

SPEECHCRAFT

SUPPORT GUIDE FOR SPEECHES

and

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR GIVING SPEECHES



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Reviewed January 2017

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SUPPORT GUIDE FOR SPEECHES

THE ICE BREAKER

Your first prepared speech is The Ice Breaker.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ICE BREAKER

- To begin speaking before an audience.
- To help you understand what areas require emphasis in your public speaking.
- To introduce yourself to your fellow Speechcrafters.

PREPARING YOUR SPEECH

The general subject of your talk is YOU. Nobody knows YOU better than YOU do. Therefore, it is the easiest subject to talk about. Select two or three interesting aspects of your life which will give others an insight and understanding of YOU as an individual.

Examples:

- Birthplace
- Education
- Family
- Occupation
- Ambitions
- Career
- Specific holiday
- Specific incident
- Personal achievements
- Specific influence upon your life
- Favourite place
- Hobbies

Then simply weave a story around this.

STRUCTURE

There are several forms of structure which can be used, the most common being:

OPENING - BODY - CONCLUSION

- The **OPENING** should be attention grabbing – e.g. quote, rhetorical question or one liner.
- The **BODY** should have no more than two or three points.
- The **CONCLUSION** should evoke thought. Do not introduce any new points in the conclusion. Link the conclusion to the purpose of the speech.

Other structures which can be used:

- Point + example x 3
- Past Present Future
- Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and now tell them what you have just told them.

PREPARING YOURSELF

- Rehearse, rehearse and rehearse
- Rehearse in front of a mirror
- Use a tape recorder
- Rehearse in front of family and friends

Do not memorise the whole speech. Memorise the opening and conclusion. Have your two or three points in mind and the rest will follow naturally as you know your subject very well (YOU).

Appearance is very important. You should be well groomed and dressed appropriately. If you look good, you will feel good and be naturally more confident, thereby creating a good first impression.

PRESENTING YOUR SPEECH

Feeling a bit nervous is natural and every speaker, no matter how experienced, feels nervous. Try to relax as you warm to your subject.

Always begin by addressing your audience "Mr/Madam Toastmaster, fellow Speechcrafters and Toastmasters". Pause. When you are ready, begin your opening.

Try to maintain eye contact with your audience and keep an eye on the Timer. If the red light comes on move smoothly to your conclusion.

Body language is covered in a separate section. However, try to keep your hands by your side and not in the fig leaf position or behind your back.

After your speech, avoid saying "thank you". The audience will thank you for your presentation by way of applause. Indicate to the Toastmaster that you have finished by stepping back, looking toward the Toastmaster and addressing him/her by saying "Mr/Madam toastmaster". Shake the Toastmaster's hand and leave the stage.

See pages 16, 17 and 18 for additional information

GET TO THE POINT

Have you ever been to a painfully bad seminar with audience members murmuring to each other? "What was that all about?" "He was all over the place." "What was her point?"

These are symptoms of a speech that had no clear objective and was not focused on achieving that objective.

How do you know if you are going on too long or wandering off track? One way is to pay attention to the cues your listeners give you. Are they attentive or fidgeting? To get to the point, stay focused. When you find yourself beginning to say too much, pause and put the brakes on!

To get back on track, keep your objective in mind. Think in terms of what your listeners need to know, not on what you want to tell them. Focus your message on the three (at the maximum) most significant points. It will be easier for you to get to the point and for your listeners to remember your message.

BE FOCUSED AND PRECISE

- Determine your general purpose.
- Focus on your specific purpose.
- Ensure that the entire speech maintains focus on your objective.

FIRST, GET TO THE POINT

Your first task is to get to the point. Before you generate an outline or your first draft, be sure you know your purpose precisely. Make sure you can state it in a single sentence.

A common pitfall is to choose topics which are too broad. Remember that your time is limited and this can be challenging. If you adopt the practice of determining your purpose before writing anything else, you will find this to be the easy part.

STAY FOCUSED ON THE POINT

Many speakers struggle to stay focused on the point.

No speaker intends to stray from their purpose; rather, it happens quite accidentally. Somewhere between getting to the point and writing the first draft, a collection of off-topic elements is often inserted into a speech.

- It might be an off-topic opening anecdote which is "too good not to share".
- It might be some jaw dropping statistics that are only remotely related to the topic.
- It might be the latest whiz-bang effect in PowerPoint that is glitzy, but content empty.

Find these extraneous elements and eliminate them while editing your speech. Every element of your speech must reinforce your purpose. Each time you edit your speech, your goal should be to sharpen the focus.

YOUR BODY SPEAKS

When you present your speech, you send two types of messages to your audience. While your voice is transmitting a verbal message, more than half of the communication takes place on the non-verbal level.

Your body can be an effective tool for adding emphasis and clarity to your words. It is also your most powerful instrument for convincing an audience of your sincerity, earnestness and enthusiasm.

THE BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE PHYSICAL ACTION

- Messages are made more meaningful and memorable.
- The audience is less likely to become bored because moving objects such as hands and body create attention
- Physical action:
 - Can enhance retention of your verbal message.
 - Adds punctuation to your speech.
 - Adds power and vitality to your words.
 - Helps relieve nervous tension.

Gestures are a great way of relieving the normal tension that builds up before a speech is delivered, and harnesses that nervous energy to make it work for you.

FIVE WAYS TO MAKE YOUR BODY SPEAK MORE EFFECTIVELY

1. Rid yourself of distracting mannerisms. Let gestures add to your speech and not distract from it.
2. Be natural, spontaneous and conversational. It is your speech, so be yourself when delivering it. Use gestures that are natural to you, feel comfortable and do not try to imitate another speaker.
3. Let your body mirror your feeling. If you are interested in what you are presenting, the physical movements will come from within and be appropriate to what you are saying.
4. Build self-confidence through preparation. If a speech is well prepared, it is easier to direct your attention to the audience and not to your inner anxieties. This allows you to be more natural and spontaneous.
5. Use Speechcraft/Toastmasters as a learning laboratory. Cherish and heed the feedback from your evaluators to improve your performance.

YOUR SPEAKING POSTURE

How you position your body reflects your attitude. Your posture tells your audience whether you are confident, alert, enthusiastic and in command of yourself and the speaking situation.

Good posture allows you to:

- Breathe properly
- Project your voice effectively
- Move your body in any direction
- Feel alert and comfortable
- Decrease nervous tension
- Minimise random, distracting movements.

How you should stand:

- Stand straight but not rigid.
- Feet should be shoulder width apart.
- One foot should be slightly ahead of the other.
- Weight should be balanced on the balls of your feet.
- You should lean forward slightly.
- Your knees should be straight but not locked.
- Your shoulders should be relaxed but not dropped.
- Your chest should be out and your stomach in.

- Your head should be erect and your chin out.
- Your arms should be hanging naturally by your sides.
- Your fingers should be slightly curled.

GESTURES

- clarify and support your words
- dramatise your ideas
- lend vitality and emphasis
- help dissipate nervous tension
- function as visual aids
- stimulate audience participation
- are highly visible

TYPES OF GESTURES

- Descriptive gestures are used to clarify or enhance verbal messages, help to visualize the shape, movement, location, function and number of objects.
- Emphatic gestures are used to indicate earnestness or conviction (e.g. a clenched fist).
- Suggestive gestures are used to symbolise ideas or emotions (e.g. shrug of the shoulders indicates ignorance, perplexity or irony).
- Prompting gestures are used to promote a response from the audience (e.g. commence applause so the audience will follow and do the same).

HOW TO GESTURE EFFECTIVELY

- Respond naturally to what you think, feel and say.
- Create the conditions for gesturing, not the gesture.
- Suit the action to the word and the occasion.
- Make gestures convincing.
- Make your gestures smooth and well timed.
- Make natural, spontaneous gesturing a habit.

BODY MOVEMENT

Body movement can benefit you in three ways -

1. It can support and reinforce what you say.
2. It almost always attracts the audience's attention.
3. It is the fastest, most effective means of burning up nervous energy and relieving nervous tension.

However, it must be done for a purpose.

- Stepping forward during a speech suggests you are arriving at an important point.
- A step or two backward indicates you have concluded an idea and you wish the audience to consider your comments.
- A lateral movement implies a transition from one thought to another.

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

The face can be used more clearly than any other part of your body to show attitudes, feelings or emotions, such as surprise, fear, happiness, confusion, disgust, contempt, interest, disbelief, anger and sadness.

The audience will use your facial expressions as a barometer to what is inside you. Your audience will watch your face for clues as to your sincerity, earnestness and enthusiasm.

EYE CONTACT

Eye contact is the cement that binds together a speaker and an audience.

You can use eye contact effectively by:

- Knowing your material
- Establishing a personal bond with each listener
- Monitoring visual feedback.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Remember that in public speaking as in any other form of human interaction, you never get a second chance to make a first impression. Your appearance strongly influences how others judge you, so dress appropriately. Do not study your speech as your audience is arriving. This implies inadequate preparation. The first minute is the most crucial part of your presentation, and during these few seconds the people in the audience will decide if you are confident, sincere, friendly and eager to address them. They will base this decision on what they see.

Remember, effective communication delivery must involve the whole person, and so your preparation should consider not only the words you are going to deliver, but the meaning you wish to convey. This is achieved by using all the previously discussed principles of body language.

VOCAL VARIETY

How boring would it be if you spoke in one tone, rate and volume? Would anyone listen to you for very long? An audience will quickly lose interest in your speech if you do not use vocal variety.

Your vocal variety is a wonderful tool, with which you can enhance your speech. If you want people to listen to you and more importantly remember your speech, the content of your speech needs to be interesting and so does the way you present your speech (body language, gestures, eye contact and vocal variety).

There are several ways you can use your voice to enhance your speeches.

- Vary your voice volume.
- Vary your speaking rate.
- Vary your vocal pitch.
- Develop a pleasing tone quality.
- Enunciate clearly.

VOICE VOLUME

Vary the volume of your voice during your delivery to help portray emotion. For example, anger - loud, love - soft, sincere - firm and easily heard, surprise - either loud or soft depending on your setting. The volume of your voice can be used to capture and maintain audience interest.

SPEAKING RATE

The most effective speaking rate is between 125 - 160 words per minute. Speak quickly enough to avoid a boring drone, yet slowly enough to be clearly understood. Vary your speaking rate during your speech to reflect mood changes and to emphasise points of the speech.

PITCH

Good speakers vary the pitch of their voices to convey emotion and conviction. Avoid high pitches because they suggest immaturity and excitability. The best approach is to be conversational during your speech.

QUALITY

For good voice quality, try and relax your throat while you speak. Try to convey friendliness, confidence and a desire to communicate. Relaxing will eliminate any tension in your voice, resulting in a pleasing tonal quality.

ENUNCIATION

To find out if you enunciate clearly, use a tape recorder during rehearsal. This is the best way to learn effective speaking. If you find that your enunciation could be better, practice opening your mouth wider than when you normally speak. Adjusting your speaking rate may help you to deliver clearer enunciation.

Remember your voice and your face are your “public relation” agents. More than any other factors, they serve to establish an image of you in the minds of others. Your face, body and speech are the interpreters of your mind. They reveal the “real” you, as nothing else can.

HOW TO SAY IT – USING THE RIGHT WORDS

When you do not understand a section of a book or a magazine article you are reading, you can read it again until the meaning becomes clear to you. When you are speaking, your listeners do not have this luxury. *They will hear your words only once.* For your listeners to understand your message when they hear it, you must use words that your audience will understand and will accurately convey your message. You must construct your sentences so they are simple and clear.

WRITE FOR THE EAR

Although good speech and good writing have much in common, each has different emphasis. Oral language must be immediately understandable to the ear. Oral language is less formal than written language. Oral language can often be repetitious so that listeners will better remember certain points. When speaking to an audience, you should speak informally in the same way you speak to a single person in conversation. By using familiar words and concepts you will gain interest, attention and reception. Construct your speech in an oral style.

USE SHORT WORDS

Long words, seldom heard words and convoluted words, rarely impress an audience. The most effective and memorable words for listeners are short - usually one syllable. Continued use of words that have three or more syllables will more likely make it difficult for your audience to understand your message. Review the words you have selected for your talk; replace words that have multiple syllables with words that have the same meaning but less syllables.

AVOID JARGON

We have all heard speakers who use sports terms when talking about business or politics and general business words when talking about art or theatre. It is best to avoid specialised words generally found in certain professions unless you are speaking to people in those professions. When relating stories about your vocation to an audience from all walks of life, do not use jargon or technical terms that pertain to your vocation. This will only confuse the audience and they will lose interest very quickly. Use simple and familiar words that everyone knows. If you must use a specialised word to make a point, take time to explain it after you use it.

USE VIVID WORDS

It is best to use vividly descriptive, expressive words that paint a mental picture the audience can see. Descriptive words convey emotion and action, stirring the audience's imagination and making your message memorable.

USE WORDS ECONOMICALLY

You should strive to say a lot in as few as words as possible. Avoid tired old unnecessary fillers such as “needless to say”, “it has been shown that”. Avoid trite clichés such as “bull in a china shop”, “dog tired” and “tried and true”. Replace phrases such as these, with more appropriate descriptive shorter words or phrases. Other phrases can be reduced to one or two words. For example, “A large number of”, can be replaced with “many” and “at the present time” can be replaced with “now”.

USE SHORT SENTENCES

Long complex sentences are difficult for your audience to follow and understand, so your point will be lost. Short sentences have more power and impact, and will be remembered longer. Be careful not to construct your entire speech with short sentences. Use a variety of short and not so short sentences that your audience can easily follow and understand.

USE ACTIVE NOT PASSIVE VOICE

An example of the active voice is "The club elected Marion President". In the passive voice, it would be "Marion was elected President by the club". The active voice uses fewer words, is easier to follow and sounds more vigorous and interesting. Whenever possible use the active voice in your sentences.

USE RHETORICAL DEVICES

Many literary devices will add power to your speech. A simile is a comparison that uses words such as “like” or “as”. "If we deny our children an education, ignorance will grow like a cancer". A metaphor merely implies the comparison. In alliteration, the initial sounds in words or in stressed syllables within words, are repeated in a pleasing and memorable manner; for example, "unnoticed and unused", "hallowed halls" and "protect and preserve for peace ". Triads are another rhetorical device using group ideas, adjectives and points of three. Expressed in threes, thoughts have a pleasant rhythm, are dramatic and become more memorable. "We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honour".

AVOID

- swearing and vulgarity in your speech (even though many words are almost acceptable, there may be some people in your audience that would be deeply offended by you using such words or vulgarity)
- words that evoke a negative emotional response
- vague appeals to authority
- words that are ambiguous and have double meanings

PREPARING YOUR SPEECH

Carefully select words, making sure they are clear, accurate, colourful and as short as possible. Pay attention to sentence construction and length. Analyse your words and sentences to be certain they communicate your exact meaning to the audience.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR GIVING SPEECHES

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

READING SPEECHES

- Read from lectern or small hand notes.
- Make sure your pages are numbered.
- Highlight or bold type key words so you can find your place easily after looking up to the audience.
- Maintain eye contact with audience while speaking.
- Vary voice where possible for added interest.
- Use unstapled pages and slide across after reading.
- Use full body paper or it will curl at the lectern and possibly fall.

USING THE LECTERN

- If it is fixed, use it.
- If the speech is grave, financial or formal, use it.
- If you need to read the speech, use it.
- If you know your speech well, your presentation is dramatic, or you are storytelling, remove the lectern for maximum impact and effect.
- Speak to the Toastmaster beforehand and organise for all arrangements before you get to the stage.
- You may move the lectern to the side to get body contact with the audience while reading.

USING OVERHEADS

- Consider the size of print and the number of points per page.
- Adjust and focus data projector before speech.
- Use the B button to blank the screen while talking between slides.
- Ensure equipment is near you.
- Colour and pictures on slides are considered helpful.

SPEAKING POINTERS

- Avoid using the same word more than once in the same sentence. For example, "In the area of public speaking and of impromptu speech and other areas."
- Avoid the use of vague words such as "Those things we spoke of earlier."
- Avoid the use of words such as "not sure" or "I don't know" when making a statement on your own subject matter.
- There is no need to thank the audience at the end of your speech. The audience thanks you by way of applause.
- Avoid the use of clichés such as "without any further ado", "last but not least" or "in conclusion".
- Try not to um or ah.
- Avoid high-pitched voice tones.
- Avoid speaking and walking at the same time.

BODY LANGUAGE

Do not:

- fold your hands in front or behind you
- put your hands in your pockets
- eat, drink or chew gum during your presentation
- rock or sway while speaking
- point your index finger at the audience for a prolonged period

- hang thumbs in belt while speaking
- turn your back to the audience at any time
- leave the lectern unattended at any time (wait for the Toastmaster to return)

SPEAKING WITH MICROPHONES

- Do not speak while walking to and from a fixed microphone.
- Make any adjustments to your lapel microphone before being introduced.
- Test the microphone before going on stage.

TELLING JOKES

- A joke must be funny to you first.
- Avoid risqué, sexist, racial or other jokes that may offend.
- Avoid using swear words or obscenities.
- Do not tell a series of unrelated one liners.
- Ensure your jokes reinforce the theme of your speech.
- Do not laugh at your own jokes.
- Practice your timing.
- Consider what to do if the audience does not laugh.

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A GOOD SPEECH

STRUCTURE

The most useful structures are:

- Opening, body, conclusion - tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and tell them what you have just told them.
- Point + example x 3
- Past, present, future
- Tell-Tell-Tell
- The opening should be "attention-grabbing". Use quotes, rhetorical questions and one liners.
- You should not have more than three main points in the body of your speech.
- You should introduce no new points in your conclusion.
- Your conclusion should evoke thought.

THEME

- Your speech must have a message to convey. After writing your speech, check if your speech objectives have been met.
- If the speech is motivational, it must contain a "call to action".

AUDIENCE INTEREST

This may be generated in a variety of ways, including -

- Colourful use of language
- Timely use of pause
- Choice of a subject with which the audience can identify
- Clever use of anecdotes

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO ALL GOOD SPEECHES

There are several common aspects to all good speeches -

1. Good preparation including practice in front of a mirror if possible
2. Impeccable timing - your prepared speech should be between 5-7 minutes
3. Structure
4. Hand Gestures
5. Voice Control
6. Good use of language
7. Sincerity

HELPFUL HINTS FOR TABLE TOPICS

As soon as you commence speaking think about your conclusion - try for opening, body, and conclusion.

Think laterally.

You can use time wasters such as repeating the question, adjusting clothing, getting up slowly, replacing chair, thanking the Table Topics Master for the question or walking to the lectern.

Avoid holding the chair, flicking pens, and looking down at the desk in front of you

SELECTING A TOPIC

The Ice Breaker speech is all about you. In other speeches, you will be given a technique to practice, and the subject of the speech will be entirely up to you. Some people find it difficult to think of a subject to talk about. Others have trouble deciding which topic to speak about. Sometimes the technique will help you think of a subject.

If you have trouble thinking of a topic, try these suggestions -

- Think of a hobby or interest, or something you do that you are passionate or have knowledge about.
- Think of an interesting place you have been to or an unusual holiday you have had.
- Think of a person or incident that moved you.
- Look in the newspaper or magazines for an interesting subject.
- Think of something you would like to know more about and research.
- Draw upon your own experience or expertise on certain topics.

You could just look at things around you - tables, pets, computers, gardens - as well as your everyday experiences, and build a story around any of them. There is a wealth of material out there. Remember, a simple speech is a good speech. Don't cram too much in.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION

How often have you felt let down at the end of what should have been a great speech, because it was only a narrative or a series of one liners? Many of these presentations should have and could have been great presentations if they had a purpose, a structure, and a conclusion that leaves you with a message.

Here are some ideas how to become an accomplished speaker by using some basic principles of Preparation and Presentation.

The three basic principles of Preparation and Presentation are -

1. Preparing your speech
2. Preparing yourself
3. Presenting your speech

PREPARING YOUR SPEECH

Determine the objective or purpose of your speech. Do you want your speech to:

- Entertain
- Inform
- Inspire
- Persuade
- Motivate

Whatever the purpose, research your subject for all relevant data and facts which will convey your message. With all the material at hand, the next step is to structure your speech. The most widely used structure is one with three distinct sections, the opening, the body and the conclusion.

OPENING

The opening of your speech is designed to catch immediate attention. It must arouse the audience's interest in your topic. It also must lead into the subject of the speech, and help listeners remember the subject and the main point you are making.

Examples of a good opening are -

- A startling question or statement
- An appropriate quotation, illustration, or story
- A display of some appropriate object or picture
- An attention-getting generalization that ties in with your subject

Avoid these common weak openings:

- An apologetic statement
- A story or joke that does not relate to your topic
- A commonplace observation delivered in a commonplace manner
- A long or slow moving statement or story

BODY

The body of your speech contains the facts and the main points. The number of main points will be limited by the time available. Most listeners will remember only three to five main facts or ideas. For a 5 to 7 minutes' speech, three points will be plenty. For a shorter speech, use only two or three at the absolute maximum. Arrange your points in a logical sequence and discuss each point in several sentences; then provide a short anecdote or story for illustration. You could also quote an authority or use simple statistics to support your idea. If appropriate, you should briefly mention contrary views and refute them.

CLOSE

The audience always remembers best what it hears last. This means your closing must be memorable. It should reinforce your ideas and leave your listeners with a lasting impression. If your mission was to inform your listeners, you may want to conclude simply with a summary of the ideas presented in the body of the speech. If your purpose was to persuade or motivate the audience to take some action, you may want to suggest a course of action listeners could take. This is called a “call to action”.

Do not introduce any new material into your conclusion. Do not apologize for anything. Finish forcefully and confidently.

Examples of a good closing are:

- A summary of the points you have made and the conclusion to be drawn from them
- A specific appeal for action
- A story, quotation, or illustration that emphasizes the point you are making
- A rhetorical question

Be sure to use smooth transitions when moving from the opening to the body and to the conclusion of your speech. Good transitions provide continuity and help the audience to follow your presentation.

Other structures that can be used are -

- Point, Reason, Example, Point - useful for persuading or informing
- Past, Present, Future - useful for impromptu speaking
- Tell, Tell, Tell - generally used for technical presentations

PREPARING YOURSELF

- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse,
- Rehearse in front of a mirror
- Rehearse in your car
- Use a tape recorder or video camera
- Rehearse in front of your friends or family

USE WHICHEVER FORM OF REHEARSAL THAT SUITS YOU BEST

- Do not try to memorize the entire speech.
- Only memorize your opening and your conclusion.
- Have the two or three main points of the speech body in your mind and talk around them to ensure a smooth flow of ideas.

APPEARANCE IS IMPORTANT

You should be well groomed and dressed appropriately. If you look good, you feel good and are naturally more confident as well as creating a good first impression.

PRESENTING YOUR SPEECH

Feeling a little nervous is natural and every speaker no matter how experienced feels nervous. Try to relax as you warm to your subject. Always begin by addressing your audience.

Examples of forms of address:

- “Mr. Toastmaster, fellow toastmasters and guests”
- “Mr Chairman, fellow colleagues and visitors”
- “Toastmasters, fellow Speechcrafters”

Pause for a moment, and when ready begin your presentation.

Try to maintain eye contact with your audience, use gestures, vocal variety and facial expressions wherever appropriate, avoid overacting and keep a close watch on your timing.

When you complete your presentation:

- There is no need to say “thank you” - the audience will thank you for your presentation with their applause.
- Indicate to the Toastmaster, Chairman or Master of Ceremonies that you have finished by stepping back and looking towards him or gesturing towards him with your hand.

Using these basic principles of preparation and presentation

You will never leave your audience feeling let down!

BE IN EARNEST

Speaking with conviction or earnestness is the most important aspect of any speech in which you are trying to advocate a point of view. Without earnestness, you will never come across as being sincere or convincing if you do not strongly believe in the viewpoint which you are trying to convey.

If you have any doubts about the subject, find a different subject to which you are truly committed. Never try to convince your audience of a point of view which you do not believe in yourself. You cannot be convincing if you do not believe in what you are saying.

Your audience will be persuaded more by the depth of your conviction and enthusiasm than by logic or proof.

Enthusiasm, sincerity and conviction are demonstrated in your speech in the following ways -

- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
- Vocal Variety
- Tone
- Gestures

Any speech of this nature should always end with a "strong call to action".

A call to action can take many forms, including a plea to do something positive. It can take the form of a petition to be signed, or it can be an appeal to take action by writing a letter to your local member of parliament.

In any speech of conviction or earnestness, your audience will be moved more by how you deliver your speech, than by what you tell them. Your persuasive power is of utmost importance.

USING VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. You are encouraged to use them.

If you cannot arrange for a data projector but would like to use visuals, you may copy the material onto a flip chart. Do this before the presentation. Use a heavy marking pen that does not “bleed” through the paper, and write on every third or fourth page so succeeding visuals will not show through. Make your letters large and heavy with ample space between words.

FOLLOW THESE TIPS WHEN USING VISUAL AIDS

- Set up your visuals and test them before the meeting begins, making sure they will be easily visible to the audience. Place your data projector so it projects a large, high, undistorted image on the screen, behind you. Focus the image.
- Bring spare equipment, including a projector bulb, extension cord, power board, extra marking pens, etc.
- Display your visuals only when they are needed. Use the B button on your laptop to blank the data projector image after you have finished with the topic displayed on the screen. When using a flip chart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- Remember not to stand between the screen/flip chart and your audience (otherwise you will block the audience’s view).
- Maintain eye contact with your listeners. Do not talk to the screen or flip chart. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.
- Make letters large when preparing visuals. A good rule of thumb is one centimetre for each 2 metres between the visual and the farthest audience member.
- Print neatly, keep lines horizontal and use ample spacing between words.
- Keep the visual aids simple. Use a simple visual aid to illustrate a single point.
- Make graphs and diagrams simple and accurate, giving each a title and labelling key components.
- Follow the “seven-seven rule”. No more than seven lines and no more than seven words per line

USING NOTES

Reading a speech word for word is an option that we prefer to avoid. Why?

- It is difficult to maintain eye contact with the audience.
- You tend not to connect with the audience and you may sound stilted.
- It does not allow you to sound natural, as in general conversation.
- We should speak as we speak, not as we write.

Memorising a speech word for word is not advised either. Why?

- It is time consuming trying to memorise a speech word for word.
- Even though you make eye contact you may still not connect since you are now reading from your mind.
- You can quite easily forget what you were going to say and not recover. An exception to this rule is the introduction and conclusion. Many speakers commit these two sections of their presentation to memory because the beginning and ending are the most important parts of your speech.

PALM CARDS

Something held in a speaker's hand can easily distract the audience. Palm cards restrict the full use of gestures and can be dropped (ensuring an embarrassing moment).

NOTES

Notes are the preferred method of delivering a presentation. They should be used in conjunction with a lectern. Winston Churchill was once asked why he had notes during a speech but never used them. He said, "I carry fire insurance, but don't expect my house to burn down".

HOW TO GET THE BEST FROM YOUR NOTES

Write a series of key words. Practice your speech using key words to remind you where you are up to. "Practice makes perfect". If under-practiced, you may forget what ideas the key words represent.

TIPS FOR NOTES

Work toward using only a few key words to keep your speaking on track. Rehearse your speech in your head using key words and/or pictures.

Visualise your speech in key words or pictures, connecting them either by drawing or mental pictures.

- Use stiff paper - so pages do not rip and blow away.
- Use large font size that is easy to read from a distance. (18-24) point
- Use a large white space in the page layout.
- Use only one side of the paper.
- Number each page.
- Bring a spare copy.
- DO NOT split a thought at the end of a line or page.
- DO NOT staple the pages together.

Properly prepared notes provide an outline for your speech. They can be in the form of key words or pictures to remind you of the points that you want to make and the order in which you want to make them.

Notes should not spell out the points word for word. They are just a cue, which allows you to connect with the audience. The secret of a good presentation is to talk to your audience rather than recite or read to them.

Type quotes and statistics that must be worded in a precise way. It is quite acceptable to read quotes and statistics.

continued...

TRY IT WITHOUT NOTES

Try to internalise the content of your speech so that you do not need to rely on notes. The use of notes during your speech can convey the opposite of confidence, enthusiasm and sincerity.

Maintaining solid eye contact with your audience and speaking from the heart rather than from a script, will always be very effective.

If you feel you need support, place the lectern to one side of your speaking position, angled in towards you, so that you can easily glance at a single page of dot point notes. Your dot points should -

- be written in a very large font (easy to read at 2 metres)
- contain a few words per point (memory joggers)
- be a single page only (negates the need to touch the notes)

WHITE BOARDS AND FLIP CHARTS

White boards and flip charts continue to be a simple and effective way to get your message across. They never fail to operate when you are giving your presentations. If you are writing or illustrating with a flip chart or whiteboard, remember that as you speak before your audience, you (not the chart or board) remain the main focal point. If you are working with material that you produced prior to the program, make the appearance of pages as professional as possible. The audience does not have the luxury of watching the material unfold because it is already written. As the speaker, you must bring life to it.

Flip charts are economical too. You don't have to use any special films or printers to produce the visuals. Adding colour is as easy as opening a box of markers.

A few tips to help you use flip charts more effectively -

Make sure your chart pad fits your chart stand.

Spaced holes at the top of chart pads may differ. The best flip chart stands have clamps at the top and will hold most types of pads. Do not wait until the last minute to find out that your pad and stand do not match.

Use a gridded pad instead of a plain pad, to make it easier to draw straight lines and align your text.

Make sure the pad is perforated at the top to allow easy removal of sheets. Many presenters struggle to tear off a sheet evenly.

Ensure your white board is clean and ready to use.

Design your visuals on note paper before drawing them on the actual board or chart.

This will ensure you do not waste paper or run out of room on the whiteboard. Do not use all capital letters. A combination of upper and lower case letters is easier to read. Use the 7x 7 rule. No more than seven words on each line and no more than seven lines to a sheet.

Use special flip chart/whiteboard markers - not standard permanent markers.

Permanent markers will bleed through the paper.

Avoid using yellow, pink or orange markers.

Do not make attendees strain their eyes to see your points by using colours that are difficult to read at a distance. Avoid using too many colours - one dark colour and one accent colour works best.

Print neatly and clearly all text and titles.

If your handwriting is not neat, ask someone to help you prepare your chart or ask for a scribe so the text is not distracting to the audience.

Create a plan.

Creating visually stimulating flip charts and whiteboard presentations takes more time than you think. Be sure to allow enough time to review your visuals and make all changes and corrections before your presentation.

10 TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATIONS

HOW TO MAKE THE BUTTERFLIES FLY IN FORMATION

Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech or presentation is natural and healthy. It shows you care about doing well. But, too much nervousness can be detrimental. Here's how you can control your nervousness and make effective, memorable presentations.

- **Know your room**

Be familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practice using the microphone and any visual aids. Stand at the lectern, speak into the microphone. Practice with visual aids which you may be using. Walk around where the audience will be seated. Walk from where you will be seated to the lectern, as you will when you are introduced.

- **Know your audience**

If possible, greet some of your audience as they arrive and chat with them. It is easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.

- **Know your material**

If you are not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech and revise it if necessary until you can present it with ease.

- **Relax**

You can ease tension by doing exercises. Sit comfortably with your back straight. Breathe in slowly, hold your breath for 4 to 5 seconds then slowly exhale. Repeat 10 to 20 times. Or do physical exercise. Stand straight, arms extended over your head. Then bend over and touch your toes. Repeat 10 times. Stand with your feet apart. Extend your arms out at your sides, then turn your head and torso to the left. Return to centre, then turn to the right. Repeat 10 times. To relax facial muscles, open your mouth and eyes wide, then close them tightly. Repeat 5 times.

- **Visualise yourself giving your speech.**

Imagine yourself walking confidently to the lectern as the audience applauds. Imagine yourself speaking - your voice loud, clear and assured. Picture the audience applauding as you finish and return to your seat. When you visualise yourself as successful, you will be successful.

- **Realise that people want you to succeed.**

Audiences want speakers to be interesting, stimulating, informative and entertaining. They want you to succeed. This is especially true in a Toastmasters Club, where your audience will always be understanding and supportive.

- **Do not apologise.**

Most of the time your nerves do not show at all. If you don't say anything about it, nobody will notice. If you mention your nervousness or apologise for any problems you think you have with your speech, you will only be calling the audience's attention to it. Had you not mentioned it, your listeners may not have noticed anything.

- **Concentrate on the message and not the medium.**

Your nervous feelings will dissipate if you focus your attention away from your own anxieties and outwardly toward your message and your audience.

- **Turn nervousness into positive energy.**

The same nervous energy that causes platform panic can be an asset to you. Harness it, and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.

- **Gain experience**

Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. A Toastmasters club can provide the experience you need in a non-threatening, supportive environment.