist cultures, who tend to be more self-serving. By sharing one’s loyalty and love for family, people from a collectivist culture like the Saudis and others from individualist cultures like Americans establish a solid ground for persuasion.

Check Yourself

Focusing on Meaning and Intention

Focus on meaning and intention is critical since it helps reduce or eliminate minor distractions, common in cross-cultural communication and persuasion. For instance, people in some cultures express themselves indirectly and implicitly to maintain harmony and show courtesy, whereas people in other cultures express themselves directly and explicitly to show honesty and

trustworthiness. Consequently, it is not uncommon for two people from the above-mentioned cultures to misunderstand each other, as direct and explicit speakers may appear bold and disrespectful, while indirect and implicit speakers may seem elusive or non-committal. Recognizing the difference between implicit and explicit communication styles reduces the chance of misunderstanding and conflict.

Speakers from individualist cultures may appear to listeners from collectivist cultures as self-centered and self-important. Conversely, speakers from collectivist cultures may appear to listeners from individualistic cultures as selfless and lacking in self-esteem. But, of course, both impressions can be completely wrong since communication styles reflect social norms, power structures, and relationships rather than individual traits. Therefore, distinguishing between personal qualities and cultural styles of communication is crucial for establishing and maintaining rapport and avoiding conflict.

Persuasion requires understanding what the person you are speaking with says and means. While this might be straightforward in a language and tradition you are familiar with, it is trickier when engaging in cross-cultural persuasion. For example, many Japanese prefer to show disagreement indirectly while many Americans do so directly. Therefore, it is common for the Japanese to perceive Americans as aggressive or discourteous. Conversely, Americans may perceive the Japanese as elusive, indecisive, or weak. Both perceptions can be completely mistaken, backfire, and undermine "trust and developing relationships" (Rahman, 2016).

Engaging in Empathetic Listening



Photo by Nick Fewings on Unsplash

Global and social media can intensify cultural and political tensions, contribute to miscommunication, and divide communities. Cross-cultural communication can be particularly fraught with miscommunication challenges due to the linguistic and cultural barriers that separate people from different backgrounds. Therefore, applying empathetic listening and suspending judgment are critical strategies for effective communication and persuasion. Furthermore, eliminating or reducing misunderstandings and tension necessitates approaching cross-cultural communication with open-mindedness and willingness to compromise and find solutions to problems (Putnam & Roloff, 1992).

Understanding other people's cultural context and perspective are critical for decreasing conflict and improving persuasiveness. For example, while some cultures adhere to strict rationality as a persuasive strategy, others may view strict adherence to logic as attempts to dictate and impose opinions and solutions without fully understanding the discussion's political, social, or cultural context. On the other hand, appealing to emotion, which is common in some cultures, can be interpreted as avoiding facts or ignoring logic and reason. Empathetic listening requires showing others your genuine interest in understanding their ideas. One way to show empathy is by paraphrasing speakers' viewpoints in your own words, asking for clarification, or expressing appreciation of their contribution to the discussion.

Approaching Persuasion as Dialogue

In this era of globalization, ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity has become the norm in the United States and across the globe. The emerging global, pluralistic culture, in which people from different backgrounds work and live together, will shape how people perceive themselves, others, and reality. In such a pluralistic environment, cross-cultural communication requires dialogue with others "to understand one another's point of view, to show tolerance, listening, and flexibility of thought in the face of sociocultural gaps" (Eliyahu-Levi, 2020, 417).

Linguistic and cultural barriers can be decreased or eliminated if communication is focused on meaning and purpose. For example, millions of people use English as a foreign language (EFL) to communicate effectively without necessarily adopting the cultural values, beliefs, or styles of native speakers of English. Adopting dialogue helps maintain a positive tone when speaking with people with different communication styles and cultural etiquette. Thus, it is essential to remember that when communicating with EFL speakers, the latter may not observe the values, opinions, or communication strategies used by native English speakers. Furthermore, it is essential to remember that when engaging in persuasive dialogue with people from different linguistic or cultural

backgrounds than yours, the latter filter the ideas through the lens of their communication patterns and social and political experiences. Therefore, suspending judgment and listening carefully to the arguments and evidence help achieve mutual understanding, reach an agreement, and resolve conflicts.

Approaching cross-cultural persuasion as a two-way dialogue helps build trust and reduce disagreements and tension. Dialogue requires participants to listen carefully, be flexible, and give up trying to control the communication process to achieve predetermined outcomes. Michael L. Kent and Maureen Taylor (2002) view dialogue as a means to solidify sympathy, satisfaction, and trust, essential for relationship building between people who would otherwise find no grounds for reasoning and agreement. Hence, cross-cultural communication is essentially a compromise between people committed to searching for ways to engage and remain in constant dialogue that may seem impossible at times.

In many Western cultures, monologue is hailed as a winning method of speech to persuade and change hearts and minds. However, in cross-cultural communication, monologues may be counterproductive. It should, therefore, be replaced by dialogue which is a balanced two-way symmetrical communication process that leads to mutual understanding between participants (Grunig et al., 2006).

Check Yourself

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16.8: Conclusion and Exercises

Conclusion

Your persuasive speech in class, as well as in real life, is an opportunity to share a passion or cause that you believe will matter to society and help the audience live a better life. Even if you are initially uncomfortable with the idea of persuasion, we use it all the time in 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.

When formulating a persuasive speech, remember to determine the type of question you seek to answer so that you can decide whether to offer a proposition of fact, a proposition of value, or a proposition of policy. Weave the topic and the proposition together to create a compelling argument for your specific audience.

Knowing your audience can help when it comes to choosing the appropriate strategies for convincing them that you are a credible speaker. Once you have established your credibility, you can advance both logical and emotional appeals to move your audience toward the belief or behavior you hope they will adopt. As you weave these appeals together, be sure to offer the most ethical arguments by avoiding fallacies and supporting emotional appeals with relevant evidence.

Once you have compiled the most relevant arguments and emotional appeals for a given audience, take care to organize your message effectively. Give thought to your persuasive goals and determine whether they can be best achieved through the use of one of the patterns of organization explained in this chapter.

Building linguistic and cultural bridges are fundamental strategies for effective cross-cultural persuasion. Engaging in genuine dialogue for understanding and being understood is the basis for building trust, reducing tension, and reaching an agreement. We discussed effective cross-cultural communication strategies that emphasize shared values, empathetic listening, and dialogue-based persuasion. Recognizing diverse communication styles can help build rapport and reduce conflict, fostering mutual understanding and respect. Engaging in two-way dialogue is crucial for meaningful interactions and conflict resolution, highlighting that successful cross-cultural persuasion can bridge linguistic and cultural divides.

The primary goal of persuasive speaking is to influence an audience's beliefs or behaviors so that they can make necessary or positive change. Persuasive speaking is a vital skill in all areas of life, whether it is a political candidate convincing voters to elect them, an employee convincing the boss to give them a promotion, or a sales person convincing a consumer to buy a product, individuals must understand what persuasion is and how it functions.

Review Questions

1. Early in the chapter the prevalence of persuasion was discussed. Think of an instance in which you knew you were being persuaded. What were you being persuaded to do? Was the persuader focused on changing your beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions? How do you know?
2. Imagine you are giving a persuasive speech on _____ [you fill in the blank]. Draft a specific purpose statement on this topic for a speech to convince. Next, draft a specific purpose statement on the same topic for a speech to actuate.
3. Draft a proposition of fact, proposition of value, and proposition of policy for one or more of the following topics:
    a. Shortening class time
    b. Pro-anorexia images on social networking sites
    c. Airline fees
4. You have been invited to speak to administrators about increasing alumni support for the school. What steps will you take to build your ethos for this audience? What logical appeals will you make? How will you appeal to their emotions?
5. Imagine you are giving a speech in which you hope to convince audience members to begin retirement planning while they are still in their twenties. Which of the organizational patterns described above best fits this topic? Why? Describe its advantages over the other organization styles for the specific purpose.
6. What are the root causes of cross-cultural communication?
7. What are the key strategies for successful cross-cultural persuasion?
8. Why is dialogue essential as a basis for cross-cultural persuasion?
9. What are the root causes of cross-cultural communication?
10. What are the key strategies for successful cross-cultural persuasion?

11. Why is dialogue essential as a basis for cross-cultural persuasion?

Activities

1. Using a recent newspaper, locate an example of a proposition of fact, a proposition of value, and a proposition of policy, and underline each one. Then, see if you can locate the data, warrant, and backing for each of these claims. If you cannot locate one or more of the elements, write your own based on the information provided in the article.
2. In small groups, share with your classmates some of the communication style(s) people in your culture or community use to persuade others.
3. Work with a partner on two short debates about a sensitive social or political issue: The first exemplifies asymmetrical and the second an asymmetrical dialogue.
4. In small groups, share with your classmates some of the communication style(s) people in your culture or community use to persuade others.
5. Work with a partner on two short debates about a sensitive social or political issue: The first exemplifies asymmetrical and the second an asymmetrical dialogue.

Something to Think About

Go to YouTube and look for "Persuasive Speeches by College Students." There are quite a few. Here's one example:

youtube.com

Do you find this speech persuasive? Why or why not? Based on the content of this chapter, what did the speaker do correctly or perhaps not so correctly that affected his or her persuasiveness?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

17: Logical Reasoning



17.1: Learning Objectives
17.2: Critical Thinking
17.3: Logic and the Role of Arguments
17.4: What is Correct Reasoning?
17.5: Inductive Reasoning
17.6: Deductive Reasoning
17.7: Logical Fallacies
17.8: Conclusion, Glossary, References

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17.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Understand and explain the importance of critical thinking
2. Identify the core skills associated with critical thinking
3. Define critical thinking, deductive reasoning, and inductive reasoning;
4. Distinguish between inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning;
5. Know the four types of inductive reasoning;
6. Construct a logically sound and well-reasoned argument
7. Become a more critical listener to public speeches and more critical reader of source material.
8. Avoid the various fallacies that can arise through the misuse of logic

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17.2: Critical Thinking

Critical thinking has been defined in numerous ways. At its most basic, we can think of critical thinking as active thinking in which we evaluate and analyze information in order to determine the best course of action. We will look at more expansive definitions of critical thinking and its components in the following pages.

Before we get there, though, let's consider a hypothetical example of critical thinking in action:

- *Shonda was researching information for her upcoming persuasive speech. Her goal with the speech was to persuade her classmates to drink a glass of red wine every day. Her argument revolved around the health benefits one can derive from the antioxidants found in red wine. Shonda found an article reporting the results of a study conducted by a Dr. Gray. According to Dr. Gray's study, drinking four or more glasses of wine a day will help reduce the chances of heart attack, increase levels of good cholesterol, and help in reducing unwanted fat. Without conducting further research, Shonda changed her speech to persuade her classmates to drink four or more glasses of red wine per day. She used Dr. Gray's study as her primary support. Shonda presented her speech in class to waves of applause and support from her classmates. She was shocked when, a few weeks later, she received a grade of "D". Shonda's teacher had also found Dr. Gray's study and learned it was sponsored by a multi-national distributor of wine. In fact, the study in question was published in a trade journal targeted to wine and alcohol retailers. If Shonda had taken a few extra minutes to critically examine the study, she may have been able to avoid the dreaded "D."*

Shonda's story is just one of many ways that critical thinking impacts our lives. Throughout this chapter we will consider the importance of critical thinking in all areas of communication, especially public speaking. We will first take a more in-depth look at what critical thinking is—and isn't.

Before we get too far into the specifics of what critical thinking is and how we can do it, it's important to clear up a common misconception. Even though the phrase critical thinking uses the word "critical," it is not a negative thing. Being critical is not the same thing as criticizing. When we criticize something, we point out the flaws and errors in it, exercising a negative value judgment on it. Our goal with criticizing is less about understanding than about negatively evaluating. It's important to remember that critical thinking is not just criticizing. While the process may involve examining flaws and errors, it is much more.

Critical Thinking Defined

Just what is critical thinking then? To help us understand, let's consider a common definition of critical thinking. The philosopher John Dewey, often considered the father of modern day critical thinking, defines **critical thinking** as:

- *"Active, persistent, careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey, 1933).*

The first key component of Dewey's definition is that critical thinking is active. Critical thinking must be done by choice. As we continue to delve deeper into the various facets of critical thinking, we will learn how to engage as critical thinkers.

Probably one of the most concise and easiest to understand definitions is that offered by Barry Beyer: "Critical thinking… means making reasoned judgments" (1995). In other words, we don't just jump to a conclusion or a judgment. We rationalize and justify our conclusions. A second primary component of critical thinking, then, involves questioning. As critical thinkers, we need to question everything that confronts us. Equally important, we need to question ourselves and ask how our own biases or assumptions influence how we judge something.

In the following sections we will explore how to do critical thinking more in depth. As you read through this material, reflect back on Dewey's and Beyer's definitions of critical thinking.

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17.3: Logic and the Role of Arguments

Critical thinkers tend to exhibit certain traits that are common to them. These traits are summarized in the following table:

Table 17.3.1: Traits of Critical Thinking

Traits	Summary
Open-Mindedness	• Critical thinkers are open and receptive to all ideas and arguments, even those with which they may disagree. • Critical thinkers reserve judgment on a message until they have examined the claims, logic, reasoning, and evidence used. • Critical thinkers are fair-minded and understand that a message is not inherently wrong or flawed if it differs from their own thoughts. • Critical thinkers remain open to the possibility of changing their view on an issue when logic and evidence supports doing so.
Analytic Nature	• Critical thinkers are interested in understanding what is happening in a message. • Critical thinkers ask questions of the message, breaking it into its individual components and examining each in turn. • Critical thinkers dissect these components looking for sound logic and reasoning.
Systematic by Method	• Critical thinkers avoid jumping to conclusions. • Critical thinkers take the time to systematically examine a message. • Critical thinkers apply accepted criteria or conditions to their analyses.
Inquisitive	• Critical thinkers are curious by nature. • Critical thinkers ask questions of what is going on around them and in a message. • Critical thinkers want to know more and take action to learn more.
Judicious	• Critical thinkers are prudent in acting and making judgments. • Critical thinkers are sensible in their actions. That is, they don't just jump on the bandwagon of common thought because it looks good or everyone else is doing it.
Truth-Seeking Ethos	• Critical thinkers exercise an ethical foundation based in searching for the truth. • Critical thinkers understand that even the wisest people may be wrong at times.
Confident in Reasoning	• Critical thinkers have faith in the power of logic and sound reasoning. • Critical thinkers understand that it is in everyone's best interest to encourage and develop sound logic. • More importantly, critical thinkers value the power of letting others draw their own conclusions.

Recall that critical thinking is an active mode of thinking. Instead of just receiving messages and accepting them as is, we consider what they are saying. We ask if messages are well-supported. We determine if their logic is sound or slightly flawed. In other

words, we act on the messages before we take action based on them. When we enact critical thinking on a message, we engage a variety of skills including: listening, analysis, evaluation, inference and interpretation or explanation, and self-regulation.

Next, we will examine each of these skills and their role in critical thinking in greater detail. As you read through the explanation of and examples for each skill, think about how it works in conjunction with the others. It's important to note that while our discussion of the skills is presented in a linear manner, in practice our use of each skill is not so straightforward. We may exercise different skills simultaneously or jump forward and backward.

Listening

Critical thinking requires that we consciously listen to messages. We must focus on what is being said – and not said. We must strive not to be distracted by other outside noises or the internal noise of our own preconceived ideas. Although we have already explored listening, the type of listening you do critically is worth further discussion.

Listening becomes especially difficult when the message contains highly charged information. Think about what happens when you try to discuss a controversial issue such as abortion. As the other person speaks, you may have every good intention of listening to the entire argument. However, when the person says something you feel strongly about you start formulating a counter-argument in your head. The end result is that both sides end up talking past each other without ever really listening to what the other says.

Analysis

Once we have listened to a message, we can begin to analyze it. In practice we often begin analyzing messages while still listening to them. When we analyze something, we consider it in greater detail, separating out the main components of the message. In a sense, we are acting like a surgeon on the message, carving out all of the different elements and laying them out for further consideration and possible action.

Let's return to Shonda's persuasive speech to see analysis in action. As part of the needs section of her speech, Shonda makes the following remarks:

- *Americans today are some of the unhealthiest people on Earth. It seems like not a week goes by without some news story relating how we are the fattest country in the world. In addition to being overweight, we suffer from a number of other health problems. When I was conducting research for my speech, I read somewhere that heart attacks are the number one killer of men and the number two killer of women. Think about that. My uncle had a heart attack and had to be rushed to the hospital. They hooked him up to a bunch of different machines to keep him alive. We all thought he was going to die. He's ok now, but he has to take a bunch of pills every day and eat a special diet. Plus he had to pay thousands of dollars in medical bills. Wouldn't you like to know how to prevent this from happening to you?*

If we were to analyze this part of Shonda's speech, we could begin by looking at the claims she makes. We could then look at the evidence she presents in support of these claims. Having parsed out the various elements, we are then ready to evaluate them and by extension the message as a whole.

Evaluation

When we evaluate something we continue the process of analysis by assessing the various claims and arguments for validity. One way we evaluate a message is to ask questions about what is being said and who is saying it. The following is a list of typical questions we may ask, along with an evaluation of the ideas in Shonda's speech.

Is the speaker credible?

Yes. While Shonda may not be an expert per se on the issue of health benefits related to wine, she has made herself a mini-expert through conducting research.

Does the statement ring true or false based on common sense?

It sounds kind of fishy. Four or more glasses of wine in one sitting doesn't seem right. In fact, it seems like it might be bordering on binge drinking.

Does the logic employed hold up to scrutiny?

Based on the little bit of Shonda's speech we see here, her logic does seem to be sound. As we will see later on, she actually commits a few fallacies.

What questions or objections are raised by the message?

In addition to the possibility of Shonda's proposal being binge drinking, it also raises the possibility of creating alcoholism or causing other long term health problems.

How will further information affect the message?

More information will probably contradict her claims. In fact, most medical research in this area contradicts the claim that drinking 4 or more glasses of wine a day is a good thing.

Will further information strengthen or weaken the claims?

Most likely Shonda's claims will be weakened.

What questions or objections are raised by the claims?

In addition to the objections we've already discussed, there is also the problem of the credibility of Shonda's expert "doctor."

Table 17.3.2: Analysis of Shonda's Speech

Claims	Evidence
• Americans are unhealthy • American is the fattest country • Americans suffer from many health problems • Heart attacks are the number one killer of men • Heart attacks are the number-two killer of women	• Some news stories about America as the fattest country • Research about heart attacks • Story of her uncle's heart attack

Inference and Interpretation or Explanation "Imply" or "Infer"?

For two relatively small words, imply and infer seem to generate an inordinately large amount of confusion. Understanding the difference between the two and knowing when to use the right one is not only a useful skill, but it also makes you sound a lot smarter! Let's begin with imply. **Imply** means to suggest or convey an idea. A speaker or a piece of writing implies things. For example, in Shonda's speech, she implies it is better to drink more red wine. In other words, she never directly says that we need to drink more red wine, but she clearly hints at it when she suggests that drinking four or more glasses a day will provide us with health benefits.

Now let's consider infer. **Infer** means that something in a speaker's words or a piece of writing helps us to draw a conclusion outside of his/her words. We infer a conclusion. Returning to Shonda's speech, we can infer she would want us to drink more red wine rather than less. She never comes right out and says this. However, by considering her overall message, we can draw this conclusion.

Another way to think of the difference between imply and infer is: A speaker (or writer for that matter) implies. The audience infers. Therefore, it would be incorrect to say that Shonda infers we should drink more rather than less wine. She implies this. To help you differentiate between the two, remember that an inference is something that comes from outside the spoken or written text.

The next step in critically examining a message is to interpret or explain the conclusions that we draw from it. At this phase we consider the evidence and the claims together. In effect we are reassembling the components that we parsed out during analysis. We are continuing our evaluation by looking at the evidence, alternatives, and possible conclusions.

Before we draw any inferences or attempt any explanations, we should look at the evidence provided. When we consider evidence we must first determine what, if any, kind of support is provided. Of the evidence we then ask:

1. Is the evidence sound?
2. Does the evidence say what the speaker says it does?
3. Does contradictory evidence exist?
4. Is the evidence from a valid credible source?

Even though these are set up as yes or no questions, you'll probably find in practice that your answers are a bit more complex. For example, let's say you're writing a speech on why we should wear our seatbelts at all times while driving. You've researched the topic and found solid, credible information setting forth the numerous reasons why wearing a seatbelt can help save your life and

decrease the number of injuries experienced during a motor vehicle accident. Certainly, there exists contradictory evidence arguing seat belts can cause more injuries. For example, if you're in an accident where your car is partially submerged in water, wearing a seatbelt may impede your ability to quickly exit the vehicle. Does the fact that this evidence exists negate your claims? Probably not, but you need to be thorough in evaluating and considering how you use your evidence.

Self-Regulation

The final step in critically examining a message is actually a skill we should exercise throughout the entire process. With self-regulation, we consider our pre-existing thoughts on the subject and any biases we may have. We examine how what we think on an issue may have influenced the way we understand (or think we understand) the message and any conclusions we have drawn. Just as contradictory evidence doesn't automatically negate our claims or invalidate our arguments, our biases don't necessarily make our conclusions wrong. The goal of practicing self-regulation is not to disavow or deny our opinions. The goal is to create distance between our opinions and the messages we evaluate.

The Value of Critical Thinking

In public speaking, the value of being a critical thinker cannot be overstressed. Critical thinking helps us to determine the truth or validity of arguments. However, it also helps us to formulate strong arguments for our speeches. Exercising critical thinking at all steps of the speech writing and delivering process can help us avoid situations like Shonda found herself in. Critical thinking is not a magical panacea that will make us super speakers. However, it is another tool that we can add to our speech toolbox.

As we will learn in the following pages, we construct arguments based on logic. Understanding the ways logic can be used and possibly misused is a vital skill. To help stress the importance of it, the Foundation for Critical Thinking has set forth universal standards of reasoning.

Universal Standards of Reasoning

- All reasoning has a purpose.
- All reasoning is an attempt to figure something out, to settle some question, to solve some problem.
- All reasoning is based on assumptions.
- All reasoning is done from some point of view.
- All reasoning is based on data, information, and evidence.
- All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, concepts and ideas.
- All reasoning contains inferences or interpretations by which we draw conclusions and give meaning to data.
- All reasoning leads somewhere or has implications and consequences.

Logic and the Role of Arguments

We use logic every day. Even if we have never formally studied logical reasoning and fallacies, we can often tell when a person's statement doesn't sound right. Think about the claims we see in many advertisements today—Buy product X, and you will be beautiful/thin/happy or have the carefree life depicted in the advertisement. With very little critical thought, we know intuitively that simply buying a product will not magically change our lives. Even if we can't identify the specific fallacy at work in the argument (non causa in this case), we know there is some flaw in the argument.

By studying logic and fallacies we can learn to formulate stronger and more cohesive arguments, avoiding problems like that mentioned above. The study of logic has a long history. We can trace the roots of modern logical study back to Aristotle in ancient Greece. Aristotle's simple definition of logic as the means by which we come to know anything still provides a concise understanding of logic. Of the classical pillars of a core liberal arts education of logic, grammar, and rhetoric, logic has developed as a fairly independent branch of philosophical studies. We use logic everyday when we construct statements, argue our point of view, and in myriad other ways. Understanding how logic is used will help us communicate more efficiently and effectively.

Defining Arguments

When we think and speak logically, we pull together statements that combine reasoning with evidence to support an assertion, arguments. A logical argument should not be confused with the type of argument you have with your sister or brother or any other person. When you argue with your sibling, you participate in a conflict in which you disagree about something. You may, however, use a logical argument in the midst of the argument with your sibling. Consider this example:

- *Brother and sister, Sydney and Harrison are arguing about whose turn it is to clean their bathroom. Harrison tells Sydney she should do it because she is a girl and girls are better at cleaning. Sydney responds that being a girl has nothing to do with whose turn it is. She reminds Harrison that according to their work chart, they are responsible for cleaning the bathroom on alternate weeks. She tells him she cleaned the bathroom last week; therefore, it is his turn this week. Harrison, still unconvinced, refuses to take responsibility for the chore. Sydney then points to the work chart and shows him where it specifically says it is his turn this week. Defeated, Harrison digs out the cleaning supplies.*

Throughout their bathroom argument, both Harrison and Sydney use logical arguments to advance their point. You may ask why Sydney is successful and Harrison is not. This is a good question. Let's think critically about each of their arguments to see why one fails and one succeeds.

Let's start with Harrison's argument. We can summarize it into three points:

1. Girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys.
2. Sydney is a girl.
3. Therefore, Sydney should clean the bathroom.

Harrison's argument here is a form of **deductive reasoning**, specifically a syllogism. We will consider **syllogisms** in a few minutes. For our purposes here, let's just focus on why Harrison's argument fails to persuade Sydney. Assuming for the moment that we agree with Harrison's first two premises, then it would seem that his argument makes sense. We know that Sydney is a girl, so the second premise is true. This leaves the first premise that girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys. This is the exact point where Harrison's argument goes astray. The only way his entire argument will work is if we agree with the assumption girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys.

Let's now look at Sydney's argument and why it works. Her argument can be summarized as follows:

1. The bathroom responsibilities alternate weekly according to the work chart.
2. Sydney cleaned the bathroom last week.
3. The chart indicates it is Harrison's turn to clean the bathroom this week.
4. Therefore, Harrison should clean the bathroom.

Sydney's argument here is a form of **inductive reasoning**. We will look at inductive reasoning in depth below. For now, let's look at why Sydney's argument succeeds where Harrison's fails. Unlike Harrison's argument, which rests on assumption for its truth claims, Sydney's argument rests on evidence. We can define evidence as anything used to support the validity of an assertion. Evidence includes: testimony, scientific findings, statistics, physical objects, and many others. Sydney uses two primary pieces of evidence: the work chart and her statement that she cleaned the bathroom last week. Because Harrison has no contradictory evidence, he can't logically refute Sydney's assertion and is therefore stuck with scrubbing the toilet.

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17.4: What is Correct Reasoning?

In Chapter 16, we reviewed ancient and modern research on how to create a persuasive presentation. We learned that persuasion does not just depend on one mode, but on the speaker using their personal credibility and credentials; understanding what important beliefs, attitudes, values, and needs of the audience connect with the persuasive purpose; and drawing on fresh evidence that the audience has not heard before. In addition to fresh evidence, the audience expects a logical speech and to hear arguments that they understand and to which they can relate. These are historically known as ethos, pathos, and logos. This chapter will deal with the second part of logos, logical argument and using critical thinking to fashion and evaluate persuasive appeals.

We have seen that logos involves composing a speech that is structured in a logical and easy-to-follow way; it also involves using correct logical reasoning and consequently avoiding fallacious reasoning, or logical fallacies.

Although it is not a perfect or literal analogy, we can think of correct reasoning like building a house. To build a house, a person needs materials (premises and facts) a blueprint (logical method), and knowledge of building trades (critical thinking ability). If you put them out in a field with drywall, nails, wiring, fixtures, pipes, wood and other materials and handed them a blueprint, they would need knowledge of construction principles, plumbing, and reading plans (and some helpers), or no building is going up. Logic could also be considered like cooking. A cook needs ingredients, a recipe, and knowledge about cooking. In both cases, the ingredients or materials must be good quality (the information and facts must be true); the recipe or directions must be right (the logical process); and the cook must know what they are doing.

In the previous paragraph, **analogical reasoning** was used. As we will see in Section 17.5.3, analogical reasoning involves drawing conclusions about an object or phenomenon based on its similarities to something else. Technically, the comparisons of logic to building and cooking were examples of **figurative analogy**, not a literal one, because the two processes are not essentially the same. A figurative analogy is like a poetic one: “My love is like a red, red rose,” (Robert Burns, 1759-1796); love, or a loved person, and a flower are not essentially the same. An example of a **literal analogy** would be one between the college where the authors work, Dalton State, and another state college in Georgia with a similar mission, similar governance, similar size, and similar student bodies. Analogical reasoning is one of several types of logical reasoning

Analogical reasoning is one of several types of logical reasoning methods which can serve us well if used correctly, but it can be confusing and even unethical if used incorrectly. In this chapter we will look first at “good” reasoning and then at several of the standard mistakes in reasoning, called **logical fallacies**. In higher education today, teaching and learning critical thinking skills are a priority, and those skills are one of the characteristics that employers are looking for in applicants (Adams, 2014; Gray, 2024). The difficult part of this equation is that critical thinking skills mean slightly different things for different people.

Involved in critical thinking are problem-solving and decision-making, the ability to evaluate and critique based on theory and the “knowledge base” (what is known in a particular field), skill in self-reflection, recognition of personal and societal biases, and the ability to use logic and avoid logical fallacies. On the website Critical Thinking Community, in an article entitled “Our Concept and Definition of Critical Thinking” (2013), the term is defined this way:

- *Critical thinking is that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem-solving abilities, as well as a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism.*

Critical thinking is a term with a wide range of meaning, one of which is the traditional ability to use formal logic. To do so, you must first understand the two types of reasoning: inductive and deductive.

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17.5: Inductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning (also called "induction") is probably the form of reasoning we use on a more regular basis. Induction is sometimes referred to as "reasoning from example or specific instance," and indeed, that is a good description. It could also be referred to as "bottom-up" thinking. Inductive reasoning is sometimes called "the scientific method," although you don't have to be a scientist to use it, and use of the word "scientific" gives the impression it is always right and always precise, which it is not. In fact, we are just as likely to use inductive logic incorrectly or vaguely as we are to use it well.

Inductive reasoning happens when we look around at various happenings, objects, behavior, etc., and see patterns. From those patterns we develop conclusions. There are four types of inductive reasoning, based on different kinds of evidence and logical moves or jumps.

Generalization

Generalization is a form of inductive reasoning that draws conclusions based on recurring patterns or repeated observations. Vocabulary.com (2025) goes one step further to state it is "the process of formulating general concepts by abstracting common properties of instances." To generalize, one must observe multiple instances and find common qualities or behaviors and then make a broad or universal statement about them. If every dog I see chases squirrels, then I would probably generalize that all dogs chase squirrels.

If you go to a certain business and get bad service once, you may not like it. If you go back and get bad treatment again, you probably won't go back again because you have concluded "Business X always treats its customers badly." However, according to the laws of logic, you cannot really say that; you can only say, "In my experience, Business X treats its customers badly" or more precisely, "has treated me badly." Additionally, the word "badly" is imprecise, so to be a valid conclusion to the generalization, badly should be replaced with "rudely," "dishonestly," or "dismissively." The two problems with generalization are over-generalizing (making too big an inductive leap, or jump, from the evidence to the conclusion) and generalizing without enough examples (hasty generalization, also seen in stereotyping).

In the example of the service at Business X, two examples are really not enough to conclude that "Business X treats customers rudely." The conclusion does not pass the logic test for generalization, but pure logic may not influence whether or not you patronize the business again. Logic and personal choice overlap sometimes and separate sometimes. If the business is a restaurant, it could be that there is one particularly rude server at the restaurant, and he happened to wait on you during both of your experiences. It is possible that everyone else gets fantastic service, but your generalization was based on too small a sample.

Inductive reasoning through generalization is used in surveys and polls. If a polling organization follows scientific sampling procedures (sample size, ensuring different types of people are involved, etc.), it can conclude that their poll indicates trends in public opinion. Inductive reasoning is also used in science. We will see from the examples below that inductive reasoning does not result in certainty. Inductive conclusions are always open to further evidence, but they are the best conclusions we have now.

For example, if you are a coffee drinker, you might hear news reports at one time that coffee is bad for your health, and then six months later that another study shows coffee has positive effects on your health. Scientific studies are often repeated or conducted in different ways to obtain more and better evidence and make updated conclusions. Consequently, the way to disprove inductive reasoning is to provide contradictory evidence or examples.

Causal reasoning

Instead of looking for patterns the way generalization does, **causal reasoning** seeks to make cause-effect connections. Causal reasoning is a form of inductive reasoning we use all the time without even thinking about it. If the street is wet in the morning, you know that it rained based on past experience. Of course, there could be another cause—the city decided to wash the streets early that morning—but your first conclusion would be rain. Because causes and effects can be so multiple and complicated, two tests are used to judge whether the causal reasoning is valid.

Good inductive causal reasoning meets the tests of directness and strength. The alleged cause must have a direct relationship on the effect and the cause must be strong enough to make the effect. If a student fails a test in a class that he studied for, he would need to examine the causes of the failure. He could look back over the experience and suggest the following reasons for the failure:

1. He waited too long to study.
2. He had incomplete notes.

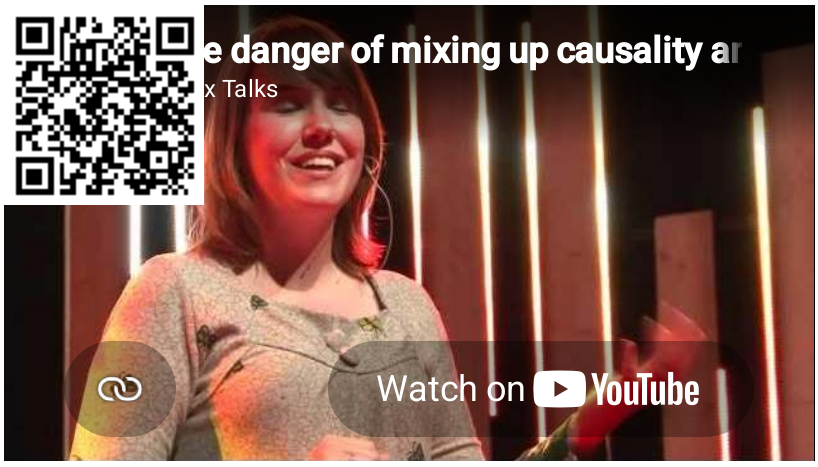
3. He didn't read the textbook fully.
4. He wore a red hoodie when he took the test.
5. He ate pizza from Pizza Heaven the night before.
6. He only slept four hours the night before.
7. The instructor did not do a good job teaching the material.
8. He sat in a different seat to take the test.
9. His favorite football team lost its game on the weekend before.

Which of these causes are direct enough and strong enough to affect his performance on the test? All of them might have had a slight effect on his emotional, physical, or mental state, but all are not strong enough to affect his knowledge of the material if he had studied sufficiently and had good notes to work from. Not having enough sleep could also affect his attention and processes more directly than, say, the pizza or football game. We often consider "causes" such as the color of the hoodie to be superstitions ("I had bad luck because a black cat crossed my path").

Taking a test while sitting in a different seat from the one where you sit in class has actually been researched (Sauffley, Otaka, & Bavaresco, 1985), as has whether sitting in the front or back affects learning (Benedict & Hoag, 2004). (In both cases, the evidence so far says that they do not have an impact, but more research will probably be done.) From the list above, #1-3, #6, and #7 probably have the most direct effect on the test failure. At this point our student would need to face the psychological concept of locus of control, or responsibility—was the failure on the test mostly his doing, or his instructor's?



Causal reasoning is susceptible to four fallacies: historical fallacy, slippery slope, false cause, and confusing correlation and causation. The first three will be discussed later, but the last is very common, and if you take a psychology or sociology course, you will study correlation and causation well. This video of a Ted Talk on The Danger of Mixing Causality and Correlation in an entertaining manner. Confusing correlation and causation is the same as confusing causal reasoning and sign reasoning, discussed below.



Sign Reasoning

Right now, as one of the authors is writing this chapter, the leaves on the trees are turning brown, the grass does not need to be cut every week, and geese are flying towards Florida. These are all signs of fall in this region. These signs do not make fall happen, and they don't make the other signs— cooler temperatures, for example—happen. All the signs of fall are caused by one thing: the rotation of the earth and its tilt on its axis, which make shorter days, less sunshine, cooler temperatures, and less chlorophyll in the leaves, leading to red and brown colors.

It is easy to confuse signs and causes. **Sign reasoning**, then, is a form of inductive reasoning in which conclusions are drawn about phenomena based on events that precede or co-exist with, but not cause, a subsequent event. Signs are like the correlation mentioned above under causal reasoning. If someone argues, “In the summer more people eat ice cream, and in the summer there is statistically more crime. Therefore, eating more ice cream causes more crime!” (or “more crime makes people eat more ice cream.”), that, of course, would be silly. These are two things that happen at the same time—signs—but they are effects of something else – hot weather. If we see one sign, we will see the other. Either way, they are signs or perhaps two different things that just happen to be occurring at the same time, but not causes.

Analogical reasoning

As mentioned above, **analogical reasoning** involves comparison. For it to be valid, the two things (schools, states, countries, businesses) must be truly alike in many important ways–essentially alike. Although Harvard University and your college are both institutions of higher education, they are not essentially alike in very many ways. They may have different missions, histories, governance, surrounding locations, sizes, clientele, stakeholders, funding sources, funding amounts, etc. So it would be foolish to argue, “Harvard has a law school; therefore, since we are both colleges, my college should have a law school, too.” On the other hand, there are colleges that are very similar to your college in all those ways, so comparisons could be valid in those cases.

You have probably heard the phrase, “that is like comparing apples and oranges.” When you think about it, though, apples and oranges are more alike than they are different (they are both still fruit, after all). This observation points out the difficulty of analogical reasoning—how similar do the two “things” have to be for there to be a valid analogy? Second, what is the purpose of the analogy? Is it to prove that State College A has a specific program (sports, Greek societies, a theater major), therefore, College B should have that program, too? Are there other factors to consider? Analogical reasoning is one of the less reliable forms of logic, although it is used frequently.

To summarize, inductive or bottom-up reasoning comes in four varieties, each capable of being used correctly or incorrectly. Remember that inductive reasoning is disproven by counter evidence and its conclusions are always up to revision by new evidence–what is called “tentative,” because the conclusions might have to be revised. Also, the conclusions of inductive reasoning should be precisely stated to reflect the evidence.

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17.6: Deductive Reasoning

The second type of reasoning is called **deductive reasoning**, or deduction, a type of reasoning in which a conclusion is based on the combination of multiple premises that are generally assumed to be true. It has been referred to as "reasoning from principle," which is a good description. It can also be called "top-down" reasoning. However, you should not think of deductive reasoning as the opposite of inductive reasoning. They are two different ways of thinking about evidence.

First, formal deductive reasoning employs the **syllogism**, which is a three-sentence argument composed of a major premise (a generalization or principle that is accepted as true), a minor premise (an example of the major premise), and a conclusion. This conclusion has to be true if the major and minor premise are true; it logically follows from the first two statements. Here are some examples. The most common one you may have seen before.

- *All men are mortal. (Major premise: something everyone already agrees on)*
- *Socrates is a man. (Minor premise: an example taken from the major premise.)*
- *Socrates is mortal. (Conclusion: the only conclusion that can be drawn from the first two sentences.)*

- *Major Premise: All California Community College students must take COMM C1000.*
- *Minor Premise: Brittany is a California Community College student.*
- *Conclusion: Brittany must take COMM C1000.*

- *Major Premise: All dogs have fur.*
- *Minor Premise: Fifi is a dog.*
- *Conclusion: Fifi has fur.*

Of course, at this point you may have some issues with these examples. First, Socrates is already dead and you did not need a syllogism to know that. The Greek philosopher lived 2,400 years ago! Second, these seem kind of obvious. Third, are there some exceptions to "All California Community College students must take COMM C1000"? Yes, there are; some transfer students do not, and certificate students do not. Finally, there are breeds of dogs that are hairless. Some people consider them odd-looking, but they do exist. So while it is true that all men are mortal, it is not absolutely and universally true that all California Community College students must complete COMM C1000 or that all dogs have fur.

Consequently, the first criterion for syllogisms and deductive reasoning is that the premises have to be true for the conclusion to be true, even if the method is right. A right method and untrue premises will not result in a true conclusion. Equally, true premises with a wrong method will also not result in true conclusions. For example:

- *Major premise: All dogs bark.*
- *Minor premise: Fifi barks.*
- *Conclusion: Fifi is a dog.*

You should notice that the minor premise is stated incorrectly. We know other animals bark, notably seals (although it is hard to think of a seal named "Fifi"). The minor premise would have to read "Fifi is a dog" to arrive at the logical conclusion, "Fifi barks." (Also, there are dog breeds that do not bark.) However, by restating the major premise, you have a different argument.

- *Major premise: Dogs are the only animals that wag their tails when happy.*
- *Minor premise: Fifi wags her tail when happy.*
- *Conclusion: Fifi is a dog.*

Another term in deductive reasoning is an **enthymeme**. This odd word refers to a syllogism with one of the premises missing.

- *Major premise: (missing)*
- *Minor premise: Daniel Becker is a chemistry major.*
- *Conclusion: Daniel Becker will make a good SGA president.*

What is the missing major premise? "Chemistry majors make good SGA presidents." Why? Is there any support for this statement? Deductive reasoning is not designed to present unsupported major premises; its purpose is to go from what is known to what is not known in the absence of direct observation. If it is true that chemistry majors make good SGA presidents, then we could conclude Dan will do a good job in this role. But the premise, which in the enthymeme is left out, is questionable when put up to scrutiny.

- *Major premise: Socialists favor government-run health care.*
- *Minor premise: (missing)*

- *Conclusion: Candidate Fran Stokes favors government-run health care.*

The missing statement in the minor premise, “Fran Stokes is a socialist,” is left out so that the audience can make the connection, even if it is erroneous. Consequently, it is best to avoid enthymemes with audiences and to be mindful of them when used by persuaders. They are mentioned here to make you aware of how commonly they are used as shortcuts. Enthymemes are common in advertising. You may have heard the slogan for Smucker’s jams, “With a name like Smucker’s, it has to be good.”

- *Major premise: Products with odd names are good products. (questionable!)*
- *Minor premise: “Smucker’s” is an odd name.*
- *Conclusion: Smucker’s is a good product.*

To conclude, deductive reasoning helps us go from known to unknown and can lead to reliable conclusions if the premises and the method are correct. It has been around since the time of the ancient Greeks. It is not the flipside of inductive but a separate method of logic. While enthymemes are not always errors, you should listen carefully to arguments that use them to be sure that something incorrect is not being assumed or presented.



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17.7: Logical Fallacies

The second part of achieving a logical speech is to avoid **logical fallacies**. Logical fallacies are mistakes in reasoning–getting one of the formulas, inductive or deductive, wrong. There are actually dozens upon dozens of fallacies, some of which have complicated Latin names. This chapter will deal with eighteen of the most common ones that you should know to avoid poor logic in your speech and to become a critical thinker.

False Analogy

A **false analogy** is a fallacy where two things are compared that do not share enough key similarities to be compared fairly. As mentioned before, for analogical reasoning to be valid, the two things being compared must be essentially similar—similar in all the important ways. Two states could be analogous, if they are in the same region, have similar demographics and histories, similar size, and other aspects in common. California is more like Arizona than it is like Hawaii, although both are states. An analogy between the United States and, for example, a tiny European country with a homogeneous population is probably not a valid analogy, although common. Even in the case where the two "things" being compared are similar, you should be careful to support your argument with other evidence.

False Cause

False cause is a fallacy that assumes that one thing causes another, but there is no logical connection between the two. A cause must be direct and strong enough, not just before or somewhat related to cause the problem. 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. Third, those salaries have nothing to do with housing market or the management of the large car companies, banks, or Wall Street, which had a stronger and more direct effect on the economy as a whole. In general, while we are often tempted to attribute a large societal or historical outcome to just one cause, that is rarely the case in real life.

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 don't 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 right to Z. A young woman may say to a young man asking her out, "If I go out with you Thursday night, I won't be able to study for my test Friday. Then I will fail the test. Then I will fail the class. Then I will lose my scholarship. Then I will have to drop out of college. Then I will not get the career I want, and I'll be 30 years old still living with my parents, unmarried, unhappy, and no children or career! That's why I just can't go out with you!" Obviously, this young woman has gone out of her way to get out of this date, and she has committed a slippery slope. Additionally, since no one can predict the future, we can never be entirely certain on the direction a given chain of events will lead.

Slippery slope arguments are often used in discussions over emotional and hot button topics such as gun control and physician-assisted suicide. 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. While it is true criminals do not care about gun laws, we already have a large number of gun laws and the level of gun ownership is as high as ever.

However, just because an argument is criticized as a slippery slope, that does not mean it is a slippery slope. Sometimes actions do lead to far-reaching but unforeseen events, according to the "law of unintended consequences." We should look below the surface to see if the accusation of slippery slope is true.

For example, in regard to the anti-gun control "bumper sticker," an investigation of the facts will show that gun control laws have been ineffective in many ways since we have more guns than ever now (347 million, according to a website affiliated with the

National Rifle Association). However, according to the Brookings Institution, there are

> *"…about 300 major state and federal laws, and an unknown but shrinking number of local laws'. . . . Rather than trying to base arguments for more or fewer laws on counting up the current total, we would do better to study the impact of the laws we do have." (Vernick & Hepburn, 2003, p. 2).*

Note that in the previous paragraph, two numerical figures are used, both from sources that are not free of bias. The National Rifle Association obviously opposes gun restrictions and does not support the idea that there are too many guns. Their website gives the background to show how that figure was discovered. The Brookings Institution is a "think-tank" (a group of scholars who write about public issues) that advocates gun control. Their article explains how it came to its number of state and federal laws, but admits that it omitted many local laws about carrying or firing guns in public places. So the number is actually higher, by its own admission. The Brookings Institution does not think there are too many laws; it thinks there should be more, or at least better enforced ones. Also, it should be noted that this article is based on data from 1970-1999, so the information may be out of date.

This information about the sources is provided to make a point about possible bias in sources and about critical thinking and reading, or more specifically, reading carefully to understand your sources. Just finding a source that looks pretty good is not enough. You must ask important questions about the way the information is presented. An interesting addition the debate is found at Rand.org. Although most people have strong opinions about gun control, pro and con, it is a complicated debate that requires, like most societal issues, clear and critical thinking about the evidence.

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. The key to generalizations is how the conclusions are "framed" or put into language. The conclusions should be specific and be clear about the limited nature of the sample. Even worse is when the generalization is also applied too hastily to other situations. For example:

- *Premise: Albert Einstein did poorly in math in school.*
- *Conclusion: All world-renowned scientists do poorly in math in school.*
- *Secondary Conclusion: I did poorly at math in school, so I will become a world-renowned scientist.*

Or this example that college professors hear all the time.

- *Premise: Mark Zuckerberg dropped out of college, invented Facebook, and made billions of dollars.*
- *Premise: Bill Gates dropped out of college, started Microsoft, and made billions of dollars.*
- *Conclusion: Dropping out of college leads to great financial success.*
- *Secondary conclusion: A college degree is unnecessary to great financial success.*

Straw Man

A **straw man** 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 man" 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. Straw man fallacy happens when an opponent in a debate misinterprets or takes a small part of their opponent's position in a debate. Then they blow that misinterpretation or small part out of proportion and make 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 man fallacy quite frequently, but they are hardly the only ones. Someone may argue that college professors don't care about students' learning because professors say, "You must read the chapter to understand the material; I can't explain it all to you in class." That would be taking a behavior and making it mean something it doesn't. 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.

Post hoc ergo propter hoc

This long Latin phrase means "After the fact, therefore because of the fact." Also called historical fallacy, this one is an error in causal reasoning. Historical fallacy uses progression in time as the reason for causation, but nothing else. In this scenario, A happens, then B happens; therefore A caused B. The fallacy states that because an event takes place first in time, it is the cause of an event that takes place later in time. We know that is not true, but sometimes we act as if it is.

Elections often get blamed for everything that happens afterward. It is true that a cause must happen first or before the effect, but it doesn't mean that everything or anything that happens beforehand must be the cause. In the example given earlier, a football team losing its game five days earlier can't be the reason for a student failing a test just because it happened first.

Argument from Silence

You can't prove something from nothing. If the constitution, legal system, authority, or the evidence is silent on a matter, then that is all you know. You cannot conclude anything about that. "I know ESP is true because no one has ever proven that it isn't true" is not an argument. Here we see the difference between fallacious and false. Fallacious has to do with the reasoning process being incorrect, not with the truth or falseness of the conclusion. If I point to a girl on campus and say, "That girl is Taylor Swift," I am simply stating a falsehood, not committing a fallacy. If I say, "Her name is Taylor Swift, and the reason I know that is because no one has ever told me that her name is not Taylor Swift" (argument from silence), that is a fallacy and a falsehood. (Unless by some odd circumstance her name really is Taylor Swift or the singer Taylor Swift frequents your campus!)

Statistical fallacies

There are many ways that statistics can be used unethically, but here we will deal with three. The first type of statistical fallacy is "small sample," the second is "unrepresentative sample," and the third is a variation of appeal to popularity (discussed below). In small sample, an argument is being made from too few examples, so it is essentially hasty generalization. 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. If you ever take a poll on a website, it is not "scientific" because it is unrepresentative. Only people who go to that website are participating, and the same people could be voting over and over. In a scientific or representative survey or poll, the pollsters talk to different socio-economic classes, races, ages, and genders and the data-gathering is very carefully performed.

If you go to the president of your college and say, "We need to have a daycare here because 90% of the students say so," but you only polled ten students, that would be small sample. If you say, "I polled 100 students," that would still be small, but better, unless all of them were your friends who attended other colleges in the state. That group would not be representative of the student body. If you polled 300 students but they were all members of the same high school graduating class and the same gender as you, that would also be unrepresentative sample.

In the end, surveys indicate trends in opinions and behaviors, not the future and not the truth. We have lots of polls before the election, but only one poll matters—the official vote on Election Day.

Non Sequitur

Non sequitur is Latin for "it does not follow." It's an all-purpose fallacy for situations where the conclusion sounds good at first but then you realize there is no connection between the premises and the conclusion. If you say to your supervisor, "I need a raise because the price of BMWs went up," that is a **non sequitur**.

Inappropriate Appeal to Authority

There are appropriate appeals to authority, such as when you use sources in your speech who are knowledgeable, experienced, and credible. But not all sources are credible. Some may be knowledgeable about one field but not another. A person with a Nobel Prize in economics is not qualified to talk about medicine, no matter how smart he/she/they is (the economist could talk about the

economic factors of medicine, however). Of course, the most common place we see this is in celebrity endorsements on commercials.

False Dilemma

This one 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

Essentially, appeal to tradition is the argument, "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. Does it work? Is it cost effective? Is some other approach better? If your college library refused to adopt a computer database of books in favor of the old card catalog because "that's what libraries have done for decades," you would likely argue they need to get with the times. The same would be true if the classrooms all still had only chalkboards instead of computers and projectors and the administration argued that it fit the tradition of classrooms.

Bandwagon

This fallacy 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. Essentially, bandwagon is a fallacy that asserts that because something is popular (or seems to be), it is therefore good, correct, or desirable. In a sense it was mentioned before, under statistical fallacies. Of course, you've probably heard it or said it many times: "Everybody is doing it." Well, of course, everybody is not doing it, it just seems like it. And the fact (or perception) that more than 50% of the population is engaging in an activity does not make that a wise activity.

Many times in history over 50% of the population believed or did something that was not good or right, such as believing the earth was the center of the solar system and the sun orbited around the earth. In a democracy we make public policy to some extent based on majority rule, but we also have protections for the minority. 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. So when you hear a public opinion poll that says, "58% of the population thinks…" keep this in mind. Also, all it means is that 58% of the people on a survey indicated a belief or attitude on a survey, not that the belief or attitude is correct or that it will be the majority opinion in the future.

Red Herring

This one has an interesting history, and you might want to look it up. 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 his stance on immigration, and the candidate responds, "I think we need to focus on reducing the debt. That's the real problem!", he is introducing a red herring to distract from the original topic under discussion. If someone argues, "We should not worry about the needs of people in other countries because we have poor people in the United States," that may sound good on the surface, but it is a red herring and a false dilemma (either-or) fallacy. It is possible to address poverty in this country and other countries at the same time.

Ad Hominem

This Latin term means "argument to the man," and generally refers to 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, she, or they 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 Congressman Jones, and we all know that Congressman Jones was convicted of fraud last year." This is not to say that Congressman Jones should be re-elected, only that climate change's being true or false is irrelevant to the 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.or past behavior, does matter. It just doesn't mean that the issues they support are logically or factually wrong.

There are other fallacies, many of which go by Latin names. You can visit other websites, such as logicalfallacies.info for more types and examples. These eighteen are a good start to helping you discern good reasoning and supplement your critical thinking knowledge and ability

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17.8: Conclusion, Glossary, References

Conclusion

As we meander through our daily routines, we are surrounded by numerous messages and people trying to get our attention and convince us to do something. We sign into our e-mail accounts and are bombarded with sales pitches to help us get rich quick or promise to fix all of our embarrassing physical problems. We drive to school and see billboards touting tantalizing restaurants or pitching local political candidates. We converse with our friends and family about current events like the crazy car thief who tried to avoid the police by driving down train tracks right into an oncoming train. Throughout all of these exchanges, we must constantly strive to make sense of the messages and determine which are true and which are not true, which are probably and which are improbable, which are intended and which are unintended. When we do this we practice **critical thinking**. We evaluate the **arguments** presented and determine if their **logic** is sound or if they rely on **fallacies** to build their case. In this chapter you will learn how to use critical thinking in all areas of your life, including preparing and presenting speeches. You will also learn how to construct a logical argument that avoids the pitfalls of fallacious thinking.

In this chapter we have examined what critical thinking is and how it involves more than simply being critical. Understanding critical thinking helps in formulating and studying arguments. We see arguments every day in advertising, use arguments to persuade others, and we use them to benefit us. The overview of fallacies showed not all arguments are valid or even logical. Always critically think and examine any argument you confront, and remember that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is a fallacious argument.We practice critical thinking on a daily basis, often without any extra effort. Now that you know a bit more about how to do these things better, you should find that you can put together more persuasive arguments that avoid the pitfalls of fallacious thinking. More importantly, when you hear a statement such as, “You should drink at least four glasses of wine per day,” you’ll know that something isn’t right. And if you do hear a statement like this, you will be prepared to think critically about the statement, and will be in a position to make a more educated decision about the information.

This chapter took the subject of public speaking to a different level in that it was somewhat more abstract than the other chapters. However, a public speaker is responsible for using good reasoning as much as she is responsible to have an organized speech, to analyze the audience, or to practice for effective delivery.

Review Questions

1. Explain the difference between critical thinking and being critical. Why should we care?
2. List and discuss at least three ways that we use logic and argumentation in our daily lives.
3. If I say, “There is plenty of pasta, so you should have some more,” am I implying or inferring that you have not eaten enough?
4. What are fallacies and why is it important that we study them?
5. Name, define, and give examples of three different fallacies you have heard recently.
6. Spend a day focusing on he logical fallacies that take place around you. You cannot hear logical fallacies unless you listen carefully and critically. Keep your ears open to possible uses of fallacies. Are they used in discussion of emotional topics? Are they used to get compliance (such as to buy a product) without allowing the consumer to think about the issues? What fallacies did you notice? Where did they occur the most?

Activities

1. In order to practice critical thinking in action, spend some time researching the major arguments each side uses. Because the debates in this area are so complex, you might want to narrow your focus just a bit. For example, you could focus on the issue of minors consenting to abortion or abortion in the case of rape or other sexual assault. Compile a list of the most common arguments used by each side.Your list should include: any evidence used to support claims, a list of the major claims, any conclusions. Return to the core critical thinking skills and critically evaluate how each side forms arguments and uses evidence. How do your own biases and thoughts on the issue of abortion influence your evaluation? If you were an advisor, what advice would you give to each side to make their arguments stronger and more logically sound?
2. Your local newspaper’s Letters to the Editor section is a prime spot to find logical fallacies in action. For several days, read the Letters to the Editor and identify all of the fallacies you find. Keep a log of the specific fallacies you find, dividing them by type. Once you have compiled a variety of example, take a step back and evaluate them. Questions that you might want to ask include: what fallacy or fallacies seem to be most popular? Why do you think this is? Pick a few of the most egregious fallacies and rewrite them correcting for the flaw in reasoning.

3. Throughout this chapter, we have studied arguments by looking at their various parts. In practice, arguments occur as part of larger statements or speeches making their analysis a bit more complicated. To understand the ways arguments occur in daily life, visit the American Rhetoric page (www.americanrhetoric.com). On this page you will find a number of political, activist, movie, and other speeches. Pick one and try to identify the major arguments that are set forth. What are the main claims? What are the sub-claims? What sorts of evidence or support are provided? Are there any fallacies present in the argument? If you were a speech writer, what advice would you give to improve the argument?
4. With a small group of classmates, create a "fallacy skit" to perform for the class. Plan and act out a situation where a fallacy is being used, and then be able to explain it to the class. The example under Slippery Slope about the young woman turning down a date actually came from the author's students in a fallacy skit.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

18: Special Occasion Speaking

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18.3: Types of Special Occasion Speeches
18.4: Effectively Deliver Your Special Occasion Speech
18.5: Sample Special Occasion Speech Outline
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18.1: Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand the purpose of entertaining speeches.
2. Recognize the differences between research-based speeches (informative and persuasive) and special occasion speeches.
3. Identify the types of special occasion speeches.
4. Describe the proper techniques for delivering a special occasion speech.

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18.2: Understanding Entertaining Speeches

The Nature of Entertainment

Often the speaking opportunities life brings our way have nothing to do specifically with informing or persuading an audience; instead, we are asked to speak to entertain. Whether you are standing up to give an award speech or a toast, knowing how to deliver speeches in a variety of different contexts is the nature of entertaining speaking. In this chapter, we are going to explore what entertaining speeches are; we will also examine specific types of entertaining speeches.

In broad terms, an entertaining speech is a speech designed to captivate an audience's attention and regale or amuse them while delivering a message. Like more traditional informative or persuasive speeches, entertaining speeches should communicate a clear message, but the manner of speaking used in an entertaining speech is typically different.

Entertaining speeches are often delivered on special occasions (e.g., a toast at a wedding, an acceptance speech at an awards banquet, a motivational speech at a conference), which is why they are sometimes referred to as special-occasion speeches. However, they can also be given on more mundane occasions, where their purpose is primarily to amuse audience members or arouse the emotionally in some way. Remember, when we use the word "entertain," we are referring not just to humor but also to drama.

The goal of an entertaining speech is to stir an audience's emotions. Of all the types of speeches we come in contact with during our lives, the bulk of them will probably fall into the category of entertainment. If you spend just one evening watching a major awards show (e.g., the Grammys, the Tonys, the Oscars), you'll see dozens of acceptance speeches. While some of these acceptance speeches are good and others may be terrible, they all belong in the category of speaking to entertain.

Other speeches that fall into the entertaining category are designed to inspire or motivate an audience to do something. These are, however, different from a traditional persuasive speech. While entertaining speeches are often persuasive, we differentiate the two often based on the rhetorical situation itself. Maybe your school has hired a speaker to talk about his or her life story in an attempt to inspire the audience to try harder in school and reach for the best that life has to offer. You can imagine how this speech would be different from a traditional persuasive speech focusing on, say, the statistics related to scholastic achievement and success later in life.

Entertaining speeches are definitely very common, but that doesn't mean they don't require effort and preparation. A frequent trap is that people often think of entertaining speeches as corny. As a result, they don't prepare seriously but rather stand up to speak with the idea that they can "wing it" by acting silly and telling a few jokes. Instead of being entertaining, the speech falls flat. To help us think through how to be effective in delivering entertaining speeches, let's look at four key ingredients: preparation, adaptation to the occasion, adaptation to the audience, and mindfulness about the time.

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18.3: Types of Special Occasion Speeches



Unlike the informative and persuasive speeches, special occasion speeches are much broader and allow for a wider range of topics, events, and approaches to be employed. However, while the following list of special occasion speeches is long, your instructor will have specific types of special occasion speeches that you will be allowed (or required) to do for class. Since you are like to give many special occasion speeches in your life, we want to cover everything you might need to know to give a good one.

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 and their speech. Few things are worse than when the introducer of a speaker stands up and says, "This is Wyatt Ford. He's going to talk about stress." While we did learn the speaker's name and the topic, the introduction falls flat. Audiences won't be the least bit excited about listening to Wyatt's speech.

Just like any other speech, a speech of introduction should have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion—and should be brief. As a speech of introduction, it is important to focus on the person being introduced, the speech should be about them.

For an introduction, think of a hook that will make your audience interested in the upcoming speaker. You need to find something that can grab the audience's attention and make them excited about hearing the main speaker.

The body of your speech 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. Next, you need to tell the audience why the speaker is a credible presenter on the topic. Has the speaker written books or articles on the subject? Has the speaker had special life events that make him, her, or they 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.

The final part of a good introduction is the conclusion, which is generally designed to welcome the speaker to the platform. Many introducers will conclude by saying something like, "I am looking forward to hearing how Wyatt Ford's advice, 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.

The introduction in a speech of presentation needs to let the audience know what award is being presented, just a brief statement about the award is enough to begin the speech. In the body of the speech, you want to make sure you explain what the award or honor is and why the presentation is important. Next, 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 his or her 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

The complement to a speech of presentation is the speech of acceptance. The **speech of acceptance** is a speech given by the recipient of a prize or honor. In the introduction for this speech, you want to acknowledge the award, then the body of the speech

usually shares these three typical components of a speech of acceptance: 1) put the award or honor into perspective, 2) thank those who helped you achieve your goal and tell stories of their contributions, and 3) discuss the work you did to achieve the award. First, you want to put the award in perspective. Tell the people listening to your speech why the award is meaningful to you.

Second, you want to give credit to those who helped you achieve the award or honor. No person accomplishes things in life on his or her 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. Lastly, you want to share the work you put in to achieve this award. If you know you are up for an award, have a speech ready. A good rule to remember is: Be thankful, be gracious, be short.

Speeches of Dedication

A fourth special occasion speech is the **speech 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.

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 about your relationship and your relative's accomplishments. Second, you want to explain what is being dedicated. If the dedication is a new building or a pre-existing building, you want to explain the importance of the structure. You should then explain who was involved in the project.

If the project is a new structure, talk about the people who built the structure or designed it. If the project is a pre- existing structure, talk about the people who put together and decided on the dedication. Lastly, explain why the structure is important for the community in which it is located. If the dedication is for a new store, talk about how the store will bring in new jobs and new shopping opportunities. If the dedication is for a new wing of a hospital, talk about how patients will be served and the advances in medicine the new wing will provide the community.

Toasts

At one time or another, almost everyone is going to be asked to deliver a **toast**. A toast is a speech designed to congratulate, appreciate, or remember. First, 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 he or she has 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 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.

As such, you need to focus your attention toward the people being toasted, both by physically looking at them and by keeping your message about them. The body of the speech should share stories or fun information about the people being toasted and should be appropriate to the occasion. You should 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.

Roasts

A **roast** is a very interesting and peculiar speech because it is designed to both praise and good-naturedly insult a person being honored. Because of this combination of purposes, it is not hard to argue that the roast is probably a challenging type of speeches to write given the difficult task of simultaneously praising and insulting the person. Generally, roasts are given at the conclusion of a banquet in honor of someone's life achievements. The television station Comedy Central has been conducting roasts of various celebrities for a few years, and if you've ever watched one, you know that the "roasters" say some harsh things about the "roastees" even though they are friends.

How does one prepare for a roast? First, you want to really think about the person who is being roasted. Does he, she, or they have any strange habits or amusing stories in their past that you can discuss? When you think through these questions, you want to make sure that you cross anything off your list that is truly private information or will really hurt the person. The goal of a roast is to poke at them in a good-natured manner.

Second, when selecting which aspects to poke fun at, you need to make sure that the items you choose are widely known by your audience. Roasts work when many people in the audience can relate to the jokes being made. If you have an inside joke with the roastee, bringing it up during roast may be great fun for the two of you, but it will leave your audience unimpressed. Lastly, end on a positive note. While the jokes are definitely the fun part of a roast, you should leave the roastee and the audience knowing that you truly do care about and appreciate the person.

Eulogies

A **eulogy** is a speech given in honor of someone who has died. Not to sound depressing, but since everyone who is alive will someday die, the chance of your being asked to give a eulogy someday for a friend or family member is significant. However, when the time comes to deliver a eulogy, it's good to know what you're doing and to adequately prepare your remarks.

When preparing a eulogy, first you need to know that you were asked because you are an important person in their lives and know about the deceased. The eulogy should be personal and help the audience to appreciate and celebrate the person who passed. Although eulogies are delivered on the serious and sad occasion, 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 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. It would be appropriate to tell a funny story about Uncle Joe's love for his car or Aunt Mary's love of tacky Christmas sweaters. 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 and to celebrate the person who has passed.

If you are ever asked to give a eulogy, here are three parts of a eulogy (i.e. main points) you can use to write one: praise, lament, and consolation.

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 them and their accomplishments. This can include notable achievements (being an award winner; helping with charities), personal qualities ("she was always willing to listen to your problems and help in any way she could"), or anecdotes and stories (being a great mother; how she 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 because 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 in a eulogy is to console the audience, or to offer comfort in a time of grief. What you must remember 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. Offer some hope that someday, things will get better.

> "We may miss Aunt Linda deeply, but our memories of her will live on forever, and her impact on this world will not soon be forgotten."

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 him or her, 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 he did when he was 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).

With regard to a eulogy you might give in class, you generally have two options for how to proceed: you can eulogize a real person who has passed away, or you can eulogize a fictional character (if your instructor permits that). If you give a eulogy in class on someone in your life who has passed away, be aware that it is very common for students to become emotional and have difficulty giving their speech. Even though you may have been fine practicing at home and feel good about giving it, the emotional impact of speaking about a deceased loved one in front of others can be surprisingly powerful.

Speeches for Commencements

A **speech of commencement** (or 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 every one of us has sat through commencement speeches at some point in our lives. Numerous celebrities and politicians have been asked to deliver commencement speeches at colleges and universities.

If you're ever asked to deliver a commencement speech, there are some key points to think through when deciding on your speech's content.

- If there is a specific theme for the graduation, make sure that your commencement speech addresses that theme. If there is no specific theme, come up with one for your speech. Some common commencement speech themes are commitment, competitiveness, competence, confidence, decision making, discipline, ethics, failure (and overcoming failure), faith, generosity, integrity, involvement, leadership, learning, persistence, personal improvement, professionalism, reality, responsibility, and self- respect.
- Talk about your life and how graduates can learn from your experiences to avoid pitfalls or take advantages of life. How can your life inspire the graduates in their future endeavors?
- Make the speech humorous. Commencement speeches should be entertaining and make an audience laugh.
- Be brief! Nothing is more painful than a commencement speaker who drones on and on. Remember, the graduates are there to get their diplomas; their families are there to watch the graduates walk across the stage.
- Remember, while you may be the speaker, you've been asked to impart wisdom and advice for the people graduating and moving on with their lives, so keep it focused on them.
- Place the commencement speech into the broader context of the graduates' lives. Show the graduates how the advice and wisdom you are offering can be utilized to make their own lives better.

Overall, it's important to make sure that you have fun when delivering a commencement speech. Remember, it's a huge honor and responsibility to be asked to deliver a commencement speech, so take the time to really think through and prepare your speech.

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 because they have the ability both to speak effectively and to make people laugh. 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. The speech should have a theme, such as celebrating the accomplishments of the last year, or connecting the audience to a special event that is important to the group.

When creating the speech, go back through and look for opportunities to insert humorous remarks. Once you've looked through your speech and examined places for verbal humor, think about any physical humor or props that would enhance your speech. The goal for a funny prop is that it adds to the humor of the speech without distracting from its message.

Just because you find something unbelievably funny in your head doesn't mean that it will make anyone else laugh. Often, humor that we have written down on paper just doesn't translate when orally presented. You may have a humorous story that you love reading on paper, but find that it just seems to be too long once you start telling it out loud. You also need to make sure the humor you choose will be appropriate for a specific audience. What one audience finds funny another may find offensive. Humor is the double-edged sword of public speaking. On one side, it is an amazing and powerful speaking tool, but on the other side, few things will alienate an audience more than offensive humor. If you're ever uncertain about whether a piece of humor will offend your audience, don't use it.

So you may now be asking, "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.

Take, for example, the experience one of your authors had while he was attending a large university. One of the major problems that any large university faces is parking: the ratio of parking spaces to students at some of these schools can be 1:7 (one parking space for every seven students). In addressing this topic at a banquet, a student gave an after- dinner speech that addressed the problem of the lack of student parking. To do so, he camouflaged his speech as a faux-eulogy (fake eulogy) for the yellow and

black board on the parking lot gates that was constantly and consistently driven through by students wanting to access restricted parking. The student personified the board by noting how well it had done its job and lamented that it would never get to see its little toothpick children grow up to guard the White House. But underneath the humor incorporated into the speech was a serious message: this wouldn't keep happening if adequate parking was provided for students on campus.

Motivational Speeches

A **motivational speech** is designed not only to make an audience experience emotional arousal (fear, sadness, joy, excitement) but also to motivate the audience to do something with that emotional arousal. A motivational speech helps to inspire people in a broader fashion, often without a clearly articulated end result in mind. As such, motivational speaking is a highly specialized form of persuasive speaking commonly delivered in schools, businesses, religious houses of worship, and club or group contexts.

The **hero speech** is a motivational speech given by someone who is considered a hero in society (e.g., military speakers, political figures, and professional athletes).

The **survivor speech** is a speech given by someone who has survived a personal tragedy or who has faced and overcome serious adversity.

The **religious speech** is self-explanatory; it is designed to incorporate religious ideals into a motivational package to inspire an audience into thinking about or changing aspects of their religious lives. The final type of motivational speech is the success speech, which is given by someone who has succeeded in some aspect of life and is giving back by telling others how they too can be successful.

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18.4: Effectively Deliver Your Special Occasion Speech

The Importance of 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 most of your preparation time will be specifically allocated towards the words you choose. 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.

For example, for your informative and persuasive speeches you were required to conduct research and cite your sources in a bibliography or references/works cited page, which took you some time to look up and format. In most cases, that will not be necessary in a special occasion speech, although there may be reasons to consult sources or other persons for information in crafting your speech. So for special occasion speeches, there is a trade-off. The time you don't spend doing research is now going to be reallocated towards crafting emotional and evocative phrases that convey the sentiment your speech is meant to impart.

The important thing to remember about using language effectively is that we are not talking about using big words just to sound smart. 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.

The next thing to think about is how to evoke emotion and wonderment. Putting the words you know into the best possible order, when done well, will make your speech sound extremely eloquent and emotional. As the speaker for a ceremony, it is important to create the emotion behind the event, to share with the audience the importance of what is being celebrated.

Be Prepared

First, and foremost, the biggest mistake you can make when standing to deliver an entertaining speech is to underprepare or simply not prepare at all. We've stressed the need for preparation throughout this text, so just because you're giving a wedding toast or a eulogy doesn't mean you shouldn't think through the speech before you stand up and speak out. If the situation is impromptu, even jotting some basic notes on a napkin is better than not having any plan for what you are going to say.

Remember, when you get anxious, as it inevitably happens in front of an audience, your brain doesn't function as well as when you are having a relaxed conversation with friends. You often forget information. By writing down some simple notes, you'll be less likely to deliver a bad speech.

Be Adaptive to the Occasion

Not all content is appropriate for all occasions. If you are asked to deliver a speech commemorating the first anniversary of a school shooting, then obviously using humor and telling jokes wouldn't be appropriate. But some decisions about adapting to the occasion are less obvious. Consider the following examples:

- You are the maid of honor giving a toast at the wedding of your younger sister.
- You are receiving a Most Valuable Player award in your favorite sport.
- You are a sales representative speaking to a group of clients after a mistake has been discovered.
- You are a cancer survivor speaking at a high school student assembly.

How might you adapt your message and speaking style to successfully entertain these various audiences?

Remember that being a competent speaker is about being both personally effective and socially appropriate. Different occasions will call for different levels of social appropriateness. One of the biggest mistakes entertaining speakers can make is to deliver one generic speech to different groups without adapting the speech to the specific occasion.

Be Adaptive to Your Audience

Once again, we cannot stress the importance of audience adaptation enough in this text. Different audiences will respond differently to speech material, so the more you know about your audience the more likely you'll succeed in your speech. One of our coauthors was once at a conference for teachers of public speaking. The keynote speaker stood and delivered a speech on the importance of public speaking. While the speaker was good and funny, the speech really fell flat. The keynote speaker basically told the public speaking teachers that they should take public speaking courses because public speaking is important. Right speech, wrong audience!

Be Mindful of the Time

The last major consideration for delivering entertaining speeches successfully is to be mindful of your time. Different entertaining speech situations have their own conventions and rules with regard to time. Acceptance speeches and toasts, for example, should be relatively short (typically under five minutes). A speech of introduction should be extremely brief—just long enough to tell the audience what they need to know about the person being introduced in a style that prepares them to appreciate that person's remarks. In contrast, commencement speeches and speeches to commemorate events can run ten to twenty minutes in length.

It's also important to recognize that audiences on different occasions will expect speeches of various lengths. For example, although it's true that graduation commencement speakers generally speak for ten to twenty minutes, the closer that speaker heads toward twenty minutes the more fidgety the audience becomes. To hold the audience's attention and fulfill the goal of entertaining, a commencement speaker would do well to make the closing minutes of the speech the most engaging and inspiring portion of the speech. If you're not sure about the expected time frame for a speech, either ask the person who has invited you to speak or do some quick research to see what the average speech times in the given context tend to be.

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18.5: Sample Special Occasion Speech Outline

Sample Outline: Commemorative (Tribute) Speech on Simone Biles

By Kellie Barnes

Specific Purpose: To inspire my audience with the story of Simone Biles.

Introduction: "I'm not the next Usain Bolt or Michael Phelps. I'm the first Simone Biles!" Said Simone, and boy did she earn that kind of recognition! Some of you might hear that name and think of a random gymnast and some of you may hear that name and not know who it is at all; but today, before this class is over, I am going to make sure each and every one of you remember just how great she is and why she deserves to be recognized.

Thesis: A person whom I admire over all other athletes is Simone Biles.

Preview: Simone is special in my eyes because she has overcome some big challenges in her life to get to where she is today. Not only is she a 3-time gymnastics champion, but she made history while doing it.

I. Simone overcame an extremely rough childhood in Columbus, Ohio, as both her mother and father were struggling with substance abuse.

A. Simone's grandparents took her and her siblings under their wings.

B. Soon her grandparents were able to adopt all of the grandchildren at a fairly young age.

C. Although Simone didn't have the best relationship with her mom as a young child, she had plenty of women to step up in her life to fill that gap.

1. She had a grandmother who was basically "Mom" to her.

2. She has also had the same gymnastics coach since she was 11 years old.

Transition: Although Simone had a rather disheartening childhood, she has emerged to be one of the best in her sport.

II. In her teens and standing at 4 foot 8 inches, Simone made a tremendous name for herself in the gymnastics world. These are just a few of her accomplishments.

A. Simone was the first female ever to win three worldwide all-around titles.

1. She has the most World Championship gold medals won by a female gymnast in history with ten.

2. She is the most decorated World Championship American gymnast with 14 total medals (10 gold, two silver, two bronze).

B. She became the Olympic Gold medalist in vault, floor, Individual and Team all-around and bronze medalist on Beam at 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

C. At just 19 years old, she became the most decorated female gymnast in America.

1. Right behind her the whole time stood her amazing family and support system.

2. She is the first African American to become an all-around world champ.

D. Consequently, she has received many media awards and much attention.

1. She was named one of the Most Influential People in the World by TIME magazine.

2. She was named Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year 2016.

Transition: Simone was so incredibly grateful that she had people to take her in and support her through all of her success she tried her best to do the same for others who were in need.

III. Simone started an amazing charity for foster kids as a way for her to give back.

A. Founded in 2015, Mattress Firm Foster Kids is now effective in 40 states nationwide.

B. "This is such a personal cause for me because I know firsthand what it is like to be in foster care, the struggles and all," says Simone.

C. This cause has given back more than 610,000 items, such as clothes and school supplies, to foster kids and their families.

Conclusion: As I sit back and look at the life of Simone Biles, I'm amazed with all that she has done in such a short amount of time. At 20 years old she had given back to those in need, rose above many tough challenges in her life, and amongst all of that she is having the time of her life on the mat, and earning medals and honors while doing so.

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18.6: Conclusion and Exercises

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 as well as allows you to give the speech exactly as you wrote it.

No matter which special occasion type of speech you end up delivering, there are certain characteristics and criteria that should be met and identified. Just as with every other speech you may deliver, preparation, organization, and delivery are key to a successful special occasion speech.

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 practiced.

You will need to practice your special occasion speech as much as or even more than you did for your informative or persuasive speeches. You need to know what you are going to say and feel comfortable knowing what is coming next. This is not to say you should have your speech memorized, however it might be necessary in order to establish and maintain a rapport with your audience, 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.

Basically, knowing your speech well allows you to incorporate the emotion that a special occasion speech is meant to convey. 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.

Exercises

Questions

1. What key tips should you remember when creating a toast?
2. What key tips should you remember when creating a eulogy?
3. What key tips should you remember when introducing someone?
4. What should you avoid when preparing a special occasion speech?

Class Activity

1. Provide an example of a special occasion speeches you have experienced. Explain what worked and what didn't and why.

2. Find an example of a special occasion speech online or in a movie or tv show. Explain what worked and what didn't and why.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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19.1: Meeting Success as a College Student
19.2: Learning to Learn
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19.1: Meeting Success as a College Student

Author: Barbara G. Tucker, Professor of Communication, Dalton State College

Many students who take a basic public speaking course are enrolled in their first semester or year of college. For that reason, this textbook includes helpful material on making the life transition to being a college student and thus a lifelong learner.

The Journey

In some ways, going to college is like taking a journey. It will feel like a different culture with a different language, customs, expectations, and even values. Consider these appendices as a guidebook for the journey.

In choosing the metaphor of a journey for college, we are comparing them on several factors.

1. Like a journey, rather than a weekend trip, college is a long process. The journey takes time.
2. A journey goes through different terrain. Sometimes you will feel like it's more uphill than downhill.
3. A journey involves guides, people who have been there before and have wisdom about the way to get to the destination. These are your professors mostly, but also your academic advisors, peer mentors, administrators, older students, and staff in Enrollment Services and the Dean of Students' Office.
4. A journey requires a map. This is, for the most part, the college catalog that tells you what courses are required to fulfill your major. Your advisor can also probably provide you with a "course plan," which breaks down in order which classes you should try to take each semester.
5. A journey has a destination. Here is where you might find that your values are different from your professors or mentors. Many college students see this destination as commencement day and getting a diploma in front of family and friends. That is only part of it. Your professors and mentors want you to be introduced to ideas, books, authors, and experiences that you will continue to engage with throughout life.

Your destination for now is probably the career you see yourself working in five years or more from now. You probably chose a major or perhaps even the college based on that career destination. That is reasonable and you were probably encouraged by your high school teachers, counselors, spiritual advisors, and parents to do that.

Why College?

However…there are a few problems with approaching college with only a career destination focus.

First, you are likely to change your mind. Most college students do at some point. In fact, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017) within 3 years of enrollment, about 30% of students in associate's and bachelor's degree programs changed their major at least once.

Second, you may have to change your mind about your major. Some college majors are competitive, meaning a fraction of those who want to get into them are accepted, based on grades and other factors.

Third, you might want to change majors as you are exposed to new ideas and career fields you didn't even know about.

Fourth, the career you end up in may not even have been invented yet. In 2007, when the author's son started college as a communication major, no one had heard of a social media director. That is what he does now. Conversely, some of the hottest jobs now might not be so hot in five years. Technology is changing, knowledge is expanding, politics alter realities, and the population is getting generally older. These trends will affect the kinds of jobs that are created (Anders, 2017).

Fifth, and more to my point, college is about becoming a better version of you, not just getting a job. If you see the main point of college as coming out with a career, you will miss some of the best parts of the journey. Or even worse, if you feel that every class is just an obstacle to that career rather than a stepping stone to being a more prepared individual for that career, you will miss the value of each class. And let's face it; you are going to take at least forty classes over the next four to six years. You want to enjoy them, not just see most of them as roadblocks to getting out. The reality of today's workplace is that you will have many positions and perhaps many careers over your forty or fifty years of work life, and college cannot prepare you specifically for all of them right now.

What college prepares you for is to be a lifelong learner who can adapt yourself and your skills to the new jobs the marketplace will create or will interest you in the future, and the new skills you will be expected to have in your chosen career field. If you want to

be a registered nurse and graduate with a bachelor of science in nursing, that will just be the beginning of your learning to be a competent, caring nurse.

You have probably heard it before, but the top skills employers want, inappropriately called “soft skills,” have more to do with personal abilities. Team work, critical thinking, work ethic, spoken and written communication, conflict resolution, and group facilitation are common skills seen on lists of what employers want in new hires. (Go ahead and do an Internet search for this subject, and you will see what I mean). The soft skills, which are really not soft but the basis of your success, are what you learn in college classes and college experiences outside of the classroom. (The term “soft” does not refer to them being squishy but fluid and transferable to different contexts. Professors in the liberal arts really do not like the term “soft skills” by they way, because they sound “less than” something important.)

In other words, college is not a vocational program that trains you for a specific job. If that goal interests you, you should consider it, because the workplace desperately needs skilled workers such as electricians, plumbers, technicians, and the like. College is designed to help you attain (not give you) a wide set of skills and knowledge so you can adapt, grow, communicate, and learn no matter what field you pursue, as well as give you more specific skills for certain positions.

Also, college will not be the end of your learning. You may want to attain another credential or degree after graduating from college. You will definitely be expected by your employers to be involved in for-credit and not-for-credit continuing education. This is the just the beginning of the learning journey. Yes, you have been learning since birth and in school since you were four or five, but there is one difference now: you are learning because you want to. Learning is now your choice.

So, every part of the college experience, even the hard parts, should be seen as part of the journey. If you’re hiking in the mountains, the view from the top will be magnificent but you might sweat a lot, trip and get scrapes, or tramp through some thorny bushes before you reach the summit.

However, if you **prepare** for the journey and stay on the right path, many of the problems can be avoided. That is the purpose of these appendices.

Preparation

Of course, much of your preparation for college came in your K-12 years. You learned to read and write, solve equations, perhaps speak the basics of a foreign language, and perform many other academic tasks. You also probably learned about working with others, solving problems, and taking responsibility through musical groups, sports teams, clubs, and other extracurricular activities. In some ways, college will be a continuation of those years, but many students find that high school did not prepare them for everything that college brings. There are many reasons for this lack of preparation. The question is, “If you find yourself unprepared, what can you do about it?” That is the subject of these appendices: Getting the big picture of what college is about; understanding your friend, the instructor; time management; appreciating how we learn and you learn individually; studying, reading, and test-taking; and avoiding the plagiarism trap. We will finish up with some resources on campus.

Getting the Big Picture of College

The institution of the university has actually been around longer than high schools or elementary schools. The first university was founded in Morocco in 859 C.E., the University of Karueein. (A college is traditionally considered a section of a university as well as an independent unit; today “universities” usually refer to institutions with graduate programs.) Oxford University in England came along in 1096. For that reason, centuries of tradition still cling to the culture of colleges and universities. Traditions change slowly, especially when they have been around over 1000 years! Part of being a college student is to learn the physical and cultural terrain of the college, much of which comes from traditions.

A college degree is either a two-year (associate of arts or science) or four-year (bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, bachelor of fine arts, bachelor of social work, bachelor of business administration, etc.). Associate’s degrees are usually limited to 60 required hours . A bachelor’s degree is usually limited to 120 hours. There are, of course, some exceptions to these standards. Most colleges have a set of “have to” classes for every student; these might include a “core” of general education courses (some required, some elective); and then required and elective courses for the student’s specific chosen major. Some programs are very closely proscribed (few elective choices, usually health professions and education), and some give the student more flexibility.

Many students feel that some of their freshman year classes are repeats of what they had in high school. Unless you took AP or dual enrollment classes, your freshman year classes will be much more demanding than those high school classes, even if some of the material is review.

All that said, the curriculum of college is not something a bunch of people in a room thought up last week. It is the result of those hundreds of years of what has traditionally been considered important to a college education. History—how did we get to where we are? Social sciences—how do we relate to other people? Literature, language, and public speaking—what are the best ideas and how do we communicate them? Sciences—how does the physical world work? Math—what is the logic behind numbers? You can argue about the value of any one of them, but years of tradition have solidified that these are what an educated person needs to know about. The configurations of classes may differ from college to college, but the basic concepts are the same.

Advising and Your Classes

The subject of the curriculum brings us to another matter that students often do not understand about college. Each college or university system is "autonomous." Each has its own curriculum and set of required classes for a particular major or degree. Each college has the right to accept or not accept courses for transfer from another institution. This may seem unfair, but that is part of the tradition of higher education and not likely to change anytime soon. If you transfer from a public to a private institution, or vice versa, or to a college out of state, some of your credits may not be accepted for transfer there.

Also, our academic advisors cannot advise you for another institution, only for this one. If you plan on transferring, you are responsible to talk to the other institution about requirements and what will transfer. Since you don't want to take a class that will not count toward your final degree and you don't want to lose time, credits, and money, be in contact with the school you hope to attend later.

Speaking of advisors, they are your best resource for making educational choices. At the same time, they want you to develop the ability to make your own academic decisions, specifically by being able to read the catalog, the course plan, Banner and Degreeworks (these last two are common student record and degree auditing systems; your college may have a different "brand" of this software). You can then see what classes you need each semester and design your schedule. They are willing to help you in the freshmen year or if you change your major, but after a while the advisor (who might be a faculty member) will want you to take ownership of this process, with their help and approval. Some things to keep in mind about advising:

- As freshmen, almost all the courses you are required to take in the core are offered frequently, usually every semester and with many sections, so you will not have trouble finding those courses when you need them.
- As you become a junior and senior, the courses may only be offered once a year, at a time that is not convenient, and/or even every two years. You will have to plan accordingly.
- Learn to use the records system and degree auditing software; they are great tools. If you advisor doesn't mention it, ask about it.

Another very important point about advising: **Financial aid questions** must be addressed to the financial aid office staff in Enrollment Services. The professional and faculty advisors usually have no access to your financial aid information. Students often run into financial aid problems for a number of reasons: dropping too many courses, failing to pass enough courses, and taking courses that are not required in their program are three major ones. Not completing the FAFSA on time is also a huge obstacle to navigating the financial aid universe. The financial aid office staff are the experts and you need to check your email, Banner, and your postal mail for notices from them about deadlines and your awards from financial aid.

Additionally, the college most likely expects payment before the semester begins. In fact, if you do not pay your bill or make sure your financial aid is in order a couple of weeks before the start of the semester, your registration may be "purged" or removed—you will no longer have a class schedule, even if you had registered very early. Dates are advertised on the website and calendar. Obviously, you do not want this to happen, because you have to begin all over again trying to get into classes, and by then they might be closed to new registrations. This is why you should have a way or plan to take care of the fees and tuition as soon as you register.

So, to recap, college is a new terrain, and the college experience is a journey over that terrain. The terrain has a physical and cultural features. The cultural one involves the rules and regulations, the language, the values, and the persons and personalities. In the next section we will talk about the people most affecting you—the faculty—but first I'd like to address the values of higher education.

Values

The first value is rigor. That means the learning tasks require effort from students. You could say it means the courses are hard, but there is more to it than that. It means the academic standards and expectations are high.

The second is diversity and inclusion. College will allow you, and sometimes force you, to encounter people and ideas that you have not before. Your instructors may be from other countries or parts of the U.S., as might be your classmates. You will have classmates who are twenty or even thirty years older than you—or younger. Your instructors may teach theories and concepts you personally disagree with. One thing that students often find in college is that the old cliques and "drama" that happened in high school simply don't apply in college. It's about the learning and the work, not social status, cliques, or in-groups. Everyone belongs, no matter what they look like, as long as they do the work.

The third is civility, which can be thought of as "actively showing respect." Not agreement, but respect for them as human beings and members of the community and as persons who have a right to express their opinions with civility as well.

The fourth value is equality and fairness. You might not always think it is true in your experience, but higher education values access (availability of learning to those willing to work hard), equality (not getting a grade for any reason other than performance, and not giving or asking for special treatment) and fairness (equal output for equal input). For that reason, if you ask a professor for special favors, you are asking them to be unfair to the rest of the class who did not get those favors.

Now, in case my emphasis on work is making you worry that there is nothing fun going on at your college, let me stop here and say that it offers a wide variety of programs for social interaction, relaxation, fun, and developing relationships, spirituality, and leadership. The Dean of Students' Office, the Health and Wellness programs, and the Athletic Department are three website you should check out right now just to convince you college is not all hard work and there is plenty of activities to get involved in here!

College Faculty

The persons you will have the most contact with on campus, other than students, are your faculty. You may spend several hours a week with them. It is best if you start to think of them in positive and constructive manners rather than as stern, rigid, distant authority figures who have no connection to your lives.

You will find your instructors to be warm, polite, helpful, and friendly—but professional. Part of growing up is to learn to negotiate between those two.

College faculty do have specific characteristics.

- They LOVE their discipline. They live their discipline. They went to school for years to understand their discipline. They think it's the greatest thing ever. I teach communication and do not understand why the subject does not fascinate everyone. Consequently, don't blow off their subject. Don't say it's worthless or boring or of no value.
- They like to question, so they seem skeptical. In pursuing graduate degrees necessary to be a college teacher, we are taught to question ideas and assumptions. Sometimes we say things in class for you to think about, even if we don't agree with it. We expect you to follow the syllabus and do the assignments. The syllabus in college means much more than the syllabus in high school; you should keep it in a prominent or accessible position in your notebook.
- They have different personalities. Some of us are extraverts and some are introverts. Some have quirky senses of humor and some have fairly quiet ones.
- They are in total charge of their classrooms. College instructors are not to be disturbed when teaching. Do not walk into a college instructor's class and interrupt in the middle of a session, unless the building is on fire or it's a matter of life or death.
- Higher education changes slowly, and so do faculty. Colleges were originally run entirely by the faculty; there was not really a separate administrative staff. Even today, many college academic policies cannot be changed without the approval of the faculty. For example, we cannot change federal financial aid policy, but we can change the curriculum in a major if we choose to do so.
- Professors are student-oriented. We chose to work here because it is a teaching institution, which means our main responsibility is to teach, advise, and serve students, as opposed to doing research. We do engage in research, but that is not our priority.
- They don't treat some students better because they like them.
- We have heavy workloads. We teach 3-7 classes per semester, with varying numbers of students—as few as ten, as many as 100 or more. We have to keep office hours, one or two a day, which does not include committee meetings (faculty participate in governance of the college, and that takes time), advising students, preparing classes, grading, assessments, and required continuing education.
- We have families and lives, too.

- College faculty do not deal with parents. It is against federal law for a college instructor to talk to your parents about your status (that means grades) in their class. That law is called the Buckley Amendment and often referred to as FERPA because of its origin in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. If a parent calls and asks about a student–and it does happen occasionally–we just say we are not allowed to talk about a student's progress to parents or anyone else outside the College personnel.
- As adults, authority figures, and experts in their subject matters, faculty members expect respect. It is best to refer to him, her or they as "Professor" if you do not know if the instructor has earned a doctorate, and as "Dr." if you know they have (it will probably be on the syllabus). We work hard for the doctorate and it is professional courtesy to use it. Some will say it is all right to call them by their first name (very rare) or "Mr." or "Ms." but unless they do, you should default to "Professor." You should also learn your professor's name and office location on Day One. The instructors keep office hours mainly for students to come see them about class matters. You will not be bothering them.
- Keeping all these characteristics in mind, here is a list of Don'ts that will keep you in good shape with your professors.
- **Don't…**
  - Ever ask them if anything important happened in class on a day you were absent. This is literally the Kiss of Death and you may get a very harsh or sarcastic answer, such as "No, since you were not there, we put our heads down and thought about your absence."
  - Don't email them like text speak. Emails should start professionally, "Dear Professor," identify who you are and your class (the email address may not do that), and clearly give your question or concern. You should have a closing as well. Your relationship with your faculty member is a professional one and this is a good time to learn professional communication. Many professors simply will not answer an email like this:

hey I missed class today can I get the notes from you or the power point? Bill

Yes, I have gotten emails like this from students

- Expect special treatment. Fairness to students is extremely important to us.
- Play with your electronic devices in class. I cannot stress this one enough. Each faculty member will have a policy on phones and laptops, and you must abide by it. Remember, we are in control of our classrooms. Faculty are also allowed to call public safety and have students escorted out of class if they are disruptive or causing harm to other students and their learning.
- Think attendance doesn't matter. This is one of the biggest lies that is propagated about college life. Attendance in class does matter, very, very much. No, we won't call the county truant officer. However, many faculty take daily roll, and we have to keep some record of attendance for financial aid purposes. So, we are aware of your attendance, but more important, you will not do well by missing many classes, even in a class that is purely lecture and test-taking. Lots of research shows this.
- Be afraid to go to their offices and ask for help. It's one of the best things you can do if you are having academic concerns. If you do go to their office, however, don't overlook the office hours sign on the door (also on the syllabus). If the professor has informed the students that she is in from 1:00-3:00 on Thursday afternoon, don't expect her to be there at 4:30.
- Think your instructors are psychic. If you never ask questions in class, even if you have them, we are not mind readers. Please ask.

At the end of the semester you will be asked to evaluate your instructors online. First, please comply. The data is important to the college's operations. Second, answer thoughtfully. Third, don't blindside the instructor. If you say "He never explained X clearly," did you ask about X? Fourth, don't get ugly and personal; swearing or obscenity on the evaluations isn't helping anyone. State your case about the instructor's behavior, not that you didn't like her shoes. The evaluations are about the learning experience in the class, not whether you think the class should be in the curriculum.

Parting thoughts

While there are a lot more things I could say about the journey of being a college student, some things you just have to experience. Not everything will make sense at first. Remember, it's a long journey.

Expect your college life to have a cyclical nature. The first few weeks will be exciting and daunting; you may feel like your head will explode with all the newness. A few weeks in you might feel a little down. The newness has worn off and man, oh, man, the work is piling up. By the eighth week, it will feel like everything came at once. The stress and activity builds and builds until finals

and whew, it's time to sleep and binge watch shows on Netflix. You say, "I got to get a better start next time" before it starts again in January.

I'm telling you this now because the key word I want to leave you with is PROACTIVITY. Your college journey will be enjoyable and successful to the extent that you are **proactive**. I learned this all-important word from the best book on time management, *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People* by Stephen A. Covey. In a sense it means "planning" but more than that. Because we cannot plan for everything, we plan margin and solutions for what we know we cannot plan for. I cannot plan when I will have a flat tire; I can plan to have the resources in my car to fix the flat when that happens. I cannot plan the traffic between my home and the campus, but I can plan to leave 10 minutes early every day to get a parking space and miss the worst of the traffic.

Proactivity is about having a future-orientation that is executed in the present. Paper planners, or electronic ones, can help. But you can write down or type into your phone all the plans you want if you don't choose to execute the plans. After a while, proactivity can become a habit and you cease to even recognize it as such. For example, years ago I learned to put my clothes out the night before a workday. My husband sets the coffee pot up before going to bed. These are small things but they save loads of time and more importantly, stress. Much of the stress we feel is self-inflicted from poor planning.

It is common for textbooks on transitions for first-year students in college to contain a chapter on time management. In place of a separate chapter or appendix, we will include some online resources. Inventories, filling out sample weekly calendar/schedules, and tips on time management are very helpful, but they start with this attitude of proactivity and some of the mental processes, specifically self-efficacy and locus of control. Now is the time in your life to realize that there are urgent things and important things in your life, and those will change as you go through various seasons.

Urgent means that for whatever reason the task must be done very, very soon. Important means that it is central to your values and to your reaching your goals. Urgent means the task or activity demands your attention now; important tends to mean it will demand your attention long-term. Some things are simply urgent, but not important; some are important but not urgent; some are neither, and some are both. The diagram on the next page is often used to show that comparison.

Many of you have family and work responsibilities. Being a student is one of your many roles. This means balancing priorities; you have more things in your life that are both urgent and important. For that reason, using tools such as planners are a must for you. As a friend of mine says, everything takes longer than it takes," so be realistic about trying to pack too many activities into your day. For your health and good relationships, you need to plan "margin" in your life, time in the day that is not packed to the full. That time will probably be taken up by the urgent and semi-urgent things that come up that you can't plan for or expect.

Consider the following to help you with time management:



Figure 19.1.1: A 2x2 matrix of the (un)important and the (non)urgent. Crises, impending deadlines are urgent and important. Reading junk mail and watching TV and social media re unimportant and not urgent. Responding to texts and checking email are urgent and usually not important. Planning and preparation, taking care of yourself are important but not urgent.

In conclusion, time management is more about self-management than the clock. You can't really manage time—it keeps going forward, no matter what we do. You can only manage your own goals and behaviors, and college life will bring the importance of that home to you.

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19.2: Learning to Learn

Author: Barbara G. Tucker, Professor of Communication, Dalton State College

"Remember, in business and in life – success is earned from learning how to do things that you don't like doing." (Llopis, 2012)

One of the most important things that you will learn in college is how to learn. Why does that matter? Because learning will be one of our jobs in the future. No matter what profession you eventually enter after your formal education—social work, nursing, accounting, social media director, elementary school teacher, business manager, respiratory therapist, banker, or one of many others—you will continue learning new procedures, new policies, new techniques, new ways of thinking. Your employers will expect you to attend training. You may decide to change careers completely or slightly and have to learn new skills. Software and technology change constantly. Many of you will eventually want to earn a graduate degree.

Psychologist Herbert Gerjuoy said many years ago, **"Tomorrow's illiterate will not be the man who can't read; he will be the man who has not learned how to learn."** " This quotation has often been attributed to the futurist Alvin Toffler, who used it in his book Future Shock from the 1970s. These men's words were prophetic, although they could not have foreseen all of today's technology.

Of course, not every learning task will be the same as the type you do in college. However, the truth remains that you are only beginning to learn as an adult, and this is the time in our life where you can focus on learning, on understanding the process, on how you best learn, and how you can expand your repertoire to learn better.

There are many theories about how we learn. While in some cases they contradict, for the most part they complement and supplement each other because they concern themselves with different aspects of the learning process, either the physiological effects of learning on the brain and body, the social aspects, or the personal and psychological effects.

Thanks to magnetic resonance imaging (MRIs), other medical science, and the growing field of neuroscience, we know much more today about how we learn. We know that learning creates a physical change in the brain as synapses grow. We know that this happens not by passive reception or exposure to information but by our effort. We know that memories are formed by passing from a short-term category to long-term through rehearsal, usage, and other efforts.

We understand how attention works and that distractions inhibit learning rather than helping it. While you think listening to music may help you study, it probably is not, and your open laptop in class is distracting the students behind you. In fact, the idea of multitasking is a myth. You may think you can do several things at a time, but you are actually cutting the efficiency and quality of the work you are doing. In other words, you might get some things done when you multitask, but you won't do them as quickly or as completely or as well.

We understand now that intelligence is malleable (change-able, flexible) and that a person with a fixed mindset about learning (those who say they are just born to be good at a skill like math, music, or writing) will face frustrations and obstacles in comparison with those who have a growth mindset. A growth mindset sees one's failures in a learning task as ways to find new methods for learning, not as a stopping off point in learning. Also, to the advantage of all college students who sometimes feel like their heads are going to explode, we know that learning is not a zero sum game. Learning one thing does not mean it has to displace something else. Your brain is an organ that is developing new and more intricate connections; it is not a box that will only hold so much. We also know there are different kinds of knowledge and different kinds of intelligence, and we know there is a distinct difference in learning and processing between novices and experts.

We also know that some of the common ideas about learning do not have much evidence. One of them is learning styles. You have probably taken a test that classified you as a visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learner. While there is nothing wrong with being classified in such a way, there is no evidence from scientific studies that you will learn better if your instructor teaches to your learning style. Unfortunately, I have heard many students over the years attribute their failure in a class to the professor who didn't teach to their learning style. What the students did not understand is that we learn through all styles (visual, print, hearing, and activity) depending on the demands of the learning tasks.

You did not learn to drive a car simply by reading about it or looking at videos (print, visual). You had to drive around in a car and listen to the instructor (kinesthetic and auditory learning). Think about learning how to ride a bicycle—same scenario. On the other hand, learning to speak a foreign language requires auditory and visual input, not just one, and is enhanced by movement. It would be better for you to use all four modalities than to pigeonhole yourself and limit your ability to learn.

- *Like other labels, learning style labels may contain a grain of truth. A student who prefers to learn auditorily may find studying more productive when her notes are spoken aloud into a recording device and revisited later. But she may also find that when studying for a geometry test, drawing diagrams (visual) and physically manipulating shapes on paper (kinesthetic) work best for her.*

In fact, it's just as important what you do with the information after it is accessed (enters your mind) than how it gets in there! As a college student and developing adult learner, you will want to be aware of what learning tasks require, especially what they require of you in terms of effort, attention, and time. You will want to notice what you are doing when you learn and even when you do not learn as you hoped to. You will want to think about and talk about how you learn best because using language is part of the effort behind creating those synaptic connections. These behaviors are called metacognition, or "thinking about thinking."

This need for metacognition is why your professors will often ask you to turn to your partner and discuss some of the lecture material, such as what was unclear– "the muddiest point"—or to compare notes you have taken. It is why your instructor might have you look at the questions you got wrong on that midterm exam and figure out why you got them wrong— what processes did you go through to get that answer, and where, perhaps, did you get off track. It is why your professor might give you a pre-test at the beginning of the course to see what your pre-conceptions about the material are.

Of course, learning is not just about adding knowledge but also reshaping your understanding and approaches. For an example, I'll use public speaking. Students come into the class with ideas about public speaking that they have to "unlearn." One is that they cannot do it, because of bad past experiences or fear. Another is that all they have to do to be a good speaker is be funny, even silly. Another might be that public speaking is not an important skill, or that public speaking is just reading to an audience. As another example, science instructors often see that their beginning students have faulty ideas about science as a field of knowledge as well as about specific scientific facts. Their goal is not just to fill the students' minds with scientific facts but to think like scientists, to understand what the scientific process involves and to apply that process in new ways.

All this is to say that one of the things you will hear over and over again, and one of the things that is a major difference between high school and college, is "time on task." College learning, because it is "higher" in terms of the thought processes your professors want you to engage in, takes time. You cannot jot off a ten-page paper in a couple of hours. You cannot study for a midterm for an hour the night before. Well, you can try, but how successful you will be, in terms of really learning and earning good grades, is up for grabs.

Six theories of learning I would like to present here that will be of value to you as a student are Bloom's/Krathwohl's/Anderson's taxonomy, Albert Bandura's self-efficacy, self-directed and self-regulated learning, the usefulness of mindset, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, and Kolb's experiential learning cycle. What matters with each is that learning is effort. While learning can be enjoyable, the old "learning is fun" adage gives the idea that it is easy and that it shouldn't require much effort. It learning does take effort, the erroneous thinking goes, then something must be wrong. On the contrary, learning is hard work.

Recently I signed up for an online course with an organization that credentials online courses. The organization's purpose is to help instructors create excellent courses and to train college personnel in applying excellent standards to the course. I have taught online for almost twenty years but wanted to learn this organization's system. It proved to be more challenging than I planned.

Because I had many years of experience in teaching online and reading about how to do it and design classes, I found I had to put aside some of my attitudes and ideas because of the philosophy and approach of this organization's system. I had to "unlearn" some of my former ways of thinking about online teaching and course design. To "unlearn" doesn't mean to forget, since memory is not something we can just erase like deleting a file from a computer. Due to my willingness to do that, I walked away with a deeper understanding of good online course design. I was also able (and this is another aspect of college learning) to transfer or apply that knowledge to my traditional classroom teaching.

What is one of the things I "unlearned?" I like to put lots of extra resources in my online class, as in "when you get a chance, this is something interesting to read." I "unlearned" that that was a good idea. It just confuses the students, and unless it directly meets a learning objective or outcome, it does not belong with all the other materials. What I might do in a regular classroom doesn't translate to online, not in all cases. That was a hard lesson for me because of my personality—I like to give students lots of choices! But it was a good one to learn.

In that personal learning situation I see each one of the six theories mentioned above. I see that I had to go up the taxonomy, and I had to be stretched into a new zone. I had to believe that my failure on the first assignments (yes, I failed them!) was not because I couldn't learn but that I had to—and could—find new strategies. I also had to regulate my time and work on the class when I was mentally prepared, and I had to reflect on my experience to learn. Let's talk about each one in more detail.

Bloom’s taxonomy was created in the 1960s to help teachers recognize that all learning was not the same and happened in an upward movement. This is a typical reproduction (source: Wikimedia.commons) of the original “taxonomy,” which means “a scheme of classifications.” In this case, it is classifying learning tasks.

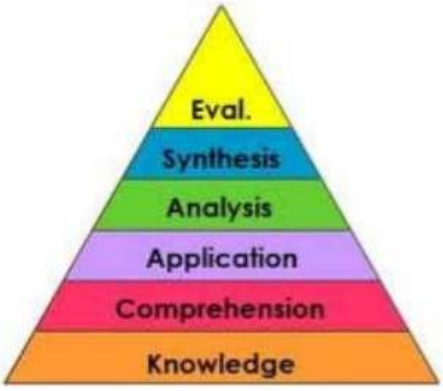


Figure 19.2.1: Bloom's taxonomy. At the bottom, knowledge then comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation at the top

Later, in 2001, the model was updated to use verbs rather than nouns and emphasize the activity of learning. (Also from Wikimedia.commons) This configuration turns the triangle (or rhombus) upside down but other versions keep it like the one above

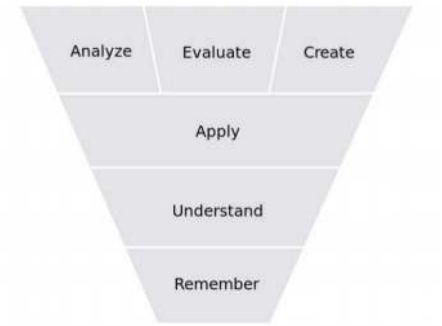


Figure 19.2.2: Updated taxonomy as an upside down triangle. At the top analyze, evaluate, create then apply, then understand and finally remember.

The important thing for you to get from this is that your instructors will have some learning tasks at the bottom—remembering facts or concepts, such as being able to recreate lists of information on a test, and understanding, such as being able to define the concepts in your own words . However, in higher education we move higher up the taxonomy. You will be asked to apply the learning, and then do new things with it. You will also be asked to learn a greater volume of information for tests, in most cases, than what you have been used to in high school.

So in a history class, obviously you will have to remember dates. Then you will have to be able to explain or define an historical concept such as Manifest Destiny. Then you will be asked to apply, such as “Did the concept of Manifest Destiny influence a president’s behavior?” In this case the instructor may have never addressed that question specifically in class; you are supposed to take the concept and compare it to what the president did and said. Those are the lower levels, and it is possible that those will be your major learning tasks in your first year or so of classes, although not entirely.

However, as you progress, you will be asked to:

- Analyze (taking apart, contrasting and comparing parts): “What are the beliefs behind Manifest Destiny and where did they come from?”
- Evaluate: Assess how a concept or practice stands up to other criteria, standards, or philosophies: “Does Manifest Destiny violate the U.S. Constitution in spirit or in letter?”
- Create: Develop a new thesis from the materials you have learned.

This is not to say you will be asked to do all six levels of the taxonomy in anyone class; in fact, that is unlikely. But I introduce this for you to understand what your instructors are trying to do. If you come into class with the pre-conception that you will be

learning lots of facts and taking tests on them, that is only partly true. You will be expected to operate more at the applying, analyzing, and evaluating levels.

The second theory we will examine is that of **Mindset**. This theory is based on the work of Carol Dweck, a psychologist from Stanford University in California, and it has encouraged a great deal of research on learning. It is simple, "elegant" as some say, but also has a number of parts and offshoots.

Learning is work, sometimes hard work. You do not learn a task primarily because you are inherently good at that task; you learn it because you work hard in the right way. Learning researcher Angela Duckworth shows that experts—the really skilled—spend an average of 10,000 hours becoming that skilled person. For example, concert musicians and professional athletes do not approach their tasks as "I am just talented at this" and let it slide. They constantly practice and keep working on skills.

A person with a growth mindset sees learning as possible and due to hard work. They will try new methods to learn because they don't see having the skill as either "born with it or not." Also, a person can change their mindset; it would be against the theory to say someone could not change! Thankfully those who are trained to recognize how their fixed mindsets are affecting them can change to a growth mindset. Finally, children (and adults) should probably not be praised for being "smart" or "gifted" but instead for "working hard," "finding new ways to do things, " and having perseverance or endurance. (From mindsetonline.com)

Closely tied to the idea of mindset is self-efficacy, which is "one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task" (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is not just self-confidence, but is related to beliefs regarding specific tasks. Self-efficacy is tied to success in many endeavors, and to resilience and locus of control, which are also a large part of mindset. A person who believes that ability and talent are just natural and all that matters in success—absent from hard work and using the right techniques, practice, etc.—lacks self-efficacy. The mindset approach can help college students because they will be faced with daily events that can attack their self-worth and lead to dropping out, when what they often need is to find other ways to approach learning.

For example, let's say that on your first Biology 1107 test you earn a 56. You say, "This is not me! I don't get 56s on exams! What is going on?" You now have a choice. You can study exactly the same way for the next exam, maybe just using more of it or spending longer hours at it. That might work, and it might not. You can blame the instructor's teaching methods. That is not going to help, because then your only option is to drop the class, **something you do not want to do** because it will become a pattern. You can say, "I told you so; I stink at science, so I need to drop the class and change my major so I don't have to take biology." Again, not a pattern you want to establish. You can do nothing and hope for the best (not a good option either).

Or you can:

1. Examine your behavior in the class up to now. This is part of a process called reflection. Have you attended all your classes (that old myth that you don't need to go to class in college rears its head again!) Have you read the material in the textbook outside of class? Did you come to class alert, having slept and eaten well? Did you look at your notes after class or go over them everyday, accumulating knowledge, or did you just wait until the night before the exam? All of these are standard things that college students are told to do, and it's not because college professors want to control your life. THEY WORK.
2. Go talk to the professor during posted office hours (and don't expect them to be there at other times) to ask for help and some ideas for succeeding in the class.
3. Attend the tutoring services offered by the Dean of Students' Office.
4. If your instructor offers outside of class sessions, take advantage of them.

The process of reflection is vital to college learning. You start by reflecting on what led up to the experience, as well as how you felt about the low grade and even the experience of taking the exam. What was on the test that you didn't expect? Did you study word-for-word definitions but the test asked you for applications? Did you memorize lists but it asked you to put concept in your own words? Was there a whole section of the textbook that you just skipped?

After reflecting, you have to make a plan for the next time and take action. It may be that your problem was not the amount of time you spent, but when you spent it and what you did during the time. For the purpose of learning and memory formation, repetition (going over the accumulated class notes every day or several days a week) would be better than what we call "cramming." Spending ten minutes a day for 21 days (three and half hours) will be more useful than cramming for five hours the night before, which is time you might not have that night anyway. You do have ten minutes every day.

You make a plan, you commit to it, you act upon it, and then you experience it again. Is there a difference? More than likely, yes. You might not get a 98 on the exam, but you should be able to approach the exam in a more organized and in control fashion. And

you will have a clearer idea of how you can learn.

I have just described another theory of learning, one that I particularly like, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, pictured below.

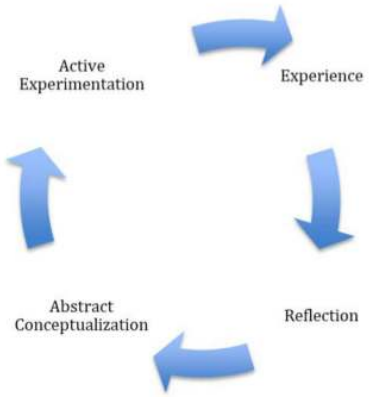


Figure 19.2.3:Kolb's learning cycle. Experience, Reflection, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation

As the image shows, this model involves four steps that are cycled through: Experience, Reflection, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. The key part is the reflection. Many people like to say "we learn by experience" but we don't necessarily. We learn by reflecting on experience and doing something with it. In the model, don't let the word "Abstract Conceptualization" confuse you. It means, in this case, making a plan for what will work next time.

Reflection is something we all approach differently. Some of us talk to reflect (even to ourselves out loud), some write (I am a writer, but I reflect a lot when I walk my dog every evening), and some just mull it over in our minds when nothing else is holding our attention There is no right way to do it, but there are some questions you should ask yourself, or some territory you should cover in reflection. In order for reflection to be useful, you should focus on **what** really happened in the experience as well as **how you felt** about it. You should turn the experience around and see it from **other points of view**. You should ask, "Is the way I feel about it, am evaluating it, **valid**, or am I just seeing one side of it?" You can question, **why** and **how** did it happened? These are only a few questions that you can use in reflecting. Here is a diagram of questions you can ask about a lecture, film, or speaker.

Example of Q1, Q2, Q3.

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
What	What is being said? (and not) (understanding)	What does it mean? (interpretation)	What can I do with this information or insight? (application)
Why	Why is this important (value)	Why should I accept his position? (logic of his arguments)	Why would I be biased against this position? (questioning my assumptions)
How	How did the speaker get to this position/idea view? (is he or she honest about it)	Could the speaker be leaving something out? (their biases)	How does the speaker support their ideas? (persuade us)

What I mean for you to take from this is that reflection is useful for you as a self-regulated and self-directed learner (discussed below).

Now, a few words here. First, notice that as I was discussing strategies to improve exam grades, I didn't say "get a study buddy." Study buddies or study groups are great . . . IF. What are the ifs?

- You know that the person is a good student. While you might think that student in your history class is cute and you want to get to know them, don't hide asking the other student out on a date behind studying. He or she may have gotten a 48 on the exam! By a good student I don't just mean someone with a high grade, however. This person needs to have good learning habits, take good notes, be willing to engage in asking questions, and generally be cooperative. If you don't commit to serious study and to trying new approaches, such as the ones listed above. Research shows mixed results on

study groups because students use it without changing other behaviors, that is, they still don't read the textbook or go over accumulated notes every day.

- You have to realize this is a study session, not a tutoring session. You have to bring an equal part to the session. If it's just "I want to look at your notes because I take bad ones," or "I want you to explain this to me," you are just using the other person and not helping them.
- You need to study in a good setting, for example, one that is free of distractions, and come prepared (laptop, textbook, paper, etc.)
- You need a **plan**. It can't just be, "Well, here we are. What now?" You can first be sure all your sets of notes are complete, and then you can quiz each other, or think up possible questions that will be on the test. Research shows that student who can come up with their own questions and "self-quiz" do better on tests. Plan to take breaks—we really don't study well in two-hour sessions. The breaks should just be for bathroom and a drink of water and stretching legs, not as long as the session itself!

A second note. Up to this point I have not used the two most important words about learning in college. Those words are "self-directed" and "self-regulated." **Self-directed** learning is learning you choose to do, that you are invested in and that you direct. The fact that you are in college should say that you are self-directed, because college is not legally required—we choose to go. Now, I realize that some people go to college for reasons other than choice (that is, someone told them they had to in order to get some kind of reward or avoid some sort of punishment), and those people usually are unsuccessful. I have heard of students who enrolled in college because their parents said, "You either go to work at manual labor, go in the military, or go to college," and college sounded like the best of the three. That type of student is rarely self-directed.

Self-directed also means that you choose the method of learning and you decide when you have learned it. In this case, college cannot be totally self-directed because, unfortunately, the college expects you to learn a certain amount and show that you have learned in order to get a degree. You have to get certain grades and take certain courses to even stay in school. However, you can still be self-directed by choosing the hours that you take the classes, the professors, the number of hours of classes you take each semester, and the subject matter of the courses.

The point is that your instructors expect a large amount of self-direction from you, because you are an adult now and not required by law to be in their classes. Granted, you may only be in that biology class because two lab science classes are required for your major, but in general you have chosen to be there.

I make this point because it relates to an aspect of self-efficacy called "**locus of control.**" We do better at tasks, generally, when we have an internal locus of control rather than an external one. In other words, if I am the one making the choices in my life and I recognize that, my viewpoint on learning and success will be quite different than if I think I am just being bossed around by external forces, and therefore a victim. Locus of control means I take responsibility for my life rather than blaming others. If I get a ticket for going 15 miles per hour too fast in a 35 mph zone, I might blame the fact that the police officer was "out for me." That's external locus of control. If I own up to the fact it was my foot was the gas and I was going 50, that's internal locus of control.

On the other hand, self-regulated learning is more about the actual behaviors you engage in as a learner. The concept of metacognition that we mentioned earlier is key here. A self-regulated learner reflects and recognizes what he, she or they is doing as a learner and seeks to find approaches that will make them more successful (and that includes being more economical in use of time and resources). A self-regulated learner is like an athlete who pays attention to their body and outcomes and what they are telling them about their athletic performance.

With all this talk of self-efficacy, self-regulation, and self-direction, it may sound like I am saying that learning is a very individualistic, "lone wolf" kind of phenomenon. That is not what I want to communicate, only that ultimately it does boil down, especially in college, to your own choices and work. However, one of the best parts of college (and one of the downsides of online classes) is that learning is social. Although Bandura originated the self-efficacy concept, it is rooted in his social learning theory, which states that an individual's actions and reactions are influenced by the actions that individual has observed in others. So, if we have self-efficacy (also called personal efficacy) it's not because it just sprang from nowhere or we figured it out on our own somehow magically. It came largely as a result of accumulated social interactions and observations over the lifespan

The good news is, though, that even reading this textbook is a social situation for learning, as are the classes you are enrolled in this semester—especially the public speaking class! College allows you to learn in the best of situations—you can learn from others, directed and regulated by yourself.

Of course, one of those people in the situation is the class instructor, and this brings us to the last of the theories. Go back to the beginning of this appendix and read the quotation that starts it, from Forbes Magazine online. (Forbes is a leading business magazine.) Mr. Llopis (2012) has put in his own words the essence of Vygotsky's theory called "**Zone of Proximal Development**," which sounds like something from science fiction but is really quite simple and useful.

Vygotsky claimed that we learn only when we are given new tasks that are just outside our ability to do them. If we are given tasks to do that are within our ability, what's there to learn? Only when we have to stretch outside the "zone" do we learn. Just like an athlete who will try to beat his last time or distance, we have to be asked to do something we cannot do right now in order to learn it. The qualifier is that it cannot be too far outside of the "zone of proximal development," because the learner will fail and not really be able to figure out why. Ideally, learning tasks must be staged as a series of challenges just outside what you can currently do.

Public speaking instructors do this by making your series of speech assignments longer and more complicated. Your first speech will be short and probably personal; your last speech will be much longer and involve higher-order thinking such as found on the Bloom's taxonomy. Your history instructor in First Year U.S. History will probably not assign you to write a twenty-page paper. If you are a history major and take the seminar course before you graduate, you will by that time have the skills to write a forty-page, in-depth paper with scholarly sources.

It is your instructors' and professors' jobs to structure the classes this way. It may feel like the challenge is too far outside your "zone." Sometimes, it is; that doesn't mean you are incapable of the challenge, only that there are some steps in between that you need to do first. In that case, you might need to visit the tutoring center on campus and meet with the professor for extra help.

In my many years of teaching, I have found that sometimes a short conversation with the faculty member clears up a lot of matters. A student might just misunderstand what is being asked of him, her, or them and consequently construe it into a much more difficult task than it is. At other times a tutor or tutorial videos can fill in the gaps. This is often true with math or science concepts that are not that difficult but were missed in your high school education for some reason. The key is not to give up when the task seems right outside your reach. Your mental "arm" is longer than you think. Although we really can't make our arm longer, we can build synapses in our minds that connect neurons and lead to learning.

This part of the appendix has attempted to explain and inspire. By understanding what really goes on in the learning involved in "higher education," you will have more tools to reflect on and regulate your learning. I have emphasized that learning is hard work and should be. That does not mean college is all drudgery. You have a unique opportunity to get to know really smart and interesting people in your classes who also want to learn, and in many cases they will be going into the same fields you are, so you have built-in networking colleagues. College is about gaining what is called "social capital" (networks of friends and relationships that you can draw upon later in life) as well as intellectual capital. Instead of coming into class, hiding in the back of the room, burying yourself behind your cell phone until the instructor starts class, turn to someone and say, "Hello. My name is…What did you think about…?"

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19.3: Your Textbooks and Other Resources

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College Reading

Many people do not realize that we read at different rates for different purposes. For instance, if we are looking for an answer to a question, we scan very quickly through the material to find the answer, and once the answer is found, we move on to something else. When we are reading a magazine for pleasure, we most likely read it quickly, skimming through the material and slowing down in sections that are especially interesting to us. We are reading for understanding, but we do not intend to memorize the material for a later date.

In college reading, we have to read slowly with an intent to remember what we have read because we know we will be tested on the material in the future. The most popular method of college reading uses a system known as **SQ3R** – Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review. This system has been used since WWII when it was created by Francis Pleasant Robinson from Ohio State University and is the most popular method for study reading used today.

The Survey step of SQ3R is be used to familiarize yourself with a new book or just a chapter of a book, depending on your goal. If you are looking at an entire book, you want to review the table of contents to see what the chapters are about. Many texts have two tables of content, one is general and short, and the other is detailed. The detailed one will give you the best overview of the text.

Next, look to see what else the book has to offer. Does it have an index? A glossary? Appendices of supplemental information? Self-tests throughout the chapters or at the end of each chapter? Lists of important terminology for each chapter? Terms defined in the margins? Terms defined in a single glossary or after each chapter? Boldface printed terms within the chapters? An introduction to each chapter? Objectives for each chapter? A summary or outline at the end of each chapter? Knowing what your text has to offer can help you devise a study plan for your reading that will be effective as well as giving you an idea as to what the text and the course will cover. Having this information allows you to start reading with background information which improves your concentration and focus, and your comprehension of the material.

When you use the Survey step of SQ3R to survey a single chapter, you want to look for and skim the chapter's objectives and introduction. Then focus on the words in boldface print that divide the chapter into sections and emphasize the terminology. Browse the pictures, graphs, and charts and read their captions to see what examples are given of the information being presented. Look for a summary of the chapter at its end.

Once you have skimmed over for all these aspects, you will have created background information so that when you begin reading, you are not going into it cold, and you have improved your ability to focus and concentrate on the reading as well as comprehend it. This entire step should only take about ten minutes because you are skimming through the material to familiarize yourself with its contents.

Once you have finished the "S" and surveyed the chapter, you want to create questions related to the information that you can answer after reading. Basically, you want to be able to identify the main points the author is trying to get across to you. A simple way to do this is to take the boldface printed subtopics and turn them into questions. For instance, in chapter one of this text, the first section on page eight is already in a question format for you. You just have to read to find out what public speaking is. The second section on page nine is not in question format, but you can form a question out of it, such as "Why does public speaking produce anxiety?" Once you have the question, you can read to find the answer which will give you the important information in the section.

The third step of SQ3R is the Read step which goes hand-in-hand with the question step, and as you will see shortly, with the Recite step. Your goal in the Read step is to read actively and answer each of the questions you have formulated from the section headings. Pause after each section and ask yourself, "What have I just read and does it answer my question?" If you find you have understood the section, go back and highlight the key words and phrases that answer your question.

When you pause and highlight, you are in effect, reciting the information and entering the Recite step of SQ3R. Since repetition is the key to remembering what you have read, this step is very effective. To further your comprehension and memory of the information, summarize it in the margin of your book. If you find you do not understand or cannot recite what you have read, you will have to refocus and reread. Perhaps you became distracted as you were reading or started daydreaming or maybe the material is so foreign to you that you must reread it to comprehend it. Whatever the reason, it is important that you understand the section

before moving on to the next section. This Recite step, coupled with repetition, is important if you want to build neural pathways to keep the information in your brain.

The last step of SQ3R, Review, is completed after you have read and highlighted the chapter in its entirety. This step can be done in different ways depending on your learning style. If you are an auditory learner, you will want to read over your high-lighted information aloud because your hearing ability is your strongest learning sense. If you are a visual, tactile, or kinesthetic learner, you will want to write out (tactile, kinesthetic) the information on paper to reread (visual). Maria Montessori, who created the Montessori schools, stated, “The hands are the instruments of man’s intelligence.” In essence, she believed that the hands were directly connected to the brain, so writing out the highlighted information is particularly effective to use for further review. You could write out the information and then study it aloud, too. This would incorporate all of your senses and bombard your brain with the information, making it more memorable.

The Review step must be repeated at periodic intervals because only through repetition will you build neural pathways for the information that will allow you to remember all that you have read and studied. Once you have achieved comprehension of the material, repetition and review are necessary if you want to be able to pass a test on what you have read. SQ3R promotes meaningful reading and test preparation which results in higher course grades.

Concentration

Concentration is essential when reading college textbooks and studying for exams. Poor concentration is more the result of a lack of internal direction than it is the result of external direction. You must have a positive attitude and be prepared to be actively involved with the materials you are reading and/or studying. Self-testing or reciting as in the recite step of SQ3R is crucial.

When trying to improve your concentration, keep the following in mind:

- The greater your interest in a subject, and the stronger your purpose or motivation in reading, the deeper your concentration will be. Many times the preview step in the SQ3R system can perk your interest in a subject or help motivate you to learn more.
- The ability to concentrate must be acquired. It takes effort and practice. You want to read and study with an intent to understand and recall.
- Make sure you are working in a proper environment. Have good lighting, a suitable noise level with minimal distractions (put your phone away), plenty of air, and comfortable clothes and seating. Only you can drive away distractions. If you have something pressing on your mind that you need to take of first, do so, so you can concentrate on the work at hand.
- Have a well-defined purpose in reading. Think—why am I reading this?
- Do not try to concentrate when you are very tired. You will be wasting your time and become discouraged when you can’t recall what you have just read or studied.
- ind the time of day when your mind is most active and receptive to do your serious reading and studying. Reading at the same time in the same place every day will help you to form a reading and studying habit that will increase your powers of concentration.
- It helps to take a “thinking break” after each paragraph or chapter subheading. In SQ3R, this is when you recite the main points of what you have been reading. If you can’t recite the main points, perhaps you were not concentrating.

Again, reading a college textbook is a different process than thumbing through a magazine or reading your favorite novel. Using the SQ3R method and seeking to improve your concentration will make the time spent in reading your textbooks more worthwhile.

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19.4: Effective Memorization

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Effective Memorization

Many students tend to be able to recognize information, but not recall information. They frequently think that when they cannot recall a correct answer that they have forgotten it, when in reality, they never really knew the information, they could only recognize it. Recognition occurs when you are able to arrive at a correct answer after you have been given a number of answers to choose from, such as in a multiple choice test. Recall involves remembering information without any choices or cues; that is, without the aid of recognition. Essay questions and even short-answer questions put an emphasis on this skill.

Thus, do not study just to recognize information; study to recall information. In addition, you should always ask your instructor what kind of test you will be taking. Is it objective, meaning multiple choice, matching and true/false, or is it subjective, meaning short answer and essay. Knowing what the test will entail will aid you in studying the information correctly.

General Principles:

Intend to remember. Tell yourself you will recall this information because you want to remember it.

Learn from the general to the specific. In essence, build a framework or create context first. Superior, Erie, Michigan, Huron, and Ontario mean nothing if you don't identify them as the Great Lakes first.

Make the information meaningful by creating associations. Create a concept map of the main points and supporting details of what you have read or are trying to remember. Concept maps show the relationships between ideas and make memorization easier. They also allow you to create a "picture" of what you are learning. Pictures are easier to recall than lists of words or outlines because they allow you to visualize the information. In addition, when you try to remember lists or outlines, you have a tendency to recall the beginnings and the endings and confuse the information in the middle. An example of a concept map is on the next page.

Study actively. Look for answers, recite the material aloud, create flashcards, or write notes, and test yourself.

Recite and repeat, the more often the better. Overlearn the information. This means once you think you know the information, test yourself one more time.

As with increasing your concentration, reduce interference. Find a place to study where you won't be distracted. Turn off your phone and put it out of sight.

Keep a positive attitude. Find something that connects you to the information or motivates you even if you think the subject is boring. Tell yourself you will learn this information because you need to pass this course in order to fulfill your goal of graduating.

Space your studying. Distribute your learning over hours or days. Studying a little at a time is more effective than cramming.

Use all of your senses. Look at it, say it, listen to it, talk about it, and write it. Use the material in as many different ways as you can. Create flashcards, concept maps, timelines, charts, short lists, summaries, and self-tests.

Group items in groups of seven or less. For instance, your social security number is ten digits, but you tend to recall it in three parts or groups (i.e. 123-45-6789). We tend to remember seven groups of information at a time.

For information that is difficult for you to recall, use a mnemonic device. For instance, make up an acronym, a rhyme or song, or an acrostic. These are described below.

Acronym: The word scuba is an acronym that stands for Self, Contained, Underwater, Breathing, and Apparatus. The word homes stands for the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior. SQ3R is another acronym: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. These are popular acronyms, but you can make up your own acronyms by taking the first letter of each of the words you want to recall and making a new word to use as a memory tag. Absurd and silly words are especially easy to remember.



Figure 19.4.1: Ways of fostering your emotional growth. Keep a journal for self understanding, join a support group because sharing helps, take an assertiveness course to gain self confidence, and seek counseling to build growth enhancing skills

Suppose you needed to remember the six listening faults: daydreaming, closed-mindedness, false attention, intellectual despair, memorizing, and personality listening. You would take the first letter of each meaningful word; in this case, D, C, F, I, M and P and create a new word or phrase, such as PC DIMF or DC PIMF. The word or phrase doesn't have to make sense, it just has to be memorable. When you have your test in hand, take a moment to write down PC DIMF in the margin. When you come to the question that deals with the six listening faults, you will have a memory tag all ready to aid your thinking. If the list of items to be remembered has to be in order, you will be limited in what you can create, so you might want to create an acrostic instead.

Have you ever noticed that when a song comes on the radio or TV, you can easily recall the words? *Create a jingle or a song of concepts to aid your memory*. Perhaps you are familiar with the jingle:

- *Thirty days has September, April, June and November. All the rest have 31 except February, it's a different one. It has 28 days clear, and 29 each leap year.*

An acrostic is another effective memory device. A popular one you may be familiar with is "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas." This acrostic, which is a sentence using words with the same first letter as the words you are trying to recall, is a clue to the planets in order from the sun: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. The six listening faults could also be recalled using an acrostic. For instance, I may call proper friends daily. I for intellectual despair; M for memorizing; C for closedmindedness; P for personality listening; F for false attention; and D for daydreaming.

Keep in mind that mnemonic devices should not be overused. They are intended just for information that is difficult for you to recall. Many times people will recall the mnemonic device they used years after memorizing it, but not be able to recall what it stands for. Roy G. Biv is a popular acronym that many people recall, but don't remember that it stands for the colors of the rainbow in proper order; Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet. Thus, limit the number of mnemonic devices you use when you are studying.

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19.5: Test Anxiety/Speech Anxiety

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All students experience some test anxiety – a fear or worry about having to take a test. When the anxiety is normal, it raises your alertness and is productive. When the anxiety is severe, it can cause mental interference which will make concentration difficult and make you easily distracted. It also can produce physical symptoms, such as restlessness; “butterflies in the stomach”; accelerated heart beat and/or breathing; nausea, sweaty palms and a headache, among other symptoms.

The worst part of severe test anxiety is that it causes a mental block which makes it difficult to focus on the task at hand and remember all the information you have studied. If you are very anxious about a test and have studied effectively, you can still do poorly on the test if you are unable to control your anxiety.

The most important step to take to control anxiety is to be prepared. You need to self-test and practice the information repeatedly to make it your own. You also need to keep your perspective and not let your emotions interfere with logic. Consider why you are anxious. Are you anxious and afraid because of self-defeating thoughts? If you think you will do poorly, you are setting yourself up to do just that.

You must keep a positive attitude and talk to yourself. Say, “I have studied for this test and even though I may not know all the answers, I do know most of them, so I will earn a good grade;” or in the case of a speech, “I have researched this speech effectively, and I have practiced this speech numerous times in front of my friends and family, so I will be able to deliver it successfully in class.” Use your imagination and visualize yourself being successful. See yourself acing the test or delivering your speech calmly and in control. Imagining yourself successful in a situation sets you up to be successful as long as you have completed all the requirements to be successful, i.e. studying and practicing.

The last technique to controlling text anxiety is to learn to relax. If you find yourself breathing heavily and upset about the test or speech, take a little time and count your breaths for a minute. A breath is considered one intake and one outtake. Next, slow down your breathing and count your breaths again. The fewer breaths you take, the more your body will slow down. If you are anxious, you are probably taking fifteen to twenty breaths per minute; whereas, if you are relaxed, you can limit yourself to three or four breaths per minute without holding your breath. This little exercise can help you focus and relax before you take a test or give a speech, or during a test if you find your anxiety is worsening.

Another exercise you can practice consists of starting out in a comfortable position. Loosen your clothing if necessary. Then, beginning with your toes, tighten your muscles to the count of ten, and then release them from the tension. Next tighten your muscles in your feet, again to the count of ten and release. Continue moving slowly up your body, tightening and releasing. As you are doing this, breathe deeply and slowly. This is a good technique to use on test or speech day before you get to class or just after you arrive. This technique can be used whenever you feel yourself becoming anxious, when you can’t sleep at night, or as a refresher between study and practice sessions.

If you find your mind is blocked during an exam or just before you are to give your speech, close your eyes, take a long, deep breath and let it out slowly. Concentrate on your breathing, so that you can feel and hear yourself breathe. Don’t allow yourself to worry about the exam, speech, time, or tension. Repeat once and then return to the test or ready yourself to give your speech. Keep in mind that being able to make your mind and body relax takes practice, so try these techniques in non-anxious situations. As you become comfortable with them, try them in anxiety-producing situations.

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19.6: Test Taking

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In many classes, the large part of your grade, and thus your success, will be from high grades on exams. These pointers will walk you through preparing and taking exams.

The first step to test-taking is to study. If you are prepared for the test, you will be less anxious and more apt to score a high grade. What should you study?

Key terms, definitions and examples: It is not enough to know the terminology and what each new vocabulary word means. You need to be able to provide an example or explain how the word fits into the subject you are studying.

Enumerations or lists of items: Lists of items make excellent test questions, especially the kind that read, "All of the following are related EXCEPT…" These questions demand that you know the entire list and be able to identify the one item that does not apply.

Points emphasized in class: If your instructor repeats a concept in class several times for emphasis, he is giving you a clue that you will see that concept on a test. Study it and know it.

Reviews, study guides, flash cards, PowerPoints: Many instructors provide tools to increase your learning and help you study. If your instructor provides reviews, study guides, PowerPoints and/or flashcards, use them to your advantage. This is information your instructor has designated as important to know.

Questions from quizzes and textbook chapters: If your instructor administers regular quizzes on the material, save the quizzes for future study. There is a good chance you will see those questions or similar ones on the midterm or final. Many textbooks offer questions at the end of each chapter. Ask your instructor if studying these questions would be beneficial or not.

General Tips for Studying for Exams

Get a good night's sleep. If you are tired while taking the exam, your focus will be weak, and you are more apt to make mistakes. Being well-rested will make you more alert during the exam.

Don't cram. Schedule regular study times. The optimum way to study is to review the information you have read in your text and heard in your class on a daily basis. This can be just a quick reading through the information, but the repetition will make the concepts stick in your head. If daily is not feasible, schedule time to study your text and class notes on the days the class meets at a minimum. Looking over your notes as soon after class as possible increases your memory of the material and gives you the opportunity to clarify what you have written. Studies have shown that the longer you wait to review your notes, the more you will forget. In fact, you can forget half of what you have learned in just an hour if you don't review!

The week before the test, you will need to schedule daily study times. Break up the information into workable parts. Study part one the first night. The second night review part one and study part two. The third night review parts one and two and study part three. Continue studying in this way to keep the information fresh in your mind for test day.

In addition, take breaks while you are studying. When you come back from your break, review the material you were focusing on before the break and start studying the new material. Break, review, study provides many beginnings and endings to your studying which is beneficial because we tend to remember the beginnings and endings of information and fudge up the information in the middle.

Take your books, pens, pencils, paper, etc. to class. In short, be prepared to take the test. Responsible college students have the necessary equipment to succeed in school ready every day, not just on test days. In addition to showing responsibility, having what you need with you provides a feeling of confidence because you are ready.

Be on time for the exam. It goes without saying that being on time to class shows respect to the instructor and your other classmates. Being on time also allows you to be more relaxed for the test. Rushing in late and worrying about whether you will have enough time to finish the test will weaken your focus and concentration.

Sit in a quiet spot and don't talk about the material. Every exam day, you will find a group or groups of students hurriedly trying to make themselves remember the concepts they should have been studying all along. They tend to be frenetic as they ask each other questions and look up answers in the text. You have studied and the information is all in your mind. Don't sit near these folks and join in their frenzy. Keep to yourself. You have put the material in your mind in a logical fashion and don't need to upset your thinking by talking with these students.

Read all of the directions on the test carefully. Just because the questions appear to be the usual multiple choice or true and false doesn't mean you are to answer them the usual way. Sometimes instructors want pluses and minuses instead of trues and falses or T's and F's. If you answer the questions using a method different from what the directions state, your answers will be incorrect.

Budget your time. Don't spend so much time on a single question that you can't finish the test. Mark the troubling question and come back to it if and when you have time.

Ignore those people who finish before you do. You are not in a race. Students who finish quickly either really know all the information or don't know any of the information. You may not know all of the information, but you will know most of it because you studied. Use your time wisely and review your test if you finish before time is up to make sure you haven't made any "stupid mistakes." Use all the time you are given.

Answer the easy questions first. Answering the easy questions first tends to build your confidence as you proceed through the test. In addition, these questions may provide clues to the more difficult questions.

Mark the troublesome questions so you can look at them again later. Many times troublesome questions become clearer after reading and answering other questions on the test. Just be sure to keep track of the questions you have deemed difficult, so you can go back to them later. It is usually wise to select an answer to those difficult questions before you move on just in case you don't have time to return them.

Answer all the questions. If you leave a question blank, it is wrong. Guess if you don't know the answer. A guess at least gives you a chance at getting the question correct.

If you don't understand the question, state the question in your own words. If this doesn't clarify the question, ask the instructor for clarification. You can't answer a question you don't understand.

Always review your answers before handing in your test. However, do not change any answers unless you are certain you have made a mistake and answered incorrectly. Perhaps you accidently marked the wrong letter choice, or you misread the question. In these instances, changing your answer is wise. Otherwise, your first inclination is usually the right answer.

Additional Tips for Multiple Choice Questions

Use process of elimination. Read all of the choices and cross out those choices that are definitely false or incorrect, and choose from the answers that remain.

If unsure of an answer, even after using process of elimination, pick one, so you have an answer on your test, but mark the question to come back to later. This way, if you run out of time, you will still have an answer and not a blank.

Watch for qualifiers, such as, all, most, some, no, always, usually, sometimes, never, great, much, little, more, equal, less, good, only, bad, is, is not. Keep in mind that few things in life are always or never, so phrases such as, most of the time or rarely are more acceptable answers.

If one answer choice is a paraphrase of another answer choice, both choices are incorrect.

Additional Tips for Matching Questions

Read all of the items to be matched to understand the possibilities. Fill in all the matches you are sure of and then go back and choose answers for the difficult ones. Make sure you note which answers you have used, so you can keep track of what you are doing.

Additional Tips for True and False Questions

Watch for qualifiers, such as, all, most, some, no, always, usually, sometimes, never, great, much, little, more, equal, less, good, bad, is, is not.

Keep in mind that few things in life are always or never, so phrases such as, most of the time or rarely are more acceptable answers.

If any part of the statement is false, the entire statement is false.

Additional Tips for Essay Questions

When studying for an essay test, anticipate probable questions beforehand and create outlines for the answers for memorization.

Read the questions carefully and answer what is being asked. Often essay questions consist of several questions in one. Answer all of them.

Jot down a brief outline in the margin before writing out your answer, so your answer is clear and organized.

Write a clear, organized essay. Begin by paraphrasing the question. Then introduce your main points and supporting details. Remember, each main point must have supporting information. Use transitional words, such as first, second, next, then, however, finally and also to connect your ideas. Last, be sure to proofread your essay answer for errors and legibility.

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19.7: Avoiding Plagiarism

Author: Ms. Amy Mendes, Lecturer in Communication, Dalton State College

Plagiarism in a problem in many classrooms. It is a problem for students, since plagiarizing robs them of learning opportunities and can get them in serious trouble. It is a problem for teachers, since it leaves them unable to tell how much a student really knows and causes them to have extra administrative work to deal with students who plagiarize.

Unfortunately, it is also common. Some researchers estimate rates of cheating in undergraduate classrooms at over 80% (McCabe et al., 2001a, 2001b; McCabe & Trevino, 2002; Dawkins, 2004; Callahan, 2004; Whitley, 1998). This statistic includes other types of cheating, but we can deduce from it that plagiarism is common. And some researchers say that committing plagiarism in college can be a predictor of dishonesty in the workplace later in life (Hilbert, 1985; Lucas & Friedrich, 2005). Failing an assignment or a class is a bad consequence, but if this sort of behavior continues, it can ruin one's career.

One reason that plagiarism is such a problem is that students don't have a good understanding of what it is. Although students may articulate some understanding of plagiarism, and that it must be avoided, they do not understand the purpose of citation itself. They may only think of it as a required convention of academic writing, rather than as a means of learning and contributing to an ongoing accumulation of knowledge (Lofstrom, 2011).

Some researchers have found that students feel confused by the rules, and express fear that they may accidentally fall into plagiarism even when trying not to, or even to accidentally echo a phrase previously encountered and mistake it for their original thought (Ashworth, Bannister & Thorne, 1997). This is consistent with other's findings that students cannot identify plagiarism when given examples, do not know how to paraphrase and cite (Marshall & Garry, 2006; Yeo, 2007; Pecorari, 2003).

How do we teach about plagiarism?

The good news is that simply educating students about plagiarism helps reduce it (Landrau, Druen & Arcuri, 2002). But, a complicating factor in the public speaking classroom is the confusion that exists for some students about citation standards in verbal communication (Holm, 2002). Some students who may exhibit appropriate citation behaviors in written assignments fail to do so in speeches.

In a recent study (Mendes, 2017), student respondents on a plagiarism survey indicated some interesting things about their understanding of plagiarism. First, many respondents specifically used the terms "stealing" or "theft" and "words." The implications of this usage are that these students focus specifically on others' words, but not necessarily on thoughts, ideas, or conclusions. However, another significant minority of students used "thoughts" in their answers, indicating a more thorough understanding of citation requirements. Another important group of words that came up in the study was "knowing," "intentional," or "purpose," indicating that plagiarism behaviors are always intentional (and that perhaps unintentional plagiarism does not count).

Below are a series of activities that will help you reach a better understanding of some important ideas about plagiarism:

- How to use quotation marks.
- When and how to paraphrase.
- How to cite information from multiple sources.

An important thing to remember about quotation marks is that you shouldn't use very many. Unless there is important technical language, a direct quote you need to reference, or a significant phrase, it is better to paraphrase the information you use, rather than directly quote it (more on paraphrasing later). If you are quoting something, the a proper citation should include the quoted material and a parenthetical citation (Author's last name, Year of publication). Anytime you are going to use more than a couple words in the same order as the reference text, go ahead and add the quotation marks – but ask yourself if you could rephrase the idea so that you use different words. DO NOT just leave off the quotation marks!

Paraphrasing is when you take the information from a source and put it in your own words, usually be combining it with information you already know, or by explaining how the information is relevant to the topic you are writing about. It can be more difficult that you expect, because sometimes once you have read the original author's phrasing, it is hard to think of a "better" way to say it. Think instead of how you will be telling us something about the information – why is it important, how it relates to your topic or argument, whether it agrees or disagrees with other information in your speech.

Read the following passage, and from the information provided, take 1 quotation and 2 paraphrased sentences:

- *Cricket will be joining the crowded U.S. professional sports landscape as part of a $70 million licensing agreement between the United States of America Cricket Association (USACA) and Pennsylvania-based Global Sports Ventures, LLC. The move is a significant first step in growing the popular sport in the U.S., which has the second highest viewership of cricket in the world behind only India. More than 1.4 million people in the U.S. watched the ICC World Twenty20 competition won by West Indies earlier this year.*
- *Cricket was a popular American sport before the Civil War, with rules that were formalized by Benjamin Franklin in 1754. George Washington played cricket in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in 1778 and the first international competition in any sport was actually a cricket match between the U.S. and Canada, according to the USACA. The multiyear licensing agreement means a franchised Twenty20 (T20) professional league will be established within the next year or so. There are ongoing talks about the number of teams, the cities in which they'll be based, they facilities in which they'll play, and the creation of player contracts for both men and women (Matuszewski, 2016).*

Sometimes you will be combining information from more than one source in one paraphrased statement. Using the 2 passages below, write a sentence that contains information from both in paraphrased form.

- *What happens, though, when a child with talent and enthusiasm has nowhere to play? The U.S. only has one purpose-built ICC-certified cricket ground, at Central Broward Regional Park in Lauderhill, Florida. In 2015, the Cricket All-Stars, two teams captained by Sachin Tendulkar and Shane Warne, two of cricket's best-recognized names, played three exhibition games at Citi Field in New York City, home of the New York Mets, Minute Maid Park in Houston and Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, two other base-ball venues, using drop-in cricket pitches for games of 20 overs a side. (Kakade, 2017)*
- *An Indian-American cricket enthusiast has announced plans to build as many as eight cricket stadiums across the US at an estimated cost of $2.4 billion to professionalise the game in the country. The eight proposed stadiums, each having a capacity of 26,000 people in New York, New Jersey, Washington DC, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Illinois and California, would create as many as 17,800 new jobs in the US, said Jignesh (Jay) Pandya, chairman of Global Sports Ventures (Press Trust of India, 2017).*

Hopefully, this practice exercise has made it easier to understand when and how to cite, paraphrase, and combine sources. Your instructor can answer other questions you have.

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20: Appendix B- The Art and Craft of Using Humor in Public Speaking

What is so funny about public speaking? Well, nothing really. On the other hand, a speech that includes some timely and well delivered humor can be especially gratifying for both speaker and audience. Dottie Walters said “Begin with a laugh and end with a tear.” The judicious, strategic, and appropriate use of humor in speaking can help the audience have a positive feeling about: 1) the Subject, 2) the Speaker and 3) the Speech itself. Many people are hesitant to use humor in speeches for a variety of reasons. Some people think that humor is never appropriate for speeches. Some people shy away from it because they do not feel that they are funny. Some people do not use it because they are afraid if no one laughs it is another chance to be rejected. Some do not use it because it may take a bit of extra work to include relevant humor in a speech. You should not be afraid to use humor. With the right planning, preparation, and practice, you can be an effective purveyor of the comic arts. You may find that both you and your audience will be better for it.

Becoming proficient in using humor to connect with audiences and get your message across is not easy. It takes quite a bit of study and practice. Grady Jim Robison noted, quite correctly, that “Humor is not easy-it just looks that way when well done.” Many people will say that they cannot tell a joke or do not have a sense of humor. Using humor, whether a joke, funny story, or other bit of amusing material is a skill which can be developed. There may be some people who are more naturally adept at it, however nearly everyone can learn how to inject a bit of humor into their speeches.

Scholars and practitioners have studied the value and challenges of using humor in public speaking for many years. Consider the information in the following table:

Humor and Audiences: Positives and Negatives

Review of Humor Audiences by various public speaking authors

Scholar	Work	Positives	Negatives
Beebe & Beebe	*Public Speaking Handbook* (2013)	Message Retention	Offensiveness Potential
Campbell & Huxman	*The Rhetorical Act*	Attention Keeping, Audience Identification	Bad Taste Potential
Engleberg & Daly	*Think Public Speaking* (2013)	Information Retention, Defuse Anger, Ease Tension, Stimulate Action	Offensiveness, Irrelevance
Ferguson	*Public Speaking: Building Competency in Stages* (2008)	Audience Attention and Enjoyment	Offensiveness
Fraleigh & Tuman	*Speak Up: An Illustrated Guide to Public Speaking* (2009)	Enhances Interest, Gains Attention, Establishes Credibility	Unfunny, Credibility Diminishing
Ford-Brown	*Speaker* (2013)		
Grice & Skinner	*Mastering Public Speaking* (2011)	Favorable Self Image, Attention Getting, Defuse Audience, Hostility , Emphasize Key Ideas, Transition Between Points	Trivializing Topic, Offending Audience
Hogan, et al	*Public Speaking and Civic Engagement* (2011)	Audience Attention and Interest	Disrespectful, Irrelevant
Lucas	*The Art of Public Speaking* (2012)	Audience Enjoyment	Offensiveness
O’Hair, Stewart & Rubenstein	*A Speaker’s Guidebook* (2010)	Rapport Building, Make Key Points, Introduce Themes	Irrelevance, Bad Taste

Scholar	Work	Positives	Negatives
Osborn, Osborn, & Osborn	*Public Speaking* (2009)	Relationship Building with Audience, Information Retention	Can Seem Contrived and Flat, Irrelevance
Ross & Leonard	*Introduction to the Speechmaking Process* (2009)	Positive Showmanship, Information Retention	Offensiveness
Samovar & McDaniel	*Public Speaking in a Multicultural Society* (2007)	Point the Audience in the Direction of the Topic	Cultural Inappropriateness
Zarefsky	*Public Speaking Strategies for Success (*2011)	Relaxes the Audience, Speaker Favorability, Disarms Skeptics	Irrelevance, Offensiveness

Humorous Speaking Tips

Having seen both the value and the complications connected to humor use in speeches, please examine the following tips that weigh both the positive and negative aspects of humor in public address.

Positive Aspects

- Humor is an effective **attention getter**. You have just a few seconds to make the audience want to hear more. Humor can be a wonderful tool to do exactly that. If you can make the audience laugh or smile at the very beginning, then you will have them anxiously awaiting what you have to say next.
- Humor is an effective **attention keeper**. Audiences can drift away, especially in an age when attention spans are shrinking. Sometimes you have to rein them back in. You can do this with a bit of humor.
- Humor can be used to **break the monotony**. Sometimes you will be dealing with a technical or tedious bit of information that requires a lot of explanation. When this happens, people may begin to get restless. Perk them up with some humor.
- Humor can be used to **help your audience remember**. There is substantial research which supports the idea that information retention is aided when connected with a piece of humor or a good story. The key is to make sure that it is actually connected to the information you want them to remember.
- Humor can be used to **help your audience have a positive feeling about the message and about you as a speaker**. They will likely also have very positive feelings about the event itself and about themselves. Humor can be used for affinity building with your audience. The more they like you or feel connected with you, the more open they are to your message.
- Humor can be used to **diffuse tension** or to **soften the blow of a serious or controversial point**. Sometimes you will have to make a point that your audience needs but may not want to hear. You can use humor to make that point. You can deflect criticism with humor. Both presidents Kennedy and Reagan were masters of this. Both used humor to deflect criticisms of their age when they ran for president. Opponents thought John Kennedy was too young to be president and Ronald Reagan was too old. Their humor obviously worked. As William K. Zinsser said, “What I want to do is make people laugh so that they’ll see things seriously.”

Negative Aspects

- Humor can **offend**. It is best to avoid humor that uses sexist, racist, or demeaning language. Avoid profanity and vulgarity and sexual references. You should generally avoid partisan political humor unless you do not mind risking losing half of your audience. Be sure that your language is context-appropriate. Speaking at the Kiwanis club is not the same as speaking at the comedy club.
- Humor can **make your topic seem trivial**. The use of too much humor, especially irrelevant and silly humor, may cause your audience to lose sight of the importance of your topic. Consider how much and what kind of humor to use, particularly when dealing with sensitive or controversial topics.
- Humor can **be mere filler**. When you eat a meal, it is important to eat a balanced diet and remember to eat your vegetables. Dessert is delicious but should not be the entire meal. Think of humor as the dessert or as side dishes and not as the entrée.
- Humor can **be difficult to translate or understand**. If the audience contains several people who do not share your native tongue or national identity be careful that you do not use humor that may not be easily translated by them. Word play can be especially challenging in this situation

- Humor can be **culturally inappropriate**. Some gestures, words, or phrases may have different meanings in other cultures. In the U. S. the thumbs up sign means “all is well.” In some countries it is considered a vulgar and offensive gesture.
- Humor can be **irrelevant**. If the humor does not connect with the greater message, it can become a distraction. Remember, you do not just want them to laugh, but to consider your entire message very carefully. They may become annoyed or fail to understand the point you are trying to make.
- Humor can be **unfunny**. Sometimes humor falls flat. It may be that they have heard it before or they do not get it, or they just do not find it funny. Remember, humor is subjective. People laugh at different things and for different reasons. Sometimes they are preoccupied with other realities of life. Do not be disheartened. Move on to the next piece of information in the speech. Do not keep repeating the joke or try to explain to them why it is funny. They might be insulted and you are wasting valuable speech time.

As you can see, using humor in your speaking is not necessarily easy, but it is well worth the investment of time and energy. Stewart Harral noted, “Get a laugh and you’ve got an audience!” It will take some planning and some practice. One of the things that worries beginning speakers the most when it comes to humor use is that they think they must prepare original material and become professional standup comedians or humor writers. This is not the case. Certainly, if you have an aptitude for creating humor then develop and nurture that talent and apply it to your publics speaking. Original, fresh humor that comes from a speaker’s experience is always appreciated by an audience.

On the other hand, you need not feel as though you must create amazing pieces of comedy when there is much good, relevant humor available for you to use. Remember that humor is not just joke-telling. In fact, for most speeches jokes are not really the best kind of humor to use. You can use amusing stories, light verse, funny lists, comical visuals, etc. Be sure to give credit to the source. The more you develop this skill, the more comfortable you will become. You may even find that you are a gifted humorist. At any rate, your audience will likely appreciate the effort.

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21: Appendix C- Public Speaking Skills for Non-native Speakers of English

Learning Objectives

- Understand that prior knowledge is an asset.
- Recognize the value of group work.
- Differentiate between accent reduction and clarity.
- Recognize and be able to describe the benefits of outlining.
- Create and use mind maps.

"To learn a language is to have one more window from which to look at the world." – Chinese proverb



There are many terms to refer to students whose first language is not English such as ESL (English as a second language), EFL (English as a foreign learner), EAL (English as an additional language), and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages). Some of these terms are now outdated and considered condescending, implying that students whose native language is not English are coming in with a deficit, that there is something lacking in the languages and cultures they already have. Countless studies have shown that students whose first language is not English bring a plethora of information, insight, and valuable contributions to classrooms. Rather than viewing English Learners (EL) as deficient, acknowledging their diversity and background knowledge will lead to a more inclusive and equitable learning experience for all. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, students whose first language is not English consisted of approximately 10.3 percent of public school students in 2020, that's roughly 5 million students, and that number is steadily increasing. While English Learners may not be necessarily proficient in English, that doesn't mean that they can't take and excel in a traditional public speaking class. Non-native speakers of English must fulfill the same academic requirements as any other student. While a public speaking course may seem out of reach for a non-native English speaker, an introductory speech course is actually recommended to help English learners ease into the standard college curriculum. Non-native speakers of English benefit from taking speech courses because it provides students the chance to improve their listening comprehension, fluency, as well as benefiting from the interaction with native English speakers and viewing examples of speeches made by well-versed public speakers.

Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity

A non-native speaker of English brings an abundance of culture, knowledge, and diversity to the classroom. By engaging and promoting cross-cultural knowledge, we can enhance our classrooms for all students. According to the Education Technology leader Cengage, "Non-native speakers of English enrich the traditional public speaking class by challenging other students and instructors to think about public speaking within the broader context of the many diverse voices that are increasingly a part of the American "chorus." The EAL population is steadily increasing; as a result speech instructors need to be prepared to meet the needs of this diverse, growing population. Viewing this growth as an opportunity to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity would serve and enhance the education of all students. This chapter provides information and suggestions on how to actively engage EAL students in a public speaking classroom while meeting learning outcomes.

Culture Shock and Anxiety

Ask any student if they are excited about taking a Speech course, and the answer will probably be "No!" We know that public speaking can be a source of great anxiety to many people, even people who are native speakers of English. Non-native speakers of English may be doubly worried about public speaking. Not only are they dealing with all of the anxiety and stress that goes along with public speaking, but in addition they may also feel anxiety about their level of fluency in English and their accent. It is important to note that having an accent does not make you a 'bad' speaker. On the contrary, having an accent signifies that you have something that most Americans don't…a second language! That is something to be proud of. So don't strive to hide your accent, but embrace it! This may seem easier said than done, and we will go into further detail on accents later in this chapter. In the meantime, the following techniques can help you overcome communication anxiety and make the speech process easier:

- Accept that being nervous isn't a bad thing
- Know your topic well
- Do some breathing exercises
- Engage in relaxation activities/yoga
- Meditation
- Visualize your success
- Organize your material
- Practice! Practice often, and out loud.
- Reach out for support

Benefits of Group Work

As a student, you may often groan when your professor announces group work. The idea of working with others may seem inefficient or more time-consuming than working alone, and students who have had bad group-work experiences in the past may be hesitant to embrace the idea of working with classmates. However, there are countless studies that provide strong scientific support for the benefits of group work. Studies also show the benefits of group work in lessening communication anxiety. Working with peers can help students relax and give them the opportunity to freely express their feelings without the pressure of the entire class and the instructor observing them. Within small groups (approximately 2-6) students can give feedback and encourage each other. While it may be tempting to form small groups based on cultural background, this may actually hinder language progression because students may be tempted to speak in their native language. Create groups with a variety of cultural backgrounds as well as levels of fluency so that the maximum benefits can be attained. It is also helpful to assign a group leader, someone whose language skills are strong enough to guide the group through the task.

Accents and Pronunciation

BMCC Student describing her experience learning English:

I started studying English when I was 7. It's mandatory in Sweden that children learn it, and most people study it in school for 10-11 years. I decided to study an extra year, the highest level available before university, so I ended up taking English for a total of 12 years in school. When I graduated "high school", my skills in English were good, I had excellent grades and I considered myself very proficient when it came to reading and listening comprehension, oral presentation, and writing. About one year after graduation, I had gone through the process of becoming an au pair, and I arrived on American soil for the first time in August 2018. I had never spoken English daily before and was nervous about messing it up and not making myself understood, despite knowing that my English was still excellent. I practiced every day and became more comfortable talking, and my vocabulary and pronunciation became better. Still, after maybe a month or so, my jaw started to ache a lot. I couldn't figure out what was going on and why I had to try and relax my jaw once it began to ache. The more I thought about it, I realized the pain or discomfort usually came at the end of the day when I had done a lot of talking. The thought hit me that maybe it was hurting because I was speaking another language, with another rhythm, and in order to sound native, I was moving my jaw more than when speaking Swedish. Swedish is a language when we use our lips, tongue, and sometimes our throat to form sounds. I found that I had to move my jaw more when trying to sound like a native English speaker than I had ever done speaking Swedish back at home. After some time, my jaw stopped aching, even after long days of speaking, but I found it fascinating that languages require different movements and techniques.

Pronunciation refers to the ability to use the correct stress, rhythm, and intonation of a word in a spoken language. Basically it is how we make the sounds of words. In order to speak, we expel the air from our lungs and through our throats; this air then passes across our vocal chords, over the tongue, and and through the teeth and lips. The muscles in our mouths, tongue, and lips control the way we shape the flow of air. If the shape of the mouth controls airflow correctly, the words will be pronounced correctly.

Speakers whose native language is not English use different muscles of the mouth for pronunciation. According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary, an accent is "a distinctive mode of pronunciation of a language, especially one associated with a particular nation, locality, or social class." Your accent is the unique way the muscles of your mouth shape the language you speak based on your first language. Basically your accent is how you sound when you speak. I mentioned that everyone has an accent, but how is this possible? There are two types of accents: foreign and the way a group of people speak their native language. Foregin accents are a result of someone speaking one language while using the rules and sounds of another language. For example, in Spanish there is no distinction between long and short vowels. Spanish speakers tend to stretch out vowel sounds and confuse pairs of short and long English vowels. Words like "ship" and "sheep" may be pronounced the same by a Spanish speaker because they are stretching out the vowels equally in both words. Spanish speakers also tend to add an 'e' sound to the beginning of words that start with a

consonant. For example, instead of saying ‘school’ a Spanish speaker commonly says ‘eschool’ because they are following the rules of the Spanish language and applying it to English. By applying rules from their native language to English, ESL students may sound “foreign” to native English speakers. This is called a foreign accent.

It makes sense for foreigners to have an accent because they have a language other than English as their primary language. But how do Americans have accents? If they all speak English as their main language, how is it possible to have an accent? This is possible because people have accents based on where they were raised, where they live, and the social groups that they belong to; these are called regional dialects. Researchers identify at least five distinctive American accents with as many as twenty four dialects! It is clear that someone who is from Texas speaks very differently from someone from Boston. They are both speaking in English, yet a clear, distinctive accent is evident. Besides there being a difference in accent, which as we said is how someone pronounces a word, there are numerous dialects of English. According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary, a dialect is a particular form of a language which is peculiar to a specific region or social group. Basically, a dialect includes vocabulary and grammar along with pronunciation.

The bottom line is that English Language Learners face a lot of confusing factors beyond the basics of learning the English language. As you have learned, even native born American speakers of English have accents. Josh Katz, the author of “Speaking American: How Y’all, Youse, and You Guys Talk: A Visual Guide” says:

No matter how much media we consume, we inevitably acquire the speech patterns of the people we surround ourselves with. Our parents, our siblings, and our childhood friends have an impact that far outweighs any homogenizing effects of television, film, or the internet. The words we use will continue to reveal the contours of our cultural geography, as each ensuing generation redefines what it means to speak American (Katz, 2020, 197).

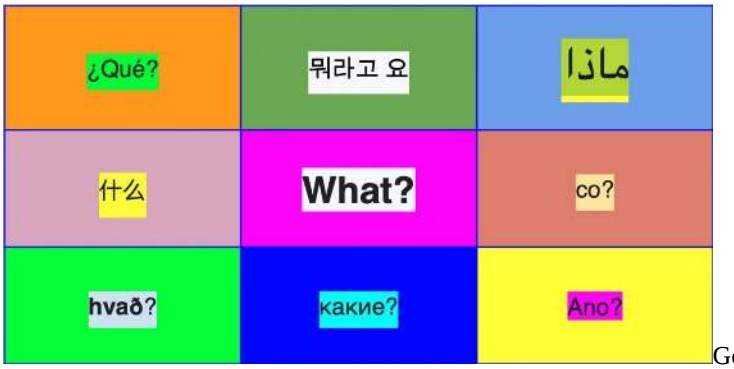
Indeed language is not static, it is constantly changing. Even native speakers of English have accents. There is no such a thing as a simple American accent. English Language Learners should not be intimidated or made to feel that they are “wrong” because they have an accent.

Accent Modification

“Do you know what a foreign accent is? It’s a sign of bravery.”— Amy Chu

In recent years there has been growing controversy over the rise in accent reduction or accent modification services offered to ESL students. According to the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), accent modification is a service that individuals seek to decrease or modify their accent. It involves pronunciation training that modifies speech patterns. The service is controversial because many non-native English speakers try to reduce their foreign accent to sound more “American,” which can be seen as devaluing their own language and culture. The term “accent reduction” implies that there is something wrong with a foreign accent. Opponents of accent reduction training argue that rather than reducing or eliminating an accent, English Language Learners should aim for clarity in their pronunciation. As long as the speaker is clear and understandable, accent reduction training is unnecessary. Most English Language Learners have the goal of reducing their accent in order to be understood easily. Rather than feel that their accent is “wrong”, EAL students should aim for clarity in their speech.

Communicating with Clarity



Good communicators don’t just read the words of a speech, they care that the audience understands their message. Clear communication skills are a goal that all public speakers should have, not just Non-Native Speakers of English. Clarity is important because a speaker wants the audience to relate to what they are saying; a speaker wants their message to not only be heard, but understood. Communicating with clarity also shows respect to your audience. The following tips will be useful to all public speakers to ensure clarity:

- Know what it is you are trying to say before you say it. In other words, think before you speak. Consider what your topic is and ask yourself what is the information that you are actually trying to convey to your audience. Once you know what it is that you would like to get across, then you can choose appropriate vocabulary to help you communicate your message.
- Use simple language. Don't use large, unfamiliar words when simple words will do. While you may be trying to impress your audience with your large vocabulary, pronouncing unfamiliar words incorrectly may hurt your credibility as well as distract your audience.
- Speak slowly. Often speakers speak at a very fast rate because they are nervous and just want to get the experience over with; the result is an unintelligible speech. By slowing your rate of speaking, you give yourself time to pronounce sounds accurately and you also give your audience a chance to comprehend and reflect on what you've said.
- Global connections. Reach out to your audience by sharing a personal story or anecdote. Not only do studies show that audiences relate better to presenters who share stories or personal information, but they help connect us. Take advantage of the fact that you are in a diverse environment and use the opportunity to expand your audience's horizons. In turn, you will learn a lot from diverse speakers as well.
- Practice, Practice, and then Practice again! There is nothing worse for an audience member than listening to a speech when it is the first time the speaker has delivered it! Practice ahead of time, identify the words that you have difficulty pronouncing and listen to the dictionary pronunciation of them. This is a time when having a group for support is beneficial because group members can listen to you practicing and help you correct unclear pronunciation. It may also be helpful to record yourself practicing and watch the recording.
- Use Presentation Aids. Good presentation aids can help you get your message across and visually engage your audience. Studies show people remember more when presented information both visually and verbally. Presentation aids are particularly helpful to EAL students because they can help them remember key vocabulary words.

Test Yourself – Review of Communicating with Clarity:

Outlining

Imagine that you wanted to build a house. You have a beautiful piece of land and decide that you are knowledgeable enough to build your dream home yourself. Do you go to the hardware store, buy some wood and nails and start building? Or do you first plan how the house will look? How many rooms will it have? How large will it be? Based on these answers you probably would draw or design a layout of the house; this is called a blueprint. Just as no builder ever starts buying materials and throwing them together without a blueprint, writers should also have a layout or a plan for what should be included in their speech. We call this an outline.

Outlining is an important tool for both writers and public speakers. Outlining allows you to visually look at your information and decide what to put in, what to keep out, allows you to see if you are being repetitive, or if you are missing an important point. It may seem like an unnecessary step when you want to just start typing away, but in reality, taking the time to outline will save you a lot of time overall. Just as a builder organizes their materials and sees if things fit well together, an outline helps writers and speakers organize their thoughts and visually see them on paper without the hassle of having to write out complete sentences or paragraphs. Outlines are great because short phrases are sufficient for seeing if ideas actually connect and if the overall information included relates back to your topic or thesis.

English Language Learners may have a difficult time with the idea of outlining because in many cultures, discourse patterns are not linear, which means that structuring may be difficult for EAL students that come from these cultures. As educator Tan Huynh states, "Many of my Asian students come from schools who practice a traditional approach to learning English that focuses on learning grammar rules. They were not asked to create language – just to memorize it." This approach, while successful in teaching grammar rules, does not help students with creating oral communication. Outlining helps students produce language because they are free from the pressures of having to organize their thoughts while worrying about the mechanics of language.

Mind Mapping

One way to make the outlining process easier for non-native speakers of English is through the use of mind maps. Mind maps are a tool that can be used to brainstorm ideas and start building an outline. Mind mapping is a visual exercise that allows you to graphically organize your ideas. The basic idea behind a mind map is that there is a central, main idea. From that central idea, you start "branching" out and jotting down whatever ideas you think connect to this central idea. Think of mind mapping as visual note-taking, all mind maps have a natural hierarchical structure that radiates from the center and uses lines, symbols, words, phrases, and color to actually "map out" what ideas and thoughts you may have. When you are finished, you will have a colorful and probably messy diagram that you can examine and use to determine which parts of your map actually do relate to your central topic, what are

the most important points to include and what order will you include them in? Mind mapping is a creative way to generate key points and can lead to a free flow of ideas. Because it is unstructured, it can be a very valuable tool for non-native speakers of English.

There are many online programs that students can now use to create mind maps digitally. View the sample mind map below:

Mind Map

Mind Mapping Basic Steps:

1. Choose a general topic.
2. Place that main topic in the center and draw lines or "branches" from the central topic. Draw as many branches as needed and jot down whatever words or phrases come to mind. Don't worry about spelling or grammar! The point is to brainstorm and get down whatever thoughts come to mind.
3. Then create sub-branches that extend from the main branches to further develop your ideas.
4. Feel free to even draw pictures and use colors to help you organize your ideas.
5. Your finished map can then be used to see if your ideas actually relate back to the main topic and can help you decide which subpoints you would like to include in your speech.

Outlining may seem like a tedious, unnecessary task for many students. For non-native speakers of English, it may actually be difficult for language structuring reasons. Mind mapping is a useful tool that allows students to creatively brainstorm their topics and make connections without being hindered with grammar and other language mechanics at the start of the process. Mind mapping offers an excellent starting point for reviewing and regrouping key ideas.

Conclusion

Taking a public speaking class is a daunting experience for any student. Most people simply do not like the idea of giving speeches in front of an audience. If you are a native speaker of English listening to a non-native speaker of English give a speech, place yourself in their shoes. Imagine how difficult it must be for your classmate to not only face the challenge of public speaking but to do so in a new, unfamiliar language. Be patient as you listen and if you don't understand something that is said, politely ask for clarification. Look at the situation as an opportunity to learn from your classmate as you are exposed to diverse speakers.

If you are a non-native speaker of English then take comfort in the fact that even native speakers get nervous about public speaking. Having communication anxiety is something that many people experience regardless of language proficiency. Use the Public Speaking classroom as an opportunity to expand your English language skills. You can benefit greatly from watching your classmates present, researching and outlining your own material, practicing speaking and listening skills with group members, and exposing yourself to diverse viewpoints in a multicultural classroom.

The goals of public speaking classrooms are to help all students enhance and improve their communication skills. By empowering our voices we can transform and deliver high impact presentations that will allow our messages to be heard beyond the classroom.



Photo by Naassom Azevedo on Unsplash

Student Voices

Tanzil Fatima, a community and human health and biology major and an international student from Pakistan, studied at UWC Pearson College in Canada. It wasn't until she arrived at OU that she said she started feeling conscious of her accent:

"The first two weeks were a roller coaster," Fatima said. "Every time it would be a lot of different things about me — my skin color or the country that I come from, my accent or just a variety of different things. People were like, 'Oh, where are you from? You have a unique accent,' (and) I'm like, 'Okay, I don't know what that means.'" Patterns emerged in people's comments regarding Fatima's accent, including phrases like "you speak English very well." She said she became aware of the different connotations it had — from someone being genuinely interested in her to simply being microaggressive. "For some people, (it) is just a compliment, for (others, it is) like, 'Oh you speak English well for the race you come from, or for the country you come

from, or you speak well compared to other people who look like you'," Fatima said. "So, it depends if it's a microaggression or not, and I feel like this is one of the biggest indicators of discrimination in language."

(https://www.oudaily.com/news/the-acc...b129bb178.html)

A BMCC student:

I came to the United States in the Summer of 2006. I was only 6 years old at the time. All I remember was saying goodbye to my family members in Mexico, I was crying in confusion. When I arrived here in the United States, I was really confused, it was like I was on a totally different planet. I went from having a wide-open space to being in an apartment. And I couldn't understand anything except my mother, who spoke Spanish. When September came, my mom had already registered to the elementary school P.S 169. I was so nervous because I didn't know anyone and didn't speak their language. My first day of first grade was frightening. I was nervous but I didn't cry the first day. I went to school for about a week. That first week was a nightmare, I had no idea what was happening. I couldn't keep up with my work. I had no friends and would be made fun of. I would cry every day, begging my mom to take me home.One of my ESL teachers, who took me out for small group work, saw the amount of stress everything was causing me. My ESL teacher with other school administrators suggested that my mother, putting me back in kindergarten. They told her that it would be the best choice for me since it was still the beginning of the school year, and it would have helped me pick up the language easily and faster. Now I realized it was the best decision, but back then I hated it, I would cry every day because I was sent back to kindergarten, I was the tallest girl there, the kids made fun of me. And I felt like everyone thought I was dumb. The teacher was really nice and made sure I was ok. That helped me so much. I started learning new songs, phonics and learned to read, and slowly started to learn and understand. And I had ESL up until the 3rd grade. My English is not perfect, but I can't thank my mother enough for how grateful I am to be here. And see the number of opportunities I have speaking, writing, and understanding two languages. This is also a reason I want to be a Bilingual Childhood Education Teacher, to help those kids who are learning English as their second language and be able to teach in my primary language.

Key Takeaways

1. Prior knowledge is an asset and helps create a multicultural learning environment.
2. Group work is beneficial to EAL students by boosting confidence and helping students practice language skills.
3. Communicating with clarity should be a goal for all public speakers.
4. Outlining offers students many benefits in speech preparation. Mind maps are a great way to start an outline.

Class Activities

- Choose a topic and create a mind map.
- Write an outline for your topic.
- Work with a small group and discuss how you may have been misunderstood due to your accent. Or have you ever misunderstood someone else's accent?

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Glossary

Absolute Values Perspective | holds that irrespective of person, place, or time, right is right and wrong is wrong. In other words, there are universal ethical values that apply to all people and cultures.

Abstract Language | language that evokes many different visual images in the minds of your audience

Abstract Word | words that refer to ideas or concepts that are removed from material reality) like "peace," "love," "immoral," "justice," "freedom," "success," and "honor" can have a number of different meanings; each of which is predicated on one's worldview

Academic Books | books that are primarily written for other academics for informational and research purposes

Acculturated | learning and using a code that other group members will be able to recognize

Achievement-Oriented Leaders | strive for excellence and set challenging goals, constantly seeking improvement and exhibiting confidence that group members can meet their high expectations

Action-Oriented Listeners | primarily interested in finding out what the speaker wants

Ad Hominem | a fallacy that attacks the person rather than dealing with the real issue in dispute.

Adjourning | this stage of group development occurs when a group dissolves because it has completed its purpose or goal, membership is declining and support for the group no longer exists, or it is dissolved because of some other internal or external cause

After Dinner Speeches | a humorous speech that makes a serious point

Ageism | prejudice or discrimination against a particular age-group and especially the elderly

Alliteration | the repetition of initial consonant sounds in a sentence or passage

Analogical Reasoning | drawing conclusions about an object or phenomenon based on its similarities to something else.

Analysis | making the connection between your support and your argument

Anaphora | the succession of sentences beginning with the same word or group of words

Antithesis | the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas in balanced or parallel words, phrases, or grammatical structures

APA Style | style scholars in the various social science fields (e.g., psychology, human communication, business) are more likely to use

Appeal to Tradition | arguing that traditional practice and long-term history is the only reason for continuing a policy.

Appropriateness | how persons and groups should be referred to and addressed based on inclusiveness and context

Argument | set of logical premises leading to a clear conclusion

Argument from Silence | making an converse argument from lack of evidence or information about a conclusion

Ascribed Identity | personal, social, or cultural identities that are placed on us by others

Assonance | the repetition of vowel sounds in a sentence or passage

Assumptions | are gaps in a logical sequence that listeners passively fill with their own ideas and opinions and may or may not be accurate

Asynchronously | communication or speech that is recorded and watched at a different time

Attention-Getter | first sentence of a speech that is meant to pull the audience's attention to the speaker and topic at hand

Audience Analysis | the process of gathering information about the people in your audience so that you can understand their needs, expectations, beliefs, values, attitudes, and likely opinions

Audience Anxiety | describes communication apprehension prompted by specific audience characteristics

Avowed Identity | personal, social, or cultural identities that we claim for ourselves

Backtracking | after you've finished reading useful sources, see who those sources cited on their bibliographies or reference pages

Bandwagon | asserts that because something is popular (or seems to be), it is therefore good, correct, or desirable

Bar Graph | a graph designed to show the differences between quantities

Best Example | demonstrates the "best" way someone should behave within a specific context

Bias | predisposition or preconception of a topic that prevents impartiality

Brakelight | transitional phrase that lets the audience know the speech is coming to a close

Bridging Statements | emphasize moving the audience psychologically to the next step

Captive Audience | audiences that are required to be present or feel obligated to do so

Causal Pattern | organizational pattern that reasons from cause to effect or from effect to cause

Causal Reasoning | a form of inductive reasoning that seeks to make cause-effect connections

Central Idea | single, declarative sentence that captures the essence or main point of your entire presentation

Channel | the means through which the message travels

Character | a person's reputation in regards to trustworthiness and goodness

Chart | a graphical representation of data (often numerical) or a sketch representing an ordered process

Chronocentrism | the assumption that people today are superior to people who lived in earlier eras (Russell, 1991)

Chronological Pattern | main points are delivered according to when they happened and could be traced on a calendar or clock

Claim | a statement that is supported with evidence

Clichés | predictable and generally overused expressions; usually similes

Code-Switching | changing from one way of speaking to another between or within interactions; happens most frequently in interracial communication

Coercive Power | comes from the ability of a group member to provide a negative incentive

Cognitive Dissonance | a psychological phenomenon where people confronted with conflicting information or viewpoints reach a state of dissonance (generally the disagreement between conflicting thoughts and/or actions), which can be very uncomfortable, and results in actions to get rid of the dissonance and maintain consonance

Cognitive Restructuring (CR) | changing how you label the physiological responses you will experience

Colloquialisms | are words or phrases used in informal speech but not typically used in formal speech

Communication | attempts to reproduce what is in our minds in the minds of our audience

Communication Apprehension | the broad term that refers to an individual's "fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (McCroskey, 2001)

Competence | demonstrated skill or knowledge in a particular area or topic

Conclusion | statement that can be clearly drawn from the provided premises

Concrete Word | a word that describes a tangible object that can be perceived through the senses

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

Connotative | the subjective or personal meaning the word evokes in people together or individually

Consensus Rule | a decision-making technique in which all members of the group must agree on the same decision

Console | to offer comfort in a time of grief

Content | the stuff you add to the book

Content-Oriented Listeners | are interested in the message itself, whether it makes sense, what it means, and whether it's accurate

Context | the actual physical setting where communication occurs

Context Anxiety | refers to anxiety prompted by specific communication contexts

Conversant | being conversant is the condition of being able to discuss an issue intelligently with others

Coordination | all of the numbers or letters of points should represent the same idea

CRAAP Method | CRAAP stands for "currency," "relevance," "authority," "accuracy," and "purpose," or the five ways that you should evaluate each source to determine if it represents the best information available at the time

Credibility | the perception the audience holds of you regarding your competence and character

Critical Listening | using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to see whether a message makes sense in light of factual evidence

Cultural Dimension | final context dimension Joseph DeVito mentions; we interact with others from different cultures, misunderstandings can result from differing cultural beliefs, norms, and practices

Cultural Identity | based on socially constructed categories that teach us a way of being and include expectations for social behavior or ways of acting

Culture | the ongoing negotiation of learned and patterned beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors

Databases | an online searchable collection of information

Decode | involves listening to words, thinking about them, and converting those words into mental images, thoughts, feelings, and ideas

Deductive Reasoning | a type of reasoning in which a conclusion is based on the combination of multiple premises that are generally assumed to be true.

Demographic Analysis | compiling information, such as the gender, age range, marital status, race, and ethnicity of the people in your audience

Demographic Information | information such as the gender, age range, marital status, race, and ethnicity of the people in your audience

Denotative | the objective or literal meaning shared by most people using the word

Derived Credibility | how the audience members judge the speaker's credibility and trustworthiness throughout the process of the speech

Designated Leaders | officially recognized in their leadership role and may be appointed or elected by people inside or outside the group

Diagram | drawings or sketches that outline and explain the parts of an object, process, or phenomenon that cannot be readily seen

Dialectic | a relationship between two opposing concepts that constantly push and pull one another

Dialogic Theory of Public Speaking | based on three overarching principles that dialogue is more natural than monologue, meanings are in people not words, and contexts and social situations impact perceived meanings

Dialogue | communication between two or more persons

Dichotomies | dualistic ways of thinking that highlight opposites, reducing the ability to see gradations that exist in between concepts

Digital Divide | refers to the unequal access to technology and related skills that exists in much of the world

Direct Quotation | when you cite the actual words from a source with no changes

Directive Leaders | provide psychological structure for their group members by clearly communicating expectations, keeping a schedule and agenda, providing specific guidance as group members work toward the completion of their task, and taking the lead on setting and communicating group rules and procedures

Distortion | occurs when someone purposefully twists information in a way that detracts from its original meaning

Diversity | a key dimension of audience membership and, therefore, of audience analysis; while the term "diversity" is often used to refer to racial and ethnic minorities, it is important to realize that audiences can be diverse in many other ways as well

Division | if you have an A, then you need a B; if you have a 1, then you need a 2, and so on

Dominant Identities | historically had and currently have more resources and influence

Drive-by Quoting | a practice that disorients your audience by not giving them everything they need to understand how the source is relevant to your own claims

Elitism | consciousness of being or belonging to an elite

Encode | the process of taking ideas, thoughts feelings, or mental images, and associating those with words, and then speaking those words in order to convey a message

Encyclopedias | information sources that provide short, very general information about a topic and are available in both print and electronic formats

Ends | those outcomes that you desire to achieve

Entertaining Narratives | stories designed purely to delight an audience and transport them from their daily concerns

Epideictic Speaking | speaking in a ceremonial context

Ethical Listening | rests heavily on honest intentions; we should extend to speakers the same respect we want to receive when it's our turn to speak

Ethical Pyramid | developed by Elspeth Tilley; involved three basic concepts: intent, means and ends

Ethical Relativism | on the other hand is the philosophical position that the sense of right and wrong is always relative to the individual and not universal to all people and situations

Ethics | has to do with social norms regarding right and wrong. It is a branch of philosophy that deals with right and wrong

Ethnic Identity | a group an individual identifies with based on a common culture

Ethnocentrism | the attitude that one's own group, ethnicity, or nationality is superior to others

Ethos | the term Aristotle used to refer to what we now call credibility: the perception that the speaker is honest, knowledgeable, and rightly motivated

Eulogy | a speech given in honor of someone who has died

Euphemisms | language devices often used to make something unpleasant sound more tolerable

Evaluating | fourth stage of the listening process; judging the value of the message

Execution | involves actually reading a quotation, paraphrasing a speaker or author's words, summarizing a speaker or author's ideas, providing numerical support, or showing pictographic support

Expert Testimony | expresses the attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors recommended by someone who is an acknowledged expert on a topic

Expertise | someone having considerable knowledge on a topic or considerable skill in accomplishing something

Extemporaneous Speaking | the presentation of a carefully planned and rehearsed speech, spoken in a conversational manner using brief notes

Eyewitness Testimony | given by someone who has direct contact with the phenomenon of your speech topic

Fact | a truth that is arrived at through the scientific process

False Analogy | a fallacy where two things are compared that do not share enough (or key) similarities to be compared fairly

False Cause | a fallacy that assumes that because something happened first, that subsequent events are a result

False Dilemma | a fallacy that forces listeners to choose between two alternatives when more than two alternatives exist.

Feedback | when a receiver sends a message back to a source

Figurative Analogies | compare two ideas or objects from two different classes, or a group that has common attributes, characteristics, qualities, or traits

Figurative Language | language that does not use comparisons like similes and metaphors

Five Cannons of Rhetoric | invention, disposition, style, delivery, memory

Focus Group | a small group of people who give you feedback about their perceptions

Frame of Reference | the unique set of perspectives, experience, knowledge, and values belonging to every individual

Frame of Reference | the unique set of perspectives, experience, knowledge, and values belonging to every individual

Free Speech | entails "the right to express information, ideas, and opinions free of government restrictions based on content and subject only to reasonable limitations

Free Speech | according to Merriam Webster's Dictionary of Law, free speech entails "the right to express information, ideas, and opinions free of government restrictions based on content and subject only to reasonable limitations (as the power of the government to avoid a clear and present danger) esp. as guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution" (Freedom of speech)

General-Interest Periodicals | magazines and newsletters published on a fairly systematic basis

Generalization | a form of inductive reasoning that draws conclusions based on recurring patterns or repeated observations.

Globalization | a complex system of interconnecting structural and cultural forces that aid the spread of ideas and technologies and influence the social and economic organization of societies

Glossophobia | a subset of social phobia, the fear of social situations

Goodwill | refers to the degree which an audience member perceives a speaker as caring about the audience member

Graph | a pictorial representation of the relationships of quantitative data using dots, lines, bars, pie slices, and the like

Gustatory | of or relating to the sense of taste

Hasty Generalization | a fallacy that involves making a generalization with too few examples.

Headings | a title at the head of a page or section of a book

Hearing | an accidental and automatic brain response to sound that requires no effort

Hero Speech | a motivational speech given by someone who is considered a hero in society

Heterosexism | a system of attitudes, bias, and discrimination in favor of female–male sexuality and relationships

Hyperbole | intentional exaggeration for effect

Idiom | a word or phrase where the meaning cannot be predicted from normal, dictionary definitions

Imagery | language that makes the recipient smell, taste, see, hear, and feel a sensation; also known as sensory language

Impromptu Speaking | the presentation of a short message without advance preparation

Inductive reasoning | a type of reasoning in which examples or specific instances are used to supply strong evidence for (though not absolute proof of) the truth of the conclusion; the scientific method.

Informative Narratives | provide information or explanations about a speaker's topic

Informative Speaking | primary purpose is to share one's knowledge of a subject with an audience, teaching and providing information for the purpose of expanding the audience's knowledge.

Initial Credibility | the speaker's credibility at the beginning of or even before the speech

Intent | to be an ethical listener or speaker, one must begin with ethical intentions; for example, if we agree that honesty is ethical, it follows that ethical speakers will prepare their remarks with the intention of telling the truth to their audiences

Interactional Model of Public Speaking | a theory of public speaking that includes the source, channel, receiver, encoding, decoding, and feedback

Interlibrary Loan | a process where librarians are able to search other libraries to locate the book a researcher is trying to find

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

Internal Summaries | emphasize what has come before and remind the audience of what has been covered

Interview | a one-on-one exchange in which you ask questions of a respondent

Irony | the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect

Jargon | language used in a specific field that may or may not be understood by others

Journals | a scholarly publication containing articles written by researchers, professors and other experts

Keywords | a word or concept of great significance

Lament | to express grief or sorrow

Language | a system of symbols we use to form messages

Lectern | a small raised surface, usually with a slanted top, where a speaker can place notes during a speech

Lexical Definition | specifically states how a word is used within a specific language

Line Graph | a graph designed to show trends over time

Linear Model of Communication | a model of public speaking that includes the source, channel, and receiver

Listening | at its best, is active, focused, concentrated attention for the purpose of understanding the meanings expressed by a speaker

Listening or Receiver Apprehension | the fear that you might be unable to understand the message or process the information correctly or be able to adapt your thinking to include the new information coherently

Literal Analogies | compare two objects or ideas that clearly belong to the same class

Literal Language | language that does not use comparisons like similes and metaphors

Logical Fallacy | mistakes in reasoning; erroneous conclusions or statements made from poor inductive or deductive analyses.

Logos | logical and organized arguments and the credible evidence to support the arguments within a speech; arguments based on logic

Main Points | the main ideas in the speech

Manuscript Speaking | the word-for-word iteration of a written message

Means | the tools or behaviors we employ to achieve a desired outcome

Media Convergence | refers to the merging of technologies that were previously developed and used separately

Media Imperialism | the domination of other countries through exported media and the values and ideologies they contain

Media Literacy | involves our ability to critique and analyze the potential impact of the media

Mediated | visual images or items to help the speaker communicate or clarify their message

Memorized Speaking | the rote recitation of a written message that the speaker has committed to memory

Mental Dialogue | an imagined conversation the speaker has with a given audience in which the speaker tries to anticipate what questions, concerns, or issues the audience may have to the subject under discussion

Message | involves verbal and nonverbal behaviors enacted by communicators that are interpreted with meaning by others

Metaphors | a figure of speech that identifies something as being the same as some unrelated thing for rhetorical effect, thus highlighting the similarities between the two

MLA style | the style scholars in the various humanities fields (e.g., English, philosophy, rhetoric) are more likely to use

Monologue | a prolonged speech by a single person

Monotone | too little variation in pitch

Monroe's Motivated Sequence | organizational pattern used for persuasive speeches involving five steps: attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action

Motivational Speech | a speech designed not only to make an audience experience emotional arousal (fear, sadness, joy, excitement) but also to motivate the audience to do something with that emotional arousal

Narratives | stories that help an audience understand the speaker's message

Negative Example | used to illustrate what not to do

Noise | refers to anything that interferes with message transmission or reception

Non Sequitur | a fallacy where the conclusion does not follow from its premise.

Nonexample | used to explain what something is not

Nonverbal Communication | the transfer of information through the use of body language including eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and more

Note of Finality | last statement that wraps up your entire presentation and lets the audience know the speech is finished

Numerical Support | citing data and numbers within a speech

Olfactory | of or relating to the sense of smell

Opinions | a personal view, attitude, or belief about something

Parallelism | the repetition of grammatical structures that correspond in sound, meter, or meaning

Paraphrase | to take a source's basic idea and condense it using your own words

Pathos | the use of emotions such as anger, joy, hate, desire for community, and love to persuade the audience of the rightness of a proposition; arguments based on emotion

Peer-Reviewed Sources | an article that has been reviewed by a group of experts in the field, sometimes called a board of editors

People-Oriented Listeners | interested in the speaker; listens to the message in order to learn how the speaker thinks and how they feel about their message

Periodicals | works that are published on a regular, ongoing basis, such as magazines, academic journals, and newspapers

Persuade | to convince, motivate, or otherwise persuade others to change their beliefs, take an action, or reconsider a decision

Persuasion | symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice (Perloffl 2003, p.8)

Persuasive Definitions | motivate an audience to think in a specific manner about the word or term

Persuasive Narratives | stories used to persuade people to accept or reject a specific attitude, value, belief, or behavior

Persuasive Speaking | the primary purpose of persuasive speaking is to convince, motivate, or otherwise persuade others to change their beliefs, take an action, or reconsider a decision

Physical Dimension | involves the real or touchable environment where communication occurs

Physical Noise | consists of various sounds in an environment that interfere with a source's ability to hear

Physiological Noise | refers to bodily processes and states that interfere with a message

Pictograph | a graph using iconic symbols to dramatize differences in amounts

Pictographic Support | any drawn or visual representation of an object or process

Pie Graph | a graph designed to show proportional relationships within sets of data

Pitch | the relative highness or lowness of your voice

Plagiarism | using someone else's words or ideas without giving credit

Popular Sources | (also called non-scholarly) sources inform and entertain the public or allow practitioners to share industry, practice, and production information

Positive Example | used to clarify or clearly illustrate a principle, method, or phenomenon

Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc | Latin phrase means "After the fact, therefore because of the fact." Also called historical fallacy, this one is an error in causal reasoning

Powerless Language | language that communicates a lack of power

Premise | statement that is designed to provide support or evidence

Preparation Outline | used to work through the various components of your speech in an organized format

Presentation Aids | the resources beyond the speech words and delivery that a speaker uses to enhance the message conveyed to the audience

Preview | a sentence that provides a clear outline of the main points that will be discussed in the presentation

Preview Statement | the part of the speech that literally tells the audience exactly what main points you will cover

Primary Research | carried out to discover or revise facts, theories, and applications and is reported by the person conducting the research

Primary Source | information that is original and first-hand or straight from the source; information that is unfiltered by interpretation or editing

Proposition | central idea statement in a persuasive speech; a statement made advancing a judgment or opinion

Psychographic Analysis | compiling information on the beliefs, attitudes, and values that your audience members embrace

Psychographic Information | involves the beliefs, attitudes, and values that your audience members embrace

Psychological Noise | mental states or emotional states that impede message transmission or reception

Public Speaking | the process of designing and delivering a message to an audience

Public Speaking Anxiety (PSA) | one of the most commonly reported social fears

Purpose Statement | clearly states what it is you would like to achieve

Racism | a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race

Rate | how quickly or slowly you say the words of your speech

Receiver | the audience members listening to the speech

Receiver Biases | can refer to two things: biases with reference to the speaker and preconceived ideas and opinions about the topic or message

Receiving | first stage of the listening process; the intentional focus on hearing a speaker's message, which happens when we filter out other sources so that we can isolate the message and avoid the confusing mixture of incoming stimuli

Red Herring | a fallacy that introduces an irrelevant issue to divert attention from the subject under discussion.

Regionalisms | are customary words or phrases used in different geographic regions

Religious Speech | a speech designed to incorporate religious ideals into a motivational package to inspire an audience into thinking about or changing aspects of their religious lives

Remembering | third stage of the listening process; begins with listening; if you can't remember something that was said, you might not have been listening effectively

Representative Sample | a group or set chosen from a larger statistical population or group of factors or instances that adequately replicates the larger group according to whatever characteristic or quality is under study

Research | scholarly investigation into a topic in order to discover, revise, or report facts, theories, and applications

Research Log | step-by-step account of the process of identifying, obtaining, and evaluating sources for a specific project, similar to a lab note-book in an experimental setting

Responding | fifth and final stage of the listening process; also referred to as "feedback;" the stage at which you indicate your involvement; almost anything you do at this stage can be interpreted as feedback

Reverse Outline | tool you can use to determine the adequacy of your speech's support by starting with your conclusion and logically working backward through your speech to determine if the support you provided is appropriate and comprehensive

Roast | a humorous speech designed to both praise and good-naturedly insult a person being honored

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

Scholarly Sources | are written by experts in their field, usually professors in a specific discipline

Scrutiny Fear | anxiety resulting from being in a situation where one is being watched or observed, or where one perceives themselves as being watched

Secondary Research | research carried out to discover or revise facts, theories, and applications—similar to primary research—but it is reported by someone not involved in conducting the actual research

Secondary Source | information that is not directly from the firsthand source; information that has been compiled, filtered, edited, or interpreted in some way

Selective Exposure | the decision to expose ourselves to messages that we already agree with, rather than those that confront or challenge us

Semantic Noise | refers to message interference that results from different meanings people attach to messages

Setup | sentence or phrase in which you explain to your audience where the information you are using came from

Sexism | prejudice or discrimination based on sex

Sign Post | transition using just a word or short phrase

Sign Reasoning | a form of inductive reasoning in which conclusions are drawn about phenomena based on events that precede (not cause) a subsequent event.

Similes | a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind (specifically using the terms "like" or "as"), used to make a description more emphatic or vivid

Situational Analysis | compiling information on characteristics related to the specific speaking situation

Situational Anxiety | the communication apprehension created by "the unique combination of influences generated by audience, time and context" (McCroskey, 2001)

Slang | a type of language that consists of words and phrases that are specific to a subculture or group that others may not understand

Slippery Slope | a fallacy that assumes that taking a first step will lead to subsequent events that cannot be prevented.

Social Learning Theory | claims that media portrayals influence our development of schemata or scripts, especially as children, about different groups of people

Social-Psychological Dimension | refers to "status relationships among participants, roles and games that people play, norms of the society or group, and the friendliness, formality, or gravity of the situation" (DeVito, 2009)

Socioeconomic Status | refers to a combination of characteristics including income, wealth, level of education, and occupational prestige

Source | the person who is giving the speech

Spatial Pattern | useful organization pattern when the main point's importance is derived from its location or directional focus

Speaking Outline | much more succinct than the preparation outline and includes brief phrases or words that remind the speakers of the points they need to make, plus supporting material and signposts

Special Occasion Speech | a speech designed to address and engage the context and audience's emotions on a specific occasion

Special-Interest Periodicals | magazines and newsletters that are published for a narrower audience

Specific Purpose Statement | builds on your general purpose (such as to inform) and makes it more specific by stating intended outcome or goal of the speech.

Speech of Acceptance | a speech given by the recipient of a prize or honor

Speech of Commencement | a speech designed to recognize and celebrate the achievements of a graduating class or other group of people

Speech of Dedication | a speech delivered to mark the unveiling, opening, or acknowledging of some landmark or structure

Speech of Farewell | a speech allowing someone to say goodbye to one part of his or her life as he or she is moving on to the next part of life

Speech of Introduction | a mini-speech given by the host of a ceremony that introduces another speaker and his or her speech

Speech of Presentation | a brief speech given to accompany a prize or honor

Speeches to Entertain | involves an array of speaking occasions ranging from introductions to wedding toasts, to presenting and accepting awards, to delivering eulogies at funerals and memorial services in addition to after-dinner speeches and motivational speeches

State-Anxiety | derived from the external situation within which individuals find themselves

Statistics | mathematical subfield that gathers, analyzes, and makes inferences about collected data

Stereotyping | taking for granted that people with a certain characteristic in common have the same likes, dislikes, values, and beliefs

Stipulative Definition | assigned to a word or term by the person who coins that word or term for the first time

Straw Man | a fallacy that shows a weaker side of an opponent's argument in order to more easily tear it down.

Subheadings | a heading given to a subsection of a piece of writing

Subordination | a hierarchy to the order of the points of a speech

Success Speech | a speech given by someone who has succeeded in some aspect of life and is giving back by telling others how they too can be successful

Summary | clear sentence that restates the preview statement in past tense, outlining the main points that were addressed in the speech

Summary of Support | involves condensing or encapsulating the entire text as a form of support

Support | range of strategies that are used to develop the central idea and specific purpose by providing corroborating evidence

Support-Manipulation | when speakers attempt to find support that says exactly what they want it to say despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of evidence says the exact opposite

Survey | a set of questions administered to several—or, preferably, many—respondents

Survivor Speech | a speech given by someone who has survived a personal tragedy or who has faced and overcame serious adversity

Syllogism | a three-sentence argument composed of a major premise (a generalization or principle that is accepted as true), a minor premise (and example of the major premise), and a conclusion.

Symbol | is a word, icon, picture, object, or number that is used to stand for or represent a concept, thing, or experience

Synchronicity | describes whether your digital oratory will be delivered live or recorded for people to use late

Systematic desensitization | is a behavioral modification technique that helps individuals overcome anxiety disorders

Target Audience | the members of an audience the speaker most wants to persuade and who are likely to be receptive to persuasive messages

Temporal Dimension | "has to do not only with the time of day and moment in history but also with where a particular message fits into the sequence of communication events" (DeVito, 2009)

Terminal Credibility | credibility at the end of the speech

Theoretical Definitions | used to describe all parts related to a particular type of idea or object

Thesis | single, declarative sentence that captures the essence or main point of your entire presentation

Thought Leader | individuals who contribute new ideas; to achieve thought leader status, individuals must communicate their ideas to others through both writing and public speaking

Time-Oriented Listeners | prefer a message that gets to the point quickly

Toast | a speech designed to congratulate, appreciate, or remember

Tone | the attitude of a given artifact (humorous, serious, light-hearted, etc.)

Topic Sentence | The first sentence of each paragraph is the topic sentence, which is basically a paragraph's thesis statement: well-written topic sentences tell the reader what the entire paragraph is about.

Topical Pattern | main points are developed according to the different aspects, subtopics or topics within an overall topic

Trait-Anxiety | measures how people generally feel across situations and time periods

Transactional Model of Communication | basic premise of the transactional model is that individuals are sending and receiving messages at the same time

Transitions | serve as bridges between seemingly disconnected (but related) material, most commonly between your main points

Trustworthiness | the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as honest

Two-Tailed Arguments | persuasive technique in which a speaker brings up a counter-argument to their own topic and then directly refutes the claim

Understanding | second stage of the listening process; we attempt to learn the meaning of the message, which is not always easy

Verbal Communication | refers to the production of spoken language to send an intentional message to a listener

Visualization | is the process of seeing something in your mind's eye

Vividness | speaker's ability to present information in a striking, exciting manner

Vocal Cue | the subtle but meaningful variations in speech delivery, which can include the use of pitch, tone, volume, and pace

Vocalized Pauses | sounds in pauses to make it appear that we haven't actually paused. Another term for them is "fillers" or "nonfluencies"

Volume | the relative softness or loudness of your voice

Voluntary Audience | gathers because they want to hear the speech, attend the event, or participate in an event

Warrant | the inference that can be drawn from the claim and evidence

World Wide Web | an interconnected system of public webpages accessible through the Internet

Worldview | is the overall framework through which an individual sees, thinks about, and interprets the world and interacts with it

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